



## Standard Administrative Policy and Procedure

**Subject:** Academic Programs Discontinuance, Reorganization, Consolidation, and/or Reduction per UW Regulation 2-13

**Number:**

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### I. PURPOSE

To outline processes for degree program and/or unit discontinuance following academic program discontinuance, reorganization, consolidation, and/or reduction, including transitioning academic personnel when needed. For a given situation multiple processes from this SAP may be applied.

### II. DEFINITIONS

**Academic Personnel:** For purposes of this SAP, Academic Personnel includes non-tenure track academic personnel, academic personnel on a fixed term contract (including extended term academic professionals), tenure track faculty, and tenured faculty as defined in UW Regulation 2-1.

**Academic Program:** Degree program, department or division of instruction, school or college, interdisciplinary program or unit, or other academic program unit. Academic Program does not include academic courses.

**Academic Unit:** A department, school, college, division, institute, center, or any other academic program unit, not including degree programs. For purposes of this SAP, unit refers to an academic department. If there is no academic department, then unit refers to the next smallest academic grouping, such as School or College.

**Consolidation:** A decision that involves two or more Academic Programs joining to form a new Academic Program.

**Discontinue or Discontinuance:** A decision that an Academic Program will no longer be offered by the University, requiring that the University will no longer offer any degree encompassing similar academic requirements, regardless of name for the foreseeable future. The reorganization and/or reduction of an Academic Program does not constitute a discontinuance.

**Fixed-Term Academic Personnel:** For purposes of this SAP, Fixed-Term Academic Personnel shall mean academic personnel on a contract with a term greater than one year, including extended-term academic professionals.

**Fixed-Term Stream Position:** A non-tenure-track position eligible for or currently with 3- or 5- year fixed-term rolling contract or an extended-term (6-year fixed term).

**Program Discontinuation:** To permanently close a program and discontinue program activities.

**Reduction:** A decision that involves downsizing a current Academic Program.

**Reorganization:** A decision that involves a change in the existing entity in which an Academic Program should be delivered in whole or substantial part by a different department, division of instruction, school, college, interdisciplinary program or unit, or other academic program unit. If any academic unit at the University offers a degree encompassing similar academic requirements, the decision shall be considered a reorganization and not a discontinuance.

**Stopped Out Student:** A previously enrolled degree-seeking student who suspended enrollment for one or more fall and/or spring terms and who subsequently seeks to re-enroll.

**Teach-Out Plan:** A written plan developed by the academic unit and approved by the Provost that provides for the equitable treatment of students when their academic program has been discontinued.

**Tenure-Stream Position:** A position that is either eligible for or currently holds tenure.

### III. DEGREE PROGRAM DISCONTINUANCE

When a degree and/or certificate program is recommended for discontinuance by the President and approved by the Board of Trustees per UW Regulation 2-13, a plan for accommodating students currently in the program will be developed by the responsible academic unit. The plan should include a degree program teach-out, admission suspension, and notification processes.

#### A. TEACH-OUT PROCESSES

The teach-out plan shall be transparent to students, showing how students will be supported through to completion of their degree. Assurance that there is a plan in place to meet the commitment made to students who are in the program, or who are making decisions to enter the University based on the availability of the program, or students who were at one time in the program and have stopped-out is necessary.

The plan shall address how the program will be made available to students for a sufficient time to allow students in the pipeline to complete or to identify an alternative.

Enough detail should be provided in the teach-out plan to assure those reviewing the proposal that a plan to support students is in place, although the exact details

may evolve as implementation proceeds. The plan should consider the needs of currently enrolled, prospective, and stopped-out students. A key feature of the teach-out plan is that it should convey how program quality will be maintained and ensured through the teach-out period for enrolled, prospective and stopped-out students.

At minimum, the teach-out plan should include:

A list of the specific courses that must be taught, and the sequence in which the courses must be delivered. A justification must be provided for the inclusion of elective courses.

- A draft schedule, indicating the number of semesters required for the teach out.
- The number of students currently in the pipeline and credit hours needed to be completed, and a timeline/matrix for completion.
- A completed preliminary teach-out faculty roster form that addresses instructional needs and faculty expertise.
- Identification of possible alternative programs at the University of Wyoming students are likely to consider or may be advised into should they not make adequate progress toward completion of degree during the teach-out period.
- A list of institutions with similar curricula that students may opt to take courses from in order to complete their program.
- The name of a primary contact for Admissions to consult with when advising stopped-out students.
- The name of a primary contact for student services, including advising support for enrolled students.

