

Section: Undergraduate Student Policies

Policy Number: 720.1

Subject: Undergraduate Program Structure and Governance

Effective Date: December 23, 2020

Undergraduate Program Structure & Governance:

The following document is meant to provide clarification, guidelines, and a policy for the decision-making process within the undergraduate Psychology program at Utah State University. This is meant to replace an undergraduate committee, as the undergraduate program consists of functionally all faculty within the department between courses and mentoring, however not all faculty are needed for all decisions.

Depending on the nature of the proposal or issue, it will start at a given level and will most likely end at the same level. However more complex issues may be passed either up or down to various levels before obtaining approval (as described below).

Leadership Structure:

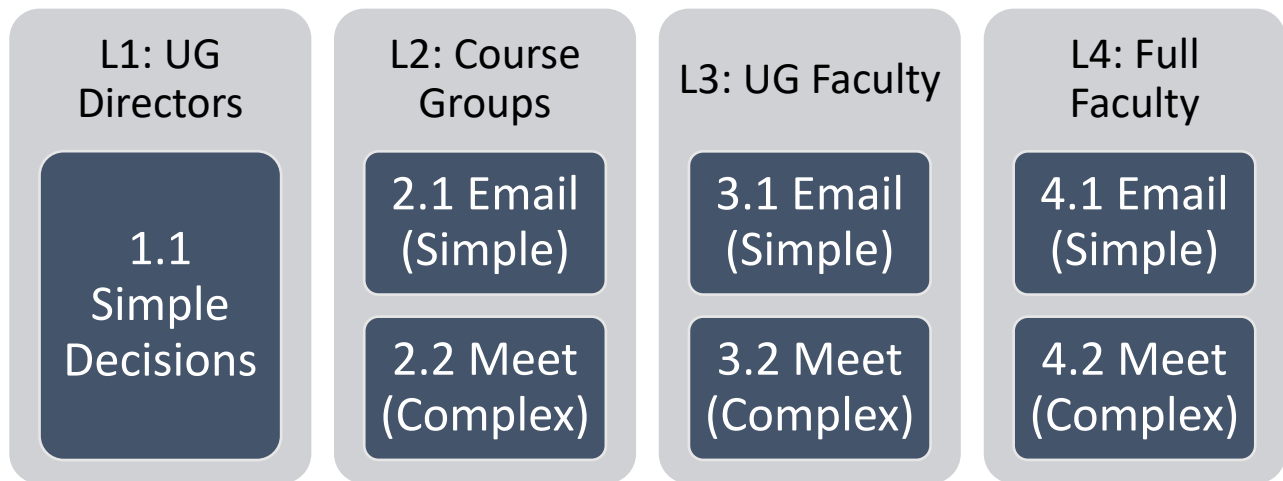
Director/Co-Directors will be individuals working primarily in the undergraduate program, and will be appointed by the Department Head. Terms will be at the discretion of the Department Head. Duties include managing assessment, curricular alignment, managing undergraduate services, communications between departments and universities, and proposing innovations and solutions to problems based on pedagogical research, current guidelines and best practices.

Undergraduate Committee Oversight Groups will vary based on the task at hand; these groups will be expected to take the proposals that are based on pedagogical research, guidelines or best practice (created by the UG Director/Co-Directors) and revise or accept based on content knowledge or program needs. For issues related to the broader undergraduate program, these groups will be made up of all individuals who work primarily in the undergraduate program (see Level 3). For issues related to individual courses or that might affect courses with prerequisites or a line of courses, or for issues related to mentoring student research, relevant faculty will be asked to participate in an as-needed basis (see Level 2).

Academic Advisors are critical players in the undergraduate program, and it is assumed that they will be active participants throughout each level in many decisions. The same is true for the department head. The general education committee and external departments may be consulted as-needed.

Structure:

Advisors & Department Head, As Needed



L1: Undergraduate Directors

Level 1 occurs when undergraduate program directors deem the decision is minimal, such that either faculty generally will not notice the change, or the change will not have an impact on faculty, courses, or resources.

L2: Course Oversight Groups

Level 2 occurs when courses or faculty are affected by proposals/decisions.

Course oversight groups consist of term and tenure-track faculty members. Course oversight groups will be determined/assigned once per year at the fall faculty retreat, generally based on faculty who instruct or prepare courses that interact with each other in the curriculum.

New courses and novel issues may have groupings generated on an as-needed basis.

L2.1: Proposals, Decisions, and Meetings Held/Decided by UG Directors

Level 2.1 occurs when UG Directors believe the issue is minor or believe that everyone will be in agreement, but the issue affects one or more courses/faculty such that it is important to provide an opportunity for discussion or revisions as needed.

A proposal will be sent out including a deadline for a response (minimum 7 days). Responses not received are considered “abstained.”

Minor revisions such as wording changes to the proposal can be modified via email if agreed upon by the faculty (silence implies abstaining from revisions). Deadlines to minor revisions should also be given.

In the event that any one member of the group would like to meet or make major revisions, this will bump up to a Level 2.2. The first member to suggest a meeting will become responsible for generating the revised proposal.

