Academic Review Committee

Academic and Curricular Guidelines Manual 2023-2024

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I. Introduction

The Academic Review Committee (ARC) is the standing committee of the Faculty Assembly charged with reviewing new course proposals, course changes, new program proposals and program revisions. ARC includes as voting members only faculty, one representative from each School and one representative from the Library. Therefore, it represents "the voice" of faculty in the shared governance process. Other members of the committee include one representative from the following departments: Provost Office (usually the Vice Provost), Registrar's Office and Center for the Student Success.

It must be noted though that ARC is only one step of the curriculum review process, which otherwise include many stakeholders, such as Faculty Assembly Executive Committee, Provost Office, Board of Trustee, etc.

The purpose of this manual is to serve as a guide in developing new courses and revising existing ones, as well as in developing new program proposals (graduate, major, minor, certificates) and revising existing ones. This manual is the work of current faculty members (AY: 2023 – 2024) and builds on the previous versions of the manual and the work of many others who have served in the past. On the college webpage, it is posted a history of the manual and acknowledged some of our colleagues who have served and contributed to this document in the past.

This update of the ARC manual reflects, in the first place, the implementation by the college of a new academic operation platform, the *CourseDog platform*. Second, in regards to new program proposals and revisions of programs, Ramapo College's curriculum review process must align with the standards, expectations and levels of scrutiny that the *New Jersey Presidents' Council (NJPC)*, through its *Academic Issues Committee (AIC)*, will demand. While this has always been implied, it is now explicit. This approach will eliminate the need to revise submissions for state-level review after Ramapo's internal process.

The current ARC members who have contributed and endorsed this manual include:
Catalin Martin (TAS - Chair)
Carol Bowman (SSHS)
Mark Skrowronski (ASB)
Samantha Wittenberg (LIB)
Pinar Kayaalp (HGS)
Meredith Davis (CA)
Susan Hangen (Vice Provost)
Jeneen Kelly (Registrar's Office)
John Yao (Center for Student Success).

II. Course Proposal Review and Approval Process

A. Course Proposal and Revisions Narrative

All proposals for new and revised undergraduate and graduate courses, as well as all credit-bearing pre-college courses, must undergo the following review and approval procedure:

1. The instructor proposing a new or revised course assembles the following proposal package:
   - An *Academic Review Committee (ARC) Course Request Form*, which will be filled electronically in the CourseDog system. ARC will consider the form complete after all required parties have signed it electronically.
   - A course syllabus which conforms to the academic and curricular guidelines of the College. When preparing the syllabus, make sure to include all required items described in the *Syllabus-Checklist* document and to follow the *Syllabus-Template* document, both of them available on ARC webpage: https://www.ramapo.edu/fa/arc/.
   - The syllabus should represent the course as you intend it to be taught. *If you are submitting a Course Revision, whenever possible, please include both current and revised syllabi, highlighting the changes in the revised syllabus.* This will help ARC committee and the provost to better understand the level and implication of the proposed changes. The Registrar's Office will also be able to easily identify what changes need to be made in the catalog. *ARC will only review the revised version of the course, while the old syllabus will be used for reference.* If for any reason, the old syllabus is no longer available (the course has not been taught in recent years, or the instructor is no longer at the institution, etc.), please mention it. ARC will still review the new syllabus.
   - Rationale and other supporting documentation. Examples include: a short document explaining the rationale and the need for creating a new course or changing an existing one, or a list of specific content or features that qualifies the course for a General Education (GenEd) category, Writing Intensive (WI), etc[1].

The following table outlines the approvals that are required; note that additional approvals may be necessary (e.g. school curriculum committee, GECCo, WAC / Study Abroad Chairs, Graduate Council, etc.), and again, that the approval signatures will be embedded in the CourseDog platform, therefore no additional pdf ARC form signed by all parties is required.

Faculty who intends to make changes to a course, should consult with the convener and the School ARC representative, in order to determine if certain changes are deemed minor or significant.