### **Progress Toward Degree and Support During the Teach Out**

In the process of discontinuing a degree program, every reasonable effort will be made to allow students to complete their degrees. Program or campus transfers will be made if mutually acceptable to the student and the receiving department. Advising assistance with respect to their academic program options, as well as mental health and financial aid counseling, will be available for affected students.

The department, division, or school chairperson, in consultation with advisors and teaching faculty, shall ensure that an academic plan is developed for students that enables them to complete the curricular program requirements within the teach-out period. The teach-out period will vary by program and must be determined by the academic unit and college with approval of the Provost. Minimum class size requirements, as per UW Regulation 2-100, may be generally waived for degree specific courses in teach-out plans.

Students should expect to take a sufficient number of courses each semester to enable them to complete all requirements within the teach-out period. As the

program winds down, planning must be in place for alternative program requirements to current requirements, if needed. Students who do not make adequate progress on their academic plan for the teach-out may be advised into another major. If a course required for the degree is not offered in the teach-out period, students may make arrangements, with the department's consent, to take the course at another institution and transfer the credit, or to arrange with the department to complete the requirements in some other academically appropriate fashion. Students are required to have ongoing contact with their academic advisors and mentors during the teach-out period to ensure that their academic plans are current and consistent with the projected course offerings.

1. **Currently enrolled students.** Students with a declared major/minor in the program must be supported with courses, advising, and other services to complete the program. The faculty should plan to continue teaching required courses or make reasonable exceptions and course substitutions to those requirements to facilitate student completion of the requirements. In some cases, the faculty may need to adjust program requirements to maintain quality throughout the teach-out period. Such a change in curricular requirements may require approval by the school/college curriculum committee. A change in the timing of course delivery may also be necessary.
2. **Prospective students.** In accordance with requirements from the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), admission of new students to a discontinued program will cease. An exception may be made, on a case by case basis, for transfer students who could join the currently enrolled student cohort without lengthening the teach-out. Students who have formally signaled an interest in the program by selecting the program on the application for admission (this includes undergraduate new freshman, transfer students who could not join the current cohort as defined above, or graduate students) or have otherwise been in a formal advising flow preceding declaration of the program will be informed that their program of interest is not available and what other program options are available. Sufficient advance timing must be given for undergraduate programs to assure that prospective (accepted but not yet enrolled) and current students are not making their college choice decisions based on a program that may become unavailable.
3. **Stopped-out undergraduate students.** Stopped-out undergraduate students generally will not be re-admitted to an academic program that has been suspended or discontinued. However, students may petition and be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The teach-out plan must describe how stopped-out undergraduate students will be supported to find an appropriate new academic program. Those planning to suspend or discontinue an undergraduate program should consult with the Director of the Advising, Career, and Exploratory Studies Center (ACES) to assist in planning advising considerations.

4. **Stopped-out graduate students.** Graduate students in an academic program that has been suspended/eliminated, as indicated above, must be notified if contact information for the student is available, and given one semester to reapply and reenroll in their academic program. Those reapplying will be given the opportunity to complete their degree within two academic years of readmission.

## **B. SUSPENSION OF ADMISSIONS**

The Provost may suspend admissions to academic programs that have been recommended for discontinuance pending completion of the process outlined in Section III of UW Regulation 2-13.

## **C. REVIEW AND NOTIFICATION**

The University will notify the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) and provide provisional plans for teaching out academic programs that are being discontinued. Notifications will also be provided to licensing boards, specialized accreditors and the U.S. Department of Education. Also, Wyoming Community College partners will be notified so their students are aware of the program discontinuance.

## **IV. DEGREE PROGRAM CONSOLIDATION**

For degree program consolidation, resulting in significant degree changes, Academic Affairs' "New Degree and Certificate Proposal Process Checklist" procedures for establishing a new degree program will be followed. For the original degrees, procedures for program teach-out, admission suspension, and notification processes described in III.A. – III.C. above will be followed.

