

POLICY TITLE: PROFESSIONAL AND CONTINUING EDUCATION POLICY

Category:	To be determined by the Policy Office
Sub-category	To be determined by the Policy Office. Policies with similar themes may be categorized together into subgroups to maintain cohesion.
Policy number:	To be determined by the Policy Office
Policy owner & office:	OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT-ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH
Approver:	VICE PRESIDENT-ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH
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Note:	The electronic version of the policy on algomau.ca/policies-and-procedures prevails over all other electronic or printed copies. This policy supersedes any related previous versions. Standard Statement

1. PURPOSE

1.1. This policy governs the development, approval, periodic review, and cessation of Professional and Continuing Education (PACE) programs leading to a credential awarded by Algoma University (AU).

PACE programs provide credentials that are not recognized for academic credit.

PACE programs are intended to:

- Respond to AU's community members' needs for development of skills relating to employment, career development, or preparation for academic programs;
- Generate a return on investment (ROI; resulting in revenue higher than costs) to support the financial health of AU.

PACE learners may be individuals who are interested in post-secondary programs of study but are not admitted to a degree program, or they may be students enrolled in an AU degree program.

PACE learners could also include post-secondary applicants who require additional readiness support prior to admission, graduates seeking to enhance skills, individuals who are seeking training for employment purposes, individuals who wish to transition in their current employment or improve their career prospects through upskilling and reskilling, or corporate and government employees in programs commissioned from AU by their employers.

Examples of PACE programs include programs for applicants who require additional readiness support prior to admission, career- and skills-oriented programming, corporate training (customized to an employer), professional certification test preparation and training, and other approaches for community members to access professional and continuing education opportunities as life-long learners.

PACE programs include but are not limited to workshops, micro-credentials, not for credit courses and not for credit longer programs.

This policy is intended to facilitate expeditious approvals and reviews, so that PACE programs may be developed, adapted, and ended quickly to respond flexibly to learner demand, labour market demands and community needs.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1. This policy applies to all programs of study offered by AU that award credentials that are ***not recognized for academic credit***.
- 2.2. For clarity, programs that are recognized for academic credit (and thus not PACE programs) are programs subject to AU's Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP) and listed in AU's Academic Calendar:
 - 2.2.1. All undergraduate degree and graduate degree programs as well as specializations and minors within such programs;
 - 2.2.2. All **for-credit** micro-credentials;
 - 2.2.3. All **for-credit** undergraduate and graduate-level diplomas and certificates; and
 - 2.2.4. All undergraduate and graduate inter-institutional programs, including dual credential and/or joint degree programs.

3. EXCEPTIONS TO POLICY

- 3.1. Where an individual who is not admitted to an AU academic program is enrolled in a course (or courses) of an existing AU academic program, the individual's learning activity is not a program subject to this policy.
- 3.2. Training courses provided by AU to its employees concerning employees' work-related responsibilities are not subject to this policy.
- 3.3. Lecture series, workshops and professional development programs for undergraduate and/or graduate students.

4. DEFINITIONS

4.1 Program

"Program" is used broadly to mean any structured activity that results in a credential or any other kind of documentation of completion, conferred by the university. Programs can be long or short form (for example, a single course or micro-credential).

4.2 Academic program

An academic program is a program subject to AU's Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP). Please see the "Scope" section of this policy for an explanation of programs subject to the IQAP.

4.3 For-credit

"For-credit" describes a program or part of a program that is recognized by AU to fulfill the requirements of an academic program.

4.4 PACE Oversight Committee (POC)

The Pace Oversight Committee (POC) is a committee appointed by the Vice-President, Academic and Research with authority to recommend approval, major modification, renewal, and cessation of PACE programs. The Vice-President, Academic and Research receives and determines approval of recommendations of the POC.

4.5 Professional and Continuing Education department (PACE department)

The PACE department is the organizational unit responsible for development and administration of PACE programs.

The PACE department is also responsible for supporting the senior academic administrator responsible for PACE programs in administration of processes for accountability and quality assurance.

4.6 Professional and Continuing Education program (PACE program)

A PACE program is any program of study offered by AU that awards a credential that is **not** an academic program. (Please see the "Scope" section of this policy for a detailed explanation of programs subject to this policy.)