[1]The GenEd curriculum is overseen by the General Education Curriculum Committee (**GECCo**) The WI curriculum is overseen by the Writing Across Curriculum Committee (**WAC**)

Request	Convener(s)	WAC	Dean(s)	GECCo	ARC	Provost
New Course	**X**	**X***	**X**	**X****	**X**	**X**
*If new course requires WI designation						
** If course is part of new Gen-ED						
Course Revisions: see below for type of revision						
Course Level	**X**		**X**		**X**	**X**
Significant title change	**X**		**X**		**X**	**X**
Minor title change (no substantial content change)	**X**		**X**		**X**	**X**
Significant content change*	**X**		**X**		**X**	**X**
Course discipline (SUBJ code)	**X**		**X**		**X**	**X**
Course description - minor change	**X**		**X**		**X**	
Course prereq's	**X**		**X**			
WI change	**X**	**X**	**X**		**X**	**X**
Gen Ed category change	**X**		**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**
Course number (same level)	**X**		**X**			

*__A *significant content change* represents a change that affects the curriculum requirements of a program.__ Examples of ***changes that are considered minor (or outside ARC's purview) and do not require ARC review*** include:

- *Changing the informational section of the course*: office hours, attendance policy, grading scale, reading requirements, or instructor name.
- *Changes to the topics covered in a course or to the Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)* do not require ARC review, as long as the course does not change its status (elective, required, GenEd, WI), level, or subject code.
- *Changing the course capacity*. See Policy 300-Z: Minimum and Maximum Course Enrollment
- *Changing the course offering method (in person, online, hybrid, etc*.), although it may have curricular implications, it is outside ARC's purview and should be resolved at the administrative level. This is rather a policy change.

As a general rule, all changes to the content of a course associated with the revisions that require ARC approval in the table above are considered as major changes and they require ARC approval. Examples of content changes that are considered major include:

- *Changes to the content associated with changing the name of the course.*

- *Changes to the content associated with changes from required to elective, or vice versa.*
- *Changes to the content associated with changing the number of credits of a course.*
- *Changes to the content associated with changing the level of the course.*
- *Change of course description.*
- *Changes to the content associated with changing its designation, such as requesting GenEd or WI classification***.**
- *Changes involving removing the lab from a lecture-lab course.* If a new course ID is generated, the ARC representative from Registrar's Office and the ARC chair will contact the submitter and/or the Convener.
- *Requesting a new course subject or to cross-list a course – See Section B below.*

2. The approval signatures required for a new course proposal or course revisions are:

Undergraduate Course:

1. Convener (if there is a convening group)
2. Chair of the School Curriculum Committee (for Schools that have such a committee)
3. Chair of Study Abroad Committee (for Study Abroad Courses)
4. Director of Writing Across the Curriculum (for WI courses)
5. Chair of GECCo (for GenEd courses)
6. The Dean of the School in which the course is housed; a second Dean will sign if a course is cross listed.

Graduate Course:

1. Faculty member's primary undergraduate program Convener
2. Director of the Graduate Program
3. Chair of the School Curriculum Committee (for Schools that have such a committee).
4. Dean of the School offering the program

1. The School ARC representative works with the submitter and the ARC chair to make sure that all required items are included and the package is complete, before it will be placed on the agenda for review. Once considered complete, the course proposal will be listed chronologically in the ARC log-spreadsheet. Course proposals will be reviewed by ARC in the order they are listed in the spreadsheet.

2. The creation of a new course or modification of an existing one can sometimes have implications beyond a specific program or convening group. Therefore, it is important that faculty work in collaboration and communicates openly the changes within the convening group. Furthermore, the conveners and Deans should discuss implications on other programs before signing the online form. ARC may ask for confirmation of prior communication and consultations when such potential issues with the new course or revisions are identified.