L2.2: Course Oversight Group Generates or Revises Proposal, or Otherwise Meets

Level 2.2 occurs when a proposal from Level 2.1 is not agreed upon by an oversight group

Occurs when a complex or unformed idea related to one or more courses requires either the revision of or generation of a proposal. In some circumstances, this may require multiple course oversight groups meeting together.

At the time of date/meeting planning, the course oversight group will identify who will be responsible for generating the proposal (this may be one of the UG Directors, but it may be someone more closely tied with course core).

The oversight group will meet to discuss the ideas and/or proposal. The identified proposal-writer will generate a proposal. This proposal will then move to Level 2.1.

L3: Undergraduate Committee

Level 3 occurs when the undergraduate program as a whole, or resources, course structure or other decisions are involved in a proposal. In these cases, it is expected (but without confidence) that graduate-level faculty would likely prefer not to be involved in the decision.

L3.1: UG Directors Send Default To UG Faculty

Level 3.1 when UG Directors believe the issue is minor or believe that everyone will be in agreement, but the issue affects the undergraduate program such that it is important to provide an opportunity for discussion or revisions as needed.

A proposal will be sent out including a deadline for a response (minimum 7 days). Responses not received are considered “abstained.”

Minor revisions such as wording changes to the proposal can be modified via email if agreed upon by the faculty (silence implies abstaining from revisions). Deadlines to minor revisions should also be given.

In the event that any one member of the group would like to meet or make major revisions, this will bump up to a Level 3.2. The first member to suggest a meeting will become responsible for generating the revised proposal.

L3.2: UG Faculty Generates or Revises Proposal, or Otherwise Meets

Level 3.2 occurs when a proposal from Level 3.1 is not agreed upon by an undergraduate committee member

Occurs when a complex or unformed idea related to the undergraduate program requires either the revision of or generation of a proposal.

At the time of date/meeting planning, the undergraduate faculty will identify who will be responsible for generating the proposal (this may be one of the UG Directors, but it may be someone in the undergraduate faculty).

The undergraduate faculty will meet to discuss the ideas and/or proposal. The identified proposal-writer will generate a proposal. This proposal will then move to Level 3.1.

L4: Full Faculty

L4.1: UG Directors or Group Sends Default to Full Faculty

Level 4.1 occurs when proposals have been developed through the Level 2 or 3 process.

A proposal will be sent out to the full faculty including a deadline for a response. Responses not received are considered “abstained.”

Minor revisions such as wording changes to the proposal can be modified via email if agreed upon by the faculty. Deadlines to minor revisions should also be given, and silence implies abstaining from revisions as well.

In the event that any one member of the faculty would like to discuss this further, this will bump up to a Level 4.2.

L4.2: Proposals Presented at Faculty Full Meeting; Vote

Level 4.2 occurs when decisions involve notable department resources, when multiple course cores are affected, or when faculty has requested discussion or a vote from a Level 4.1.

Proposal will be presented by either the UG Directors, oversight group, or UG Faculty to the Full Faculty at a regularly scheduled faculty meeting.

In order to pass, 2/3 of the faculty will approve the proposal. In the event that a proposal fails a vote, a "novel issues" team will be generated by the department head that will be made up of individuals who dissented (preferably vocally) from the proposal. This team will be equal in faculty size to the original proposal team, and the now larger team will move back to a level 2.2.

Communications

Faculty Meeting Reports

A brief report of all upcoming and approved proposals from all levels will be presented at each faculty meeting. Faculty may move to change the level of an upcoming proposal that was determined by the UG Director/Co-Directors to a new level. A majority vote passes to move a proposal to a new level.

Box Folder

All proposals will be saved to a shared box folder when they are either ready for an oversight group to evaluate, or the revised version when they have been approved. Proposals will be assigned the same level number used in this document, which references the level that the proposal is at in the process described above. The level number will be removed when a proposal has been approved. At the end of each semester, all approved proposals from the semester will be organized outside of the main box folder into a UG Handbook document (also available in the box folder).

Planned Meetings

Semester Course Alignment: Level 2.2. Each semester, there will be one meeting in which each faculty member will meet who teaches a course in one of the “course core” alignments (in which either courses build up in a sequence or in which courses work well in conjunction; one example would be the ‘stats sequence’). These meetings will rotate, so that each core will be meeting no more than once every few years. The purpose of the meeting will be to ensure that the courses are aligned, such that prerequisites are building expected prerequisite skills and knowledge; that resources, materials and outcomes are checked for redundancies, national standards are adhered to, and etc. UG Director/Co-Directors will provide resources and/or goals for the meeting.

Annual Temperature Check: Level 3.2. Each Spring, the UG Faculty will review the undergraduate program in sum for various issues. These may be related to courses taught, courses that might be added, undergraduate research, student growth, any issues with minors, touching base on any problems or opportunities, etc. While UG Faculty are expected to attend this meeting, the fully faculty will be invited if they are interested in attending.

Annual UG Student Awards: Level 3.2. Each Spring, the UG Faculty will meet to nominate students for the various UG Department awards, and discuss and determine winners based on nominations. While UG Faculty are expected to attend this meeting, the fully faculty will be invited if they are interested in attendance.