4.7 Senior academic administrator responsible for PACE programs

This term refers to the senior academic administrator appointed by the Vice-President, Academic and Research with responsibility for oversight of PACE programs and administration of this policy.

5. POLICY

Senior academic administrator responsible for PACE program

1. The Vice-President, Academic and Research shall appoint a senior academic administrator who is responsible for overseeing the interpretation and administration of this policy.

PACE Oversight Committee

1. The Vice-President Academic and Research shall establish and appoint members of a PACE Program Oversight Committee (POC).
2. The POC recommends approval, renewal, and cessation of PACE programs.
3. The Vice-President Academic and Research reviews and determines whether to approve the recommendations of the POC.
4. The POC shall comprise:
 - a. Director of PACE
 - b. The chair of AU's Senate Quality Assurance Committee;
 - c. One of the Deans of faculties of AU;
 - d. The director of the Centre for Teaching and Learning; and
 - e. A representative appointed by the Vice-President responsible for finance.
5. The POC shall be chaired by the Director of PACE.

Approval of PACE programs

Process for approval – all PACE programs

1. All PACE programs shall be recommended by the POC.
2. Units at AU other than the PACE department may establish their own policies and processes for development of PACE programs, to be followed prior to or in addition to the requirements of this policy.
 - a. For clarity, where another unit establishes its own requirements for the development of PACE programs, the requirements of this policy must also be met.

Approval criteria to be considered

3. The POC shall consider the criteria set out in this section in determining whether to recommend a new PACE program.
4. PACE programs are expected to have educational quality that is consistent with university-level learning and outcomes whilst protecting the reputation of AU.
5. The unit proposing a new PACE program shall make a submission to the POC that provides information concerning:
 - a. Credential to be awarded on completion of program,
 - b. Evidence-based demand for the program,

- c. Length of the program,
 - d. Learning outcomes of the program,
 - e. Skills and competencies,
 - f. Methods of assessment,
 - g. Admission criteria, and
 - h. Qualifications of instructors.
6. The submission shall include a business case that sets out three-year projections of:
- a. Enrolment in the program (anticipated student demand);
 - b. Costs of instruction; including program delivery and support
 - c. Other costs, including marketing and promotion, accommodation, equipment and services; and
 - d. Revenue from tuition and/or other source (such as a contract with an employer);
 - e. A summary of projected return on investment (revenue less costs).
7. The submission shall provide information, where applicable, concerning collaborations or partnerships with other units of AU, and/or entities outside of AU. Where applicable, the submission shall provide information concerning:
- a. Collaborations or partnerships involved in development of the program and/or
 - b. Collaborations or partnerships in delivery of the program.
8. The submission shall address potential competition between the proposed program and any other program offered at AU – both other PACE programs and academic programs.
- a. Where there is a potential for competition, the submission shall provide information about consultations undertaken with the relevant program(s) and faculties/departments.

Compliance with AU policies

9. All PACE programs and students (as applicable) must meet requirements set out in AU policies concerning:
- a. Accessibility;
 - b. Student conduct;
 - c. Protection of privacy;
 - d. Intellectual property and copyright; and

- e. Other applicable AU policies including, but not necessarily limited to policies addressing health, safety, and security; financial matters; human resources; information technology; and buildings.
10. PACE programs and students enrolled in them are **not** subject to AU policies concerning:
- a. Academic grade appeals,
 - b. Early feedback,
 - c. Final examinations,
 - d. Multi-section courses, and
 - e. Graduate studies.
11. If a circumstance arises where the applicability of an AU policy to a PACE program or student is uncertain, the senior academic administrator responsible for PACE programs shall make a recommendation concerning applicability to the Vice-President, Academic and Research for review and decision.

Preliminary assessment by the POC

12. Units seeking approval of a new PACE program may (but are not required to) submit a preliminary proposal to the committee, to gain the committee's guidance and advice concerning whether to develop a submission for approval.