NOTE: ARC approval of a course indicates that it conforms to the academic and curricular guidelines of Ramapo College. ARC will send the course packet to the Provost for final approval. Scheduling and staffing issues remain the purview of the Academic

Administration.

B. Course Subject Codes and Cross-Listing of Courses
The Subject Code identifies the content area of the course; there are disciplinary and interdisciplinary subject codes. Some interdisciplinary courses may find it beneficial to cross-list courses - that is, to have two subject codes for a single course (but the course *level* and *title* must be identical); both subject codes should reflect the course content. For a cross-listed course, the convening groups responsible for each subject code must both approve the cross-listing of the course. Both convening groups must be consulted if there are modifications to the course. For additional information please refer to the Cross Listing Policy and Procedures on the ARC website ('Supporting Documents' page).

C. General Education Courses must be prepared according to the GECCo manual, found at:

https://www.ramapo.edu/fa/gecco/

D. Writing Intensive Courses must be prepared according to the WAC guidelines, found at:

https://www.ramapo.edu/fa/wac/

E. Deadline: ***ARC will accept new course proposals and course revisions on a rolling basis, but only when the course package is complete***. It must be understood that the later in the academic year the proposal is submitted, the less likely it is for the course to be approved and processed by the registrar office on time for the next academic year. *ARC will make all efforts to ensure that courses submitted in the fall prior to October 15 will be reviewed by the end of the fall semester, and courses submitted in the spring prior to February 15, to be reviewed by the end of the spring semester.*

III. New Program Proposal: Review and Approval Process

As a higher education institution in the state of NJ, Ramapo College falls under the purview of the New Jersey Presidents' Council (NJPC), which *"has the responsibility to review and make recommendations concerning proposals for new academic degree programs, institutional licensure, and university status. To effectuate this responsibility, the NJPC created* ***the Academic Issues Committee (AIC)****."*

We recommend that every individual of the college, who intends to propose a new program (degree program, certificate, etc.) or to make changes to an existing one, to consult closely the manual of the AIC:
https://www.njpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/AIC-Manual-02.21.2024-FINAL.pdf

Here are the types of new programs that a college may develop and the following table summarizes them, along with the bodies and individuals who must approve them:

Request	Convening group	Unit Council	Dean	Graduate Council	ARC	Faculty Assembly	Provost	BoT	AIC
New undergraduate major	**D**	**D**	**D**		**D**	**D**	**D**	**D**	**D**

New undergraduate minor	**D**	**D**	**D**		**D**	**D**	**D**	**D**	**I**
New undergraduate concentration	**D**	**D**	**D**		**D**	**D**	**D**	**D**	**I**
New graduate concentration	**D**	**D**	**D**	**D**	**D**	**D**	**D**	**D**	**I**
New graduate degree program	**D**	**D**	**D**	**D**	**D**	**D**	**D**	**D**	**D**
New credit-bearing certificate*	**D**	**D**	**D**	**(D)**[1]	**D**	**D**	**D**	**D**	**I**
New non-credit-bearing certificate*	**I**	**I**	**I**	**I**	**I**	**I**	**D**	**D**	**I**

D = decision item; I = information item

This chapter addresses the process of creating new degree programs (Section II. A of the AIC Manual), and is intended to serve as a guide in the process of preparing and submitting new program proposals, with the following goals:

- Ensure proper communication between all stakeholders across the college (convening groups, units, ARC, FAEC, Provost Office and Registrar), in order to correctly assess the need and justification for the new program, its alignment with the college mission, student impact, cost and resources, as well as potential impact on other existing programs.
- Allow those proposing a new program to determine early on, before significant efforts are devoted to its development, if at least the idea of the new program has sufficient support at all levels and is worth pursuing, or if there are major potential issues in certain areas.
- For program proposals considered promising and worth pursuing, ensure that at the end of the internal review process, before being submitted for external approval, the program proposal package is as much as possible finalized, nearly ready for the external evaluation.