For degree program consolidation resulting in minor degree changes, Academic Affairs' "Existing College, Department, Degree Program, Certificate Program Change Request Title Change, Degree Designation, Content Change, or CIP Change" checklist will be followed.

## **V. ACADEMIC UNIT DISCONTINUANCE**

The Provost shall establish an internal process and transition plan for academic personnel whose positions are discontinued and for those whose jobs are affected by an academic unit discontinuance. This process should include a review committee comprised of deans, department heads, and faculty in the terminated unit/college and in the new unit/college, if applicable. Consultation with relevant academic units will be necessary to avoid any accreditation issues or unintended consequences.

The following considerations shall be addressed in the transition plan:

- The opportunity for terminated faculty to indicate interest in and provide documentation of relevant discipline expertise for consideration in open and funded positions in existing academic programs, reorganized or consolidated academic programs, or new academic programs.
- Protocol/criteria for determining discipline-specific expertise required for new positions.
- Steps consistent with sections IV.C and V.C of UW Regulation 2-13 for maintaining rank and seniority when multiple equally qualified candidates are identified.
- Recommended strategies for supporting academic units, schools, and colleges that have programs discontinued
- Process for transferring faculty positions to other academic programs and determining the role of these faculty members in a teach out.
- Process for submitting recommendations to the Provost and President for a final decision.

#### **A. Tenure, Promotion, and Fixed-Term Implications**

If the discontinuance of an academic unit results in the discontinuance of an academic program, it will not impact the tenure, promotion and fixed-term rolling contract review process. Faculty who are terminated during the academic year in which a decision regarding tenure, promotion, or a fixed-term rolling contract is made will receive tenure or promotion if recommended and approved by the Board of Trustees.

Academic units that receive transferred faculty members due to program discontinuance shall incorporate and apply the expectations for tenure, promotion, and fixed-term rolling contract from the original academic unit as the faculty members transition to the new academic unit. Academic units should establish a reasonable timeframe for full integration of new discipline-specific expectations into their unit and college guidance documents.

#### **B. Resignation and Retirement**

In the event that a faculty position is eliminated due to a discontinuance, the faculty member may choose to resign or to take retirement. **Academic Appointments.** In accordance with UW Regulation 2-13, when program discontinuance occurs, the university will make reasonable efforts to transfer faculty to other open and funded positions for which they are qualified and have discipline-specific expertise.

#### **C. Teach-Out Service**

A good faith effort will be made to provide faculty with the relevant expertise and that meet instructional needs the opportunity to receive an academic appointment as part of the teach-out plan for accommodating students currently enrolled in the

terminated program. This opportunity will ensure continuance of employment for the full hiring cycle.

At the discretion of the university, faculty who have expertise associated with core courses needed for program completion may be granted a limited extension, not to exceed three academic semesters, in their current tenure-stream or fixed-term stream appointment at their current salary. This extension would allow for the continuation of scholarship but it may also require a redistribution of teaching load. If there are instructional needs in the faculty member's area of expertise to carry out the teach-out program beyond three academic semesters, the faculty member may be retained in a non-tenure-track position at the same rank (e.g., Associate Professor, Tenured to Associate Instructional Professor).

For special cases not specifically covered here, such as but not limited to faculty in a joint appointment, the Provost is responsible for developing a teach-out process

In the event that faculty members find new positions at other institutions, early resignations will be accepted. Academic units shall have contingency plans for meeting instructional needs should a faculty member who was part of a teach-out plan tender an early resignation.

## **VI. ACADEMIC REORGANIZATION**

The initiation of an academic unit reorganization may be proposed by the Provost, the Dean, or the academic units themselves. Prior to initiating a reorganization, consultations should be held with relevant faculty, staff, and other appropriate stakeholders to gather input and assess the potential impact of the reorganization.

If the reorganization is approved by the President and by the Board of Trustees per UW Regulation 2-13, the following process will be implemented:

### **A. Interim Unit Head and Governing Committee**

The Provost in consultation with the responsible Dean(s) may identify an interim unit head and length of term to facilitate the reorganization effort. The interim unit head should establish a department governing or executive committee consisting of representatives of all disciplines in the new unit.

