

Process and Criteria for Centralized Funding of Distance and Distributed Learning Courses and Programs

The Distance and Distributed Learning Committee (DDLC) has the responsibility for determining which distance and distributed courses are selected for centralized development using University of Regina funds and instructional design resources. This document outlines the process and criteria for the selection of courses to be centrally funded for development. Further information and relevant documents can be found on the CCE website, under *DDL Call for Proposals* <http://www.uregina.ca/cce/distance-online/ddl-proposals.html>

A. Process

1. Call for Proposals

The Chair of the Distance and Distributed Learning Committee will issue a campus-wide call for proposals for the development of new distance and distributed courses twice a year, in the fall (generally October) and late winter (generally April). The call will include information on where to find application forms and the needed information on constructing a successful application.

2. Applications

The committee will consider proposals for the following modes of delivery:

- Purely online courses
- Purely televised courses
- Courses with a significant video-conference component
- Blended courses (where between 30-70% of the face-to-face classroom time has been replaced by an online or video-conference component, with a logical pedagogical structure to the blending) will be considered on a pilot basis

Applications can be new proposals, or proposals for revisions of courses that have already been developed. In both cases, applications are expected to include the information required in the application form, including most especially the project plan and its details. (Help is available from the Flexible Learning Division Head, Willadell Garreck (306-585-5897 willadell.garreck@uregina.ca)

The Committee will also consider funding research proposals related to distance and distributed learning.

3. First Screening

Once applications are received, the Centre for Continuing Education's Flexible Learning Division will carry out the first screening of the applications. The initial screening will examine if the application contains the mandatory requirements for selection, as outlined

below. If in the opinion of the Head of Flexible Learning the mandatory requirements are not present, the Head will contact the applicant and the applicant's Faculty DDL Coordinator and ask for those missing requirements to be added. If the applicant is not willing to add these requirements, the Committee will reject the application.

If the mandatory requirements are present, the Head of Flexible Learning will arrange for an instructional designer (ID) to examine the application (in consultation with the applicant and content developer as needed), with up to one hour of ID time allocated to this stage of the application. The instructional designer will be looking at the viability of the proposal in the light of the University's technical and design capacities, as well as providing some initial estimates of the costs of the proposal.

In addition, the Program Manager of Flexible Learning will examine the application to see how the proposal meets the distance and distributed learning needs of the University, within the cost-recovery mandate of the Centre for Continuing Education (see *C. Criteria for Selections: Priority Items, below*). Based on these two sets of analyses, the Head of the Flexible Learning Division will provide a report for the Distance and Distributed Learning Committee on the viability of the application with respect to the development of the course, as well as on the viability of the delivery of the course.

4. Second Screening and Decision

The final application, along with the accompanying analysis on the potential development costs and complexity and on the potential for successful delivery of the course will be forwarded to the Committee. The Committee will use the criteria outlined in section B below to decide which courses should be funded, and at what level, and with what conditions.

As needed, the DDL Committee may consult with the applicant and/or content developer if the committee needs more information.

5. Unsuccessful Applications

Unsuccessful applicants will receive an official letter from the Chair of the DDL Committee within a few weeks of the committee's decision. Unsuccessful applicants may consult with the Head of the Flexible Learning Division about possible improvements to the application if they are interested in adjusting and re-submitting their proposal at the next call.

6. Successful Applications and Next Stages

Successful applicants will receive an official letter from the Chair of the DDL Committee within a few weeks of the committee's decision. Applicants will identify developers, if not already stated, and those developers will be contacted by the Flexible Learning Division so a letter of agreement for development can be signed. Once in place, an instructional designer will begin working with the content developer on the timelines, etc. Information

on this process can be found on the Distance and Distributed Learning Committee website , under *DDL Call for Proposals* <http://www.uregina.ca/cce/distance-online/ddl-proposals.html>

Note: When a course received centralized funding, the expectation is that it will be delivered with the cooperation, coordination and funding of the Centre for Continuing Education.