Faculty/Conveners/Deans and all other parties involved must understand that the end goal for a new program proposal is to get approved at the state level. Therefore, the proposal package must meet two major requirements:

1. To be prepared according to requirements from Section II. A of Academic Issues Committee (AIC) Manual.
2. Satisfactorily address the four standards (listed below) by which AIC will review it at the state level:

i) Sufficient academic quality
ii) Sufficient evidence of labor market demand for the program
iii) Duplication with comparable programs of study in the State
iv) Whether the proposed new program will require significant additional State resources

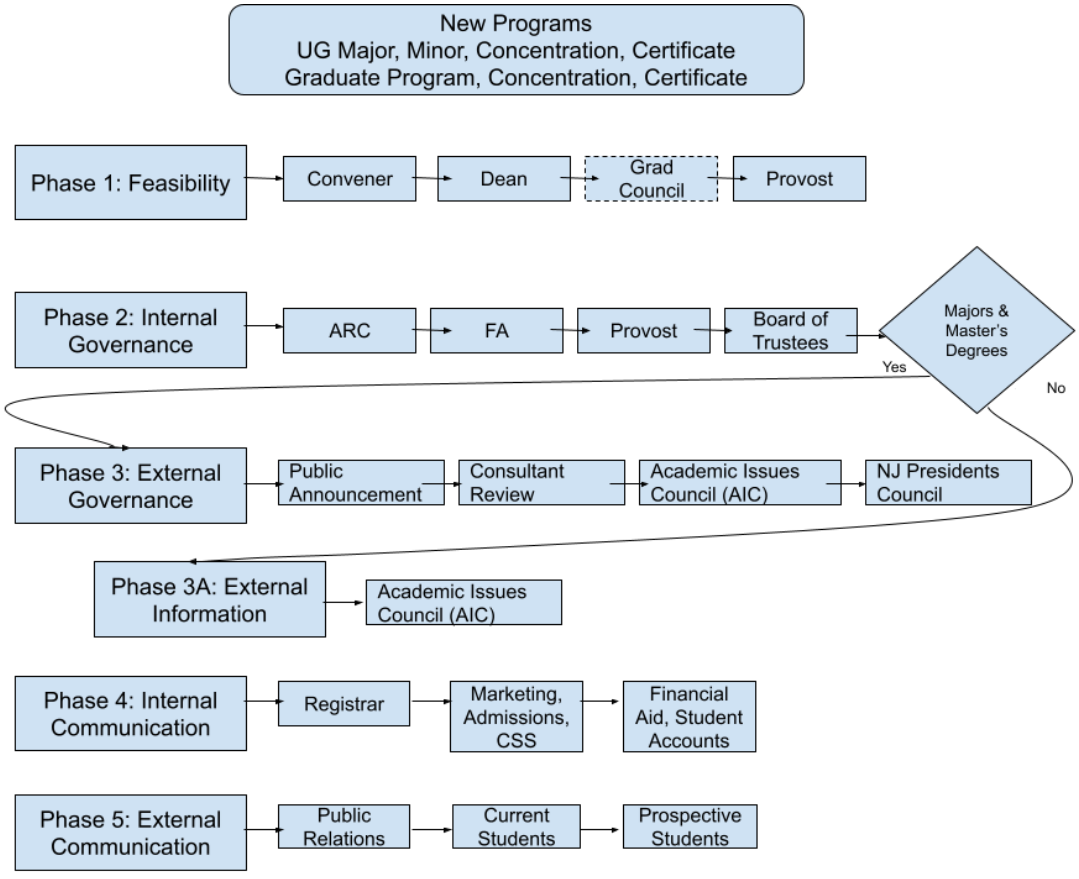
* Certificates may be credit-bearing packages of existing courses, non-credit-bearing packages of learning experiences, or packages combining credit-bearing courses and non-credit-bearing learning experiences. For definitions of certificate programs, and procedures to create them, see https://www.ramapo.edu/provost/policy/certificate-programs/)