### **B. Reorganization Process**

- 1.** A reorganization committee shall be appointed by the Dean in consultation with the Provost, if the reorganization is within a college, or by the Provost if the reorganization is across colleges. The committee shall be comprised of faculty, staff, and students, as well as any other members appropriate to the discussions.

2. The committee shall develop a detailed reorganization plan, in consultation with the governing/executive committee outlined above. The committee shall engage in open and inclusive discussions with affected parties; assess the impact on degree programs and faculty, staff, and students; evaluate the implications of financial and resource allocation as they relate to reorganization; and recommend a timeline for implementation. If the reorganization is across Colleges, the Dean(s) of the impacted units will evaluate the reorganization committee's recommendations, including budget implications, and provide their recommendation to the Provost. If the reorganization is within a College, the Dean of the College will provide their recommendations, including budget implications, to the Provost.
3. The committee will develop department bylaws to describe promotion and tenure, annual evaluations, standards for undergraduate and graduate degrees, and other departmental processes.
4. If staff are also impacted by a reorganization, the Departmental Reorganization process overseen by UW Human Resources Classification and Compensation unit should be followed.
5. Should the process of reorganization lead to degree program changes, processes for curricular change outlined by the Office of the Registrar shall be followed.

If the reorganization plan is approved by the Provost, the governing/executive committee of the new unit, once approved by the faculty of the new unit, will provide the new unit bylaws to their Dean's Office.

Tenured and tenure-track faculty within the newly reorganized unit may choose to be reviewed for tenure or promotion under the criteria and standards of the original home unit at the time they were first appointed or under the criteria and standards of the new unit. If faculty choose the new criteria and standards, the criteria will become effective immediately for their next review. For probationary tenure-track faculty choosing the existing criteria and standards of their old unit, these will be in effect for the next two review cycles, after which they will come under the new criteria and standards. For tenured faculty choosing existing standards and criteria, these will be in effect for the next review cycle after which they will come under the new criteria and standards.

Tenured and tenure-track faculty in the newly reorganized unit may choose to pursue residence in a different unit based on the mutual fit of scholarly, scientific, or artistic interests. Reassignment to a different unit is not guaranteed. The faculty, chair/head, and Dean of the potentially receiving unit must determine if the faculty member meets the standards for academic qualifications within their unit. The potential receiving unit should follow the established process of their college for reassignments. If the college does not have an established process, they should establish one.



## VII. ACADEMIC UNIT CONSOLIDATION

A consolidation is a decision that involves two or more academic units joining to form a new academic unit. In some cases, consolidations are intended to promote cross-disciplinary scholarly inquiry, in other cases they are to facilitate efficiency, and in still others to achieve some combination of these goals. The new unit can offer opportunities for cooperation across disciplines and among faculty members.

If the consolidation is approved by the President and by the Board of Trustees per UW Regulation 2-13, the Provost in consultation with the responsible Dean shall identify an interim department head and length of term to facilitate the consolidation effort. The interim department head should establish a department governing or executive committee consisting of representatives of both (or all) disciplines in the new unit. The committee will develop department bylaws to describe promotion and tenure, annual evaluations, standards for undergraduate and graduate degrees, and other departmental processes.

Should the process of consolidating individual departments under a single administrative head lead to a recommended degree program discontinuance or discontinuation of an academic appointment, the processes outlined in UW Regulation 2-13 will be followed.

A permanent department head will be identified and hired following established procedures.

## VIII. ACADEMIC UNIT REDUCTION

Reduction of an academic unit involves the downsizing of a current academic unit in response to changing research or scholarly interests, a decline in student demand over time, insufficient number of faculty to carry out the academic mission, deficiencies that come to light as the result of an programmatic review, or programmatic changes over time that call for unit reduction. The unit reduction will be accompanied by a corresponding reduction in unit budget.

When an academic unit is recommended for reduction by the President and approved by the Board of Trustees per UW Regulation 2-13, a plan for continuing unit operations with a reduced budget will be prepared by the unit head. Should the plan include recommended discontinuance of a degree program or an academic appointment, the process outlined in UW Regulation 2-13 will be followed.

**Responsible Division/Unit:** Division of Academic Affairs

**Source:** UW Regulation 2-13

**Links:** <http://www.uwyo.edu/regs-policies>

**Associated Regulations, Policies, and Forms:** UW Regulation 2-13

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