B. Criteria for Selections: Mandatory Requirements

1. All proposals should contain all the information requested in the application form. They should include a project plan that is detailed, logical and consistent, and should show some awareness of the development and delivery process. (Applicants are encouraged to consult with Willadell Garreck, Head of the Flexible Learning Division if they need help constructing the project plan. She can be reached at 306-585-5897 or Willadell.garreck@uregina.ca)
2. All proposals must be supported by and overseen by the Faculty's Distance and Distributed Learning Coordinator, or they will not be considered. The Coordinator must sign the application to show willingness to do this.
3. All applicants must agree that the course can be taught at least once a year for five years (with only minor revisions as needed – courses should be sustainable). Therefore, it is mandatory that the course as proposed should *not* be so specialized so that only one instructor can deliver it.

C. Criteria for Selections: Priority Items

1. Priority will be given to proposals that meet the goals of the University of Regina Strategic Plan *mâmahowkamâtowin: Our Work, Our People, Our Communities*, most especially Goal A.6, which commits the University to “take a programmatic approach to distributed teaching and learning.”
2. Priority will be given to proposals that create courses that will allow students to complete an existing distance or distributed education program at a distance.
3. Priority will be given to proposals that will meet or are likely to create strong student demand:
 - A course that supports the distributed and distance learning needs of the Nursing program
 - A key introductory course for a program or degree
 - A key mandatory course in a major
 - A course that typically has higher enrolments. Instructors *must* be willing to accept at least 30 students per course, and preference will be given to even higher enrolment limits. In general, enrolment caps will be set in consultation between the faculty and the Flexible Learning Division.

In all of the above situations, a detailed and evidence-based case will be made with the aid of the Flexible Learning Division.

Note: the Committee is willing to consider *pilot projects*, even if they would serve a smaller set of students, if the project will allow the University to test key methods of delivery.

4. Priority will be given to courses that meet the *accessibility* needs of a key set of University of Regina students. Examples might include courses that allow students outside Regina access to a course they otherwise cannot access. Alternatively, it might include increasing flexibility of options for students in Regina.

5. Priority will be given to courses that are cost-effective for the University – courses that are less expensive per student taught. Factors to be considered include:

- How expensive is the planned *development* of the course? How expensive is the planned *delivery* of the course?
- Is there an option to scale back the development or delivery costs and still maintain quality?
- Relevant costs would include: development time of content expert, development time of instructional designer, development time of graphic designer, copyright costs, server costs, specialized software or hardware needs.
- Proposals that leverage URCourses will be given preference.

Note: Factors other than cost and enrolments will be considered in decisions by the Committee, and higher-cost or lower-enrolment courses may be developed and delivered in specific circumstances. Other factors under consideration would include the other criteria listed in sections B, C, and D. In addition, Faculties can offset costs by their own direct funds, or by earmarking some of their revenue-shared funding.

D. Criteria for Selections: Desirable Items

1. Delivery in an online, televised, video-conferenced or blended mode is pedagogically *beneficial* or natural.

2. Costs to the student are not excessive. Do students need special software or hardware? Will there be too big a draw on their time?

3. Course modules should be re-usable elsewhere, in another online, televised or blended course or as supplements to a face-to-face course.

4. If the applicant brings some of *their own funding* to the application, either for development or for delivery (e.g. promise of Faculty support for a low-enrolment course), this will reflect positively on the application. In this manner, Faculties can support low-enrolment courses that meet key Faculty needs.

E. Revisions and Subsequent Applications

1. If the applicant is asking for *revision* of an existing course, then the history of course development and delivery is relevant – how long did it take to create the course before (was it late?), was it delivered on budget, how often has it been delivered (exact number of times), how many students, how necessary is the revision, how extensive (expensive), etc.
2. Similarly, if this is a *second or subsequent application*, how successful the applicant has been in the development and delivery of the previous courses should be relevant (see previous note).

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