[1] Graduate Council approval required only for graduate-level certificate programs

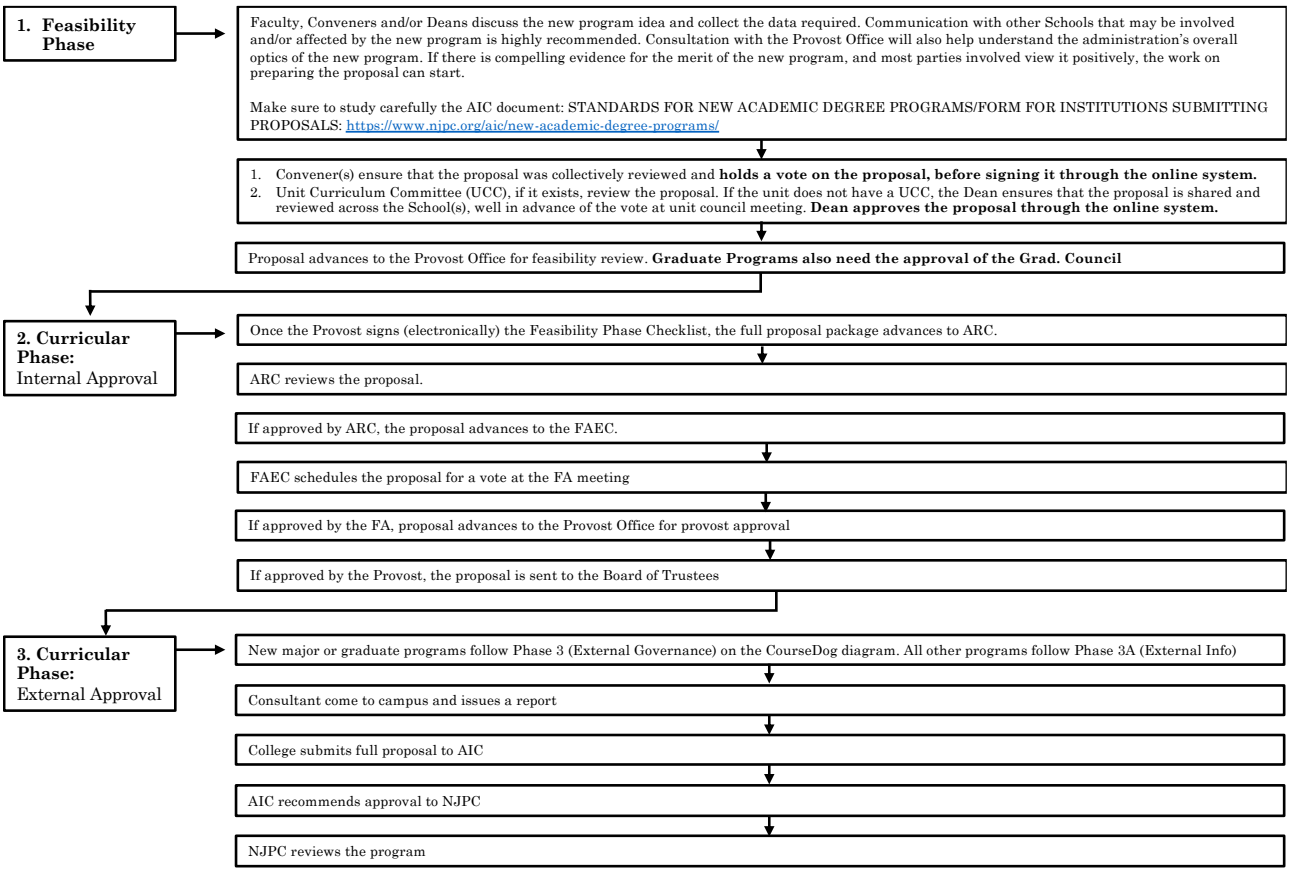
Those working on new degree program proposals must follow closely (in addition to the AIC Manual) the AIC document: *STANDARDS FOR NEW ACADEMIC DEGREE PROGRAMS/FORM FOR INSTITUTIONS SUBMITTING PROPOSALS*, found at: https://www.njpc.org/aic/new-academic-degree-programs/.

