

Complete Policy Title:

**Protocol for the Closure of  
Undergraduate Programs**

Policy Number (if applicable):

Approved by:

**Senate**

Date of Most Recent Approval:

**January 10, 2007**

Date of Original Approval(s):

**January 10, 2007**

Supersedes/Amends Policy dated:

Responsible Executive:

**Associate Vice-President (Academic)**

Enquiries:

**University Secretariat**

**DISCLAIMER:**

*If there is a Discrepancy between this electronic policy and the written copy held  
by the policy owner, the written copy prevails.*

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In order to maintain high quality academic programs and meet the goals outlined in Refining Directions and other planning documents, the University may develop new academic degree programs and close existing programs. Senate may approve the formal closure of an academic program for educational reasons, to meet strategic goals, as a result of realignment and/or changes in resource allocations and/or for financial reasons.

### **Definition of a Program**

An undergraduate program is defined as a sequence of courses prescribed by McMaster University or jointly with another institution for the fulfillment of the requirements of a particular degree, diploma or certificate, regardless of the location and/or mode of delivery of that program.

### **Closure of a Program**

Program closure is the formal termination of a degree program as outlined above.

### **Underlying Principles**

The criteria for assessing proposals for the closure of undergraduate programs include:

- the program is no longer consistent with McMaster's academic objectives, priorities and existing strengths of the University;
- the program is no longer of high academic quality;
- there is convincing evidence of the lack of student demand and/or societal need for the program. This criteria could include any of the following:
  - a decrease in the number of degrees awarded
  - a decrease in the quality or amount of faculty scholarship within the program
  - a continuing decrease in attracting the best qualified applicants to a program
  - an inability to meet internal and/or external standards relative to that program;
- there are insufficient resources available to support the program.

### **Process**

1. Consideration of whether an undergraduate program or similar course of study should be closed can be initiated by:
  - a) a recommendation from the Department (or academic unit) that delivers the undergraduate program, or from the Faculty Dean(s), to the Associate Vice-President (Academic).
  - b) a recommendation from an undergraduate program review or a departmental review, to the Associate Vice-President (Academic) that an undergraduate program should be closed.

No recommendation from a Faculty Dean(s) or the Associate Vice-President (Academic) to close an undergraduate program shall be forwarded to Undergraduate Council until the Department (or academic unit) concerned has been notified of the intention to make such a recommendation. The

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- proposal shall be discussed with members in the department or program, the Department Chair (or Director), the Faculty Dean(s), the Associate Vice President (Academic), and the Provost.
2. Regardless of its origin, a recommendation that an undergraduate program should be closed must be forwarded to Undergraduate Council. Undergraduate Council shall receive from the Chair/Director and Faculty Dean(s) a statement of academic and resource decisions that have been made by the Department and Faculty respectively with regard to the program under consideration. In addition, both the Department (or academic unit) and Faculty Dean(s) shall indicate the priority accorded the undergraduate program under review. Other Departments (or academic units) for which the program in question is integral to their own undergraduate offerings should also be informed of the proposed closure and given an opportunity to comment to Undergraduate Council on the ramifications of closure on their undergraduate work. Undergraduate Council shall recommend to the University Planning Committee whether or not the program should be closed.
  3. The Associate Vice-President (Academic) shall transmit Undergraduate Council's recommendation to the University Planning Committee, together with documentation supporting the recommendation and, if appropriate, his/her comments on the recommendation.
  4. Based upon information provided by the Associate Vice-President (Academic), Undergraduate Council, the Department (or academic unit), and the Faculty, and considering the University-wide academic and financial context, the University Planning Committee will consider whether the undergraduate program should be closed.
  5. The University Planning Committee will present its recommendation on whether or not to proceed with closure of the program to Senate for a final decision.
  6. The date for discontinuing or phasing out an academic program will take into consideration the time required for anticipated completion by students currently enrolled or for facilitation of their placement in acceptable alternative programs. Students will be notified of the program closure and timing for phasing out programs.
  7. Other implications that could include designated awards, calendar changes, and arrangements with other institutions must be reviewed and appropriate resolutions must be arranged.
  8. The process to close a program shall take place in a prompt and timely fashion, bearing in mind the effects of prolonged debate on the individuals and units involved.