Approval of PACE programs potentially recognized for credit

13. It is possible that, in some instances, completion of a PACE program could serve a dual purpose: it could result in a non-credit certificate or some other documentation of completion, **and** the activity could be recognized as fulfilling part of the requirements of an academic program (if the student chooses to pursue an academic program that recognizes the activity).
14. Where a PACE program could be recognized for academic credit, the PACE program must meet all the requirements of an academic program. Responsibility for the approval of academic programs and credentials belongs to the AU Senate. Practices for development and approval of a PACE program that could be recognized for academic credit must meet the requirements of the AU Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP).
15. Where a PACE program could be recognized for credit and is submitted for program approval under AU's IQAP process:
- a. The unit proposing the program shall submit a business case for the program (as addressed in subsection 6 above) to the POC.
 - b. The POC shall make a recommendation concerning approval of the business case.

- c. If approved, the program shall be subject to the provisions of this policy concerning:
 - i. Periodic review of the program,
 - ii. Cessation of the program, and
 - iii. Annual reporting to the Senate concerning PACE programs.

Expeditious decisions

16. The POC shall consider a submission concerning a proposed program and reach a decision concerning approval in an expeditious way, in order to support timely and flexible response to opportunities for new programs.

Modification of PACE programs

1. Where a unit delivering an approved PACE program wishes to make major modifications to the program, it shall submit a proposal for major modifications to the POC for review.
2. For the purposes of this policy, major modifications to a PACE program include changes in:
 - a. Admission requirements;
 - b. Learning outcomes of the program, where changes are significant;
 - c. Length of program;
 - d. Nomenclature of the program and/or type of credential;
 - e. Required qualifications of instructors; and
 - f. Partnership(s) in delivery of the program.
3. The POC shall make recommendations concerning major modifications to the Vice-President, Academic and Research for approval.

Periodic review of PACE programs

1. All PACE programs shall be reviewed periodically by the POC.
 - a. A periodic review shall be initiated after the program has been offered for two years.
 - b. If applicable, subsequent reviews shall be initiated after each third year following the preceding review.
 - c. Periodic reviews shall be conducted expeditiously and completed no later than eight (8) months following initiation.
2. A PACE program may continue while a periodic review is underway.

3. The POC shall make recommendations arising from a periodic review to the Vice-President, Academic and Research for approval.
4. To initiate a periodic review:
 - a. The senior academic administrator responsible for PACE programs shall provide notice to the academic or administrative unit of AU that is delivering the PACE program that a periodic review is required, and
 - b. The academic or administrative unit of AU that is delivering the PACE program shall provide a report to the POC.
5. The unit's report shall address:
 - a. Whether the program is being delivered as described in its initial submission to the POC for approval of the program (the matters set out in the subsection of this policy *Approval of new programs – Approval criteria to be considered*);
 - b. If applicable, compliance with recommendations of the POC from any prior periodic review;
 - c. Enrolment, and rate of learners' completion of the program, for each of the three years of the review period; and
 - d. The return on investment of the program (whether revenue exceeds costs) for each of the three years of the review period.
6. Where the POC determines that a PACE program is being delivered in accordance with its approved criteria and is realizing a positive return on investment, the POC shall recommend continuation of the program.
 - a. The POC may recommend a time limit on this approval.
7. Where the POC determines that a PACE program is not being delivered in accordance with its approval criteria, the POC may:
 - a. Recommend continuation of the program with recommendations for specific changes; or
 - b. Recommend conditional approval for continuation, setting conditions for the program to meet and a requirement for another periodic review within a time frame shorter than three years; or
 - c. Recommend cessation of the program.
8. Where a program has not yielded a positive return on investment of at least 6% in YR1, 8% in YR2, and 10% in YR3, the POC shall not recommend renewal of the program unless:
 - a. The unit delivering the program provides a substantial and evidence-based business case that the program will realize revenues higher than costs within a reasonable time, and

- b. The Vice-President responsible for finance approves the business case.