A. The Review Process

Proposals for a new academic program— undergraduate major, undergraduate minor, concentration (undergraduate and graduate), graduate degree program, and certificate (credit- and non-credit bearing)—move through several phases in the approval and implementation process. The online platform CourseDog will guide you through the steps, while the chart below shows the major phases of the process, along with the flow of information on the online platform.



A more detailed description of the important steps and further guidance with advancing proposals through the review process are provided in the *ARC Chart* below:



Feasibility Phase

1. Develop a plan for your proposal:

- The originators of the new program educate themselves about the requirements, the process and the timeline for developing a new program. This should be the first step in assessing the feasibility of the new program and should help planning the development of the proposal. A good start should be the current ARC checklist.
- Gather early on the data required for the feasibility checklist (see Section B).

2. Share the proposal information: Except for certificates provided by through a third-party vendor and with no school affiliation, the originator shares the proposal with the relevant convening group, unit curriculum committee, unit council, and dean for feedback.

- Follow closely Steps 1 and 2 of the Feasibility Phase of the ARC flow chart above.
- Deans and Conveners, make sure to consult all stakeholders involved, following closely the Provost guidelines for curriculum review.

3. Submit the program for feasibility review: The components of the feasibility checklist in Section B below are now embedded into the online platform (CourseDog). Therefore, the checklist form in Section B should only serve as a guiding tool, no hardcopy form with signature(s) is necessary.

a. All new programs: the Provost makes the final determination of feasibility. The proposal will only move to the next step if the provost approves it.
b. A certificate program provided by a third-party vendor requires no further approval: the Provost will notify the Board of Trustees of this program.

4. Prepare the full proposal package: It must be understood that once the provost signs the feasibility checklist online, the proposal directly advances to ARC for review. **At this stage, ARC expects a full proposal package, following Section C of this Chapter. It is imperative that the proposal package is complete, including all the documentation and data required for external evaluation, at the state level. It is the responsibility of Deans to vet the proposal for its completeness, and to ask conveners and faculty for all missing items before the proposal moves to the Curricular Phase.**

Curricular Phase

Internal Approval

1. Consult with the Vice Provost: Once the Provost approves the program for feasibility, the originator reviews the steps in this phase with the Vice Provost, who constructs a tentative timeline. Understanding the timeline is crucial. Some internal bodies (e.g., Faculty Assembly) and external bodies (e.g., NJPC) have predetermined meeting schedules, and the College Catalog must meet a publication deadline.

2. ARC reviews the proposal and communicates closely with all parties involved (Dean, Provost, FAEC) if there potential issues or concerns.

3. FAEC schedules the proposal for a vote in the FA meetings. After the FA vote, if approved, the proposal is advanced to the Provost Office.

4. The Provost advances the proposal to the Board of Trustee.

External Approval

Once the Board of Trustees approves the program, the Vice Provost notifies the Academic Issues Committee (AIC) of the New Jersey President's Council (NJPC) of a new certificate program (other than one offered through a third-party vendor), a new minor, or a new concentration (undergraduate and graduate) as an information item only.

In the case of a new undergraduate major or a new graduate degree program, the Vice Provost follows these steps, as outlined in the AIC Manual: https://www.njpc.org/aic/new-academic-degree-programs/

- The Vice Provost submits the proposal to the New Jersey President's Council for a thirty-day comment period.
- Institution completes the New Academic Degree Program Standards Form.

- The Vice Provost works with the Dean to identify a consultant and coordinates the consultant's schedule with appropriate individuals on campus. The AIC Manual delineates requirements for the consultant.
- The consultant visits campus and issues a report. The AIC Manual indicates the issues that the consultant must address.
- The Vice Provost works with the Dean and/or convener/program director to prepare a response to the consultant's report.
- The Vice Provost submits the proposal, the consultant's report, and the College's response (along with other required forms and materials) to the AIC of the NJPC.
- AIC recommends approval to NJPC, which makes the final determination.

The Vice Provost notifies the Provost, the Dean, the Registrar, the Vice President of Enrollment Management, and the Director of Institutional Research of the outcome.

Accreditation

The process outlined above does not take into consideration two accreditation issues:

- A major or a graduate program seeking programmatic accreditation must follow a separate process, as dictated by the accrediting body. That process, which may occur alongside the one outlined above, must be completed prior to program implementation.
- If a new program constitutes a substantive change (e.g., a new degree level or a significantly different type or character of program from that which the institution currently offers), the Provost's Office must work with Dean(s), as applicable, to submit a substantive change proposal to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education in accordance with its policy: https://www.msche.org/policies-guidelines/

B. Feasibility Phase Checklist (FPC)

Please use this checklist informatively, and at the same time, check the online feasibility section for a more up to date format and requirements.

☐ Program proposal
- ☐ Program summary, objectives, and cooperative arrangements (if any)
- ☐ Program's impact on the College's other programs, including the undergraduate curriculum if the proposed program is a graduate program
- ☐ Program's need
  - ☐ If the program is in the liberal arts/sciences, indicate student demand and opportunities for further education if appropriate; if the program is career-oriented/professional, indicate student demand and labor market need, provide employer surveys, and describe opportunities for employment and advanced/additional study.
  - ☐ Alignment with the Strategic Plan
  - ☐ Comparison with similar programs in the State and neighboring states

☐ Program's anticipated enrollment from launch to optimal level
☐ Additional resources needed for the first five years
☐ Program budget (graduate program only)

C. Preparing a New Degree Program Proposal

A new program proposal may be initiated at different levels of the college (convening group, unit, graduate council, provost office, etc.), by various people (faculty, conveners, deans, program directors, vice provost or provost). Regardless of its origins, the development of the new program proposal should be a highly collaborative and an openly communicated and shared process.

1. According to the *ARC Chart*, the first requirement for a proposal package is the Feasibility Phase Checklist (FPC), electronically signed by the provost.

2. Along with the signed FPC, ARC needs to receive a package containing data required in the **Section II. A 1. Steps in the Process** of the AIC Manual. Specifically, the package needs to include the following (listed exactly as in the AIC Manual):

a. Institutional Review of New Academic Degree Program Standards
Complete the Standards for New Academic Degree Programs form provided by the AIC, which can be found on the AIC website https://www.njpc.org/aic/, and address the program standards outlined in N.J.A.C. 9A:1-2.10 through 2.14: sufficient academic quality, sufficient evidence of labor market demand for the program, duplication with comparable programs of study in the State, and whether the proposed new program will require significant additional State resources. Institutions should provide as much evidence as possible to demonstrate the new academic degree program meets the four standards as outlined in N.J.A.C. 9A:1-2.10 through 2.14. Please write "N/A" for items that are not applicable.

Note: The Standards for New Academic Degree Programs is a fillable form, which will be downloaded from: https://www.njpc.org/aic/new-academic-degree-programs/

b. 1) A cover letter using the template provided by the AIC on institution letterhead.
2) A completed cover page for the new academic degree program using the fillable form provided by the AIC.
3) An approximately two-page summary of the new academic degree program, with a maximum of 1500 words, using the template provided by the AIC. The summary must address the following sections:
a) Introduction: Describe the institutional profile and context for the proposed program.
b) Sufficient academic quality: Provide the program objectives, highlighting alignment with institutional mission and strategic plan, curriculum design, and resources, including human resources, which will support the program.
c) Sufficient evidence of labor market demand for the program: Describe the evidence that supports the need for the program.
d) Duplication with comparable programs of study in the State: Explain what distinguishes the program from existing offerings.

e) Requirement of significant additional State resources, if applicable: Describe how the proposed program will ensure fiscal stewardship of State resources, demonstrate return on investment, and/or become self-sustaining.

3. A list of all *new courses* or course revisions required by the new degree program, along with their description. The request for new courses or course revisions will be submitted separately, through the online platform (CourseDog), only provide a list here, to make the ARC committee aware and ensure timely review.

D. **Deadline:** ***ARC will accept new program proposals on a rolling basis, but only when the package is complete.*** ARC will make efforts to review new program proposal timely, in the order they are received, and to work with FAEC and Office of the Provost for advancing them to the next level right after the ARC approval. However, it must be understood that new programs require several subsequent levels of approval (FA, Provost, Board of Trustee, State), all of them with their schedule and requirements, which may further delay the listing of the proposal in the catalog and its offering. *ARC will make all efforts to ensure that new program proposals submitted in the fall prior to November 1st will be reviewed by the end of the fall semester, and new program proposals submitted in the spring prior to February 15, to be reviewed by the end of the spring semester.*

IV. Program Revision: Review and Approval Process

A. Program Revision Request Process

All proposals for major revisions to existing programs (including program name changes and any change in required courses or number of credit hours) undergo the following review and approval process and procedure. The table below outlines the approvals that are required; additional approvals may also be necessary (e.g. School Curriculum Committee, Graduate Council, etc.).

Request	Convener	Dean	ARC-Info Item	ARC-approval	Provost	Faculty Assembly	BoT	AIC
Program (major, concentration, minor, certificate) name change	**X**	**X**		**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**
Change in required courses/categories - where no. of credit hours changes, or impacts another convening group	**X**	**X**		**X**	**X**			
Change in courses/categories - where no. of credit hours does not change, and no impact on another convening group	**X**	**X**	**X**		**X**			

Program Revision Steps (for Program Revisers)

1. The convener of the program assembles the following package:
    a. A *Program Revision Request Form*, which will be filled electronically in the CourseDog system. ARC will consider the form complete after all required parties have signed it electronically.
    b. Supporting materials documenting the requested changes: rationale, current

program requirements and revised proposed requirements, changes in student learning outcomes and assessment, etc.

2. The electronic approval signatures required through the online (CourseDog) platform include:
    a. Convening Group (CG)
    b. School Curriculum Committee (CC) (for Schools that have such a committee)
    c. Unit Council (UC)
    d. Dean of the program's home school
    e. Graduate Council (for graduate programs)

3. Once all required signatures are completed online (via CourseDog), the proposal automatically moves to ARC for revision. However, ARC will only place the proposal on the agenda for review after all supporting materials documenting the requested changes are uploaded. The School ARC representative works with the submitter and the ARC chair to decide what supporting material is needed. Once considered complete, the program revision proposals will be listed chronologically in the ARC log-spreadsheet and will be reviewed in the order they are listed.

B. Deadline: ***ARC will accept program revisions proposals on a rolling basis, but only when the package is complete.*** It must be understood that the later in the academic year the proposal is submitted, the less likely it is for the revisions to be approved and ready on time for the next academic year. ARC will make all efforts to ensure that program revisions submitted in the fall prior to November 1st will be reviewed by the end of the fall semester, and program revisions submitted in the spring prior to February 15, to be reviewed by the end of the spring semester.

V. ARC Decision Options

Applicable to all proposals described above (new course, course revisions, new program, program revisions), the ARC decision options will be the following:

1. **Endorse:** Everything is in order and a majority of ARC members have voted to approve the proposal.
2. **Revise:** ARC has identified concerns or significant potential issues and the proposal is sent back for revisions. The proposal may be resubmitted after revision.
3. **Reject:** The proposal does not align with mission of the college, or does not have the required capabilities or the curricular needs to operate successfully, or overlap substantially with other programs, etc. A majority of ARC members have voted to reject the proposal.