Cessation of a PACE program

1. PACE programs may be discontinued where:
 - a. The unit delivering the program determines that there is insufficient demand for the program, or that the program is no longer a priority of the unit; or
 - b. The POC recommends and the Vice-President, Academic and Research approves a cessation of the program.
2. When a decision is reached to discontinue a PACE program, the unit delivering the program shall prepare a plan (including detailed steps and a timeline) that addresses:
 - a. Impacts on students currently enrolled in the program,
 - b. Impacts on staff or contract employees delivering the program, and
 - c. A communication strategy.
3. The plan for discontinuation of the program shall be provided to the senior administrator responsible for PACE programs for review before the cessation of the program is announced and implementation begins.
4. Students currently enrolled in the program shall be allowed to complete the program, or, where feasible, transfer to another program.

Report to Senate concerning PACE programs

1. The senior academic administrator responsible for PACE programs shall provide an annual report to the Senate.
2. The report shall provide brief descriptions of PACE programs, including:
 - a. All new PACE programs approved for delivery since the date of the preceding report;
 - b. All continuing PACE programs since the date of the preceding report;
 - c. All major modifications of PACE programs approved since the date of the preceding report; and
 - d. All PACE programs that completed a periodic review.
3. The description of each new and continuing PACE program shall include:
 - a. Program title;
 - b. Credential awarded;
 - c. Subject(s) of instruction;
 - d. Enrolment;

- e. Number of learners completing the program, and completion rate;
 - f. External partners in program development and/or delivery (if applicable); and
 - g. Any other information deemed useful by the senior academic administrator responsible for PACE programs.
4. The report shall be provided to the Quality Assurance Committee of the Senate.
 5. The Quality Assurance Committee shall submit the report to Senate for information.

6. PROCEDURE

This procedure sets out:

- The current administrative positions in AU with responsibilities described in the PACE policy,
- Requirements concerning submission of proposals for new PACE programs,
- Requirements concerning submission of PACE programs for periodic review,
- Requirements concerning modifications of a PACE program, and
- Definitions of credentials that could be awarded on completion of PACE programs.

Abbreviations used in this procedure

“**AU**” means Algoma University.

“**PACE**” means Professional and Continuing Education.

“**PACE policy**” means the PACE policy approved by AU.

“**PACE program**” means a Professional and Continuing Education program as defined by the PACE policy.

“**POC**” means the PACE Oversight Committee established under the PACE policy.

Definitions of credentials

PACE programs may award a Certificate of Completion on successful completion of the program.

Administrative positions responsible for PACE policies and procedures

The senior academic administrator appointed by the Vice-President Academic and Research to be responsible for overseeing the interpretation and administration of this policy is the Associate Vice-President Academic and Continuing Education.

Submission of proposals for new PACE programs

All proposals for new PACE programs must be submitted to the POC for review.

Proposals shall be submitted in the form of and with all the information required by the templates for:

- New program submissions attached as [Appendix A](#) to this procedure, and
- Business case for a new PACE program attached as [Appendix B](#) to this procedure.

Approval of major modifications of a PACE program

Where the unit responsible for a PACE program seeks approval of major modifications of the program, it shall submit a proposal for major modifications to the POC for review.

Proposals for major modifications shall be submitted to the POC in the form of and with all the information required by the template for major modifications review attached as [Appendix C](#) to this procedure.

Submission of PACE programs for periodic review

First periodic review

All PACE programs that have been approved for delivery shall be reviewed by the POC no later than three years after the program has begun.

The start date of a new PACE program for the purposes of periodic review is the first day that students receive instruction.

The unit in AU responsible for the PACE program shall submit the program for the periodic review to the POC before the end of third year after the program began.

The program may continue to be delivered if the periodic review is not completed before the next admission cycle has begun.

Programs shall be submitted for periodic review to the POC in the form of and with all the information required by the templates for:

- Periodic reviews submissions attached as [Appendix D](#) to this procedure, and
- Business case for a periodic review of a PACE program attached as [Appendix E](#) to this procedure.

Subsequent periodic reviews

If a PACE program is intended to continue for more than three years after its most recent periodic review, the program shall be reviewed by the POC no later than three years after the most recent periodic review.

The start date of a PACE program for the purposes of a subsequent periodic review is the first day that students receive instruction after the period of the most recent review.

- If the program was continued during a periodic review, the subsequent review period remains the first day that students receive instruction after the period of the most recent review.

The program may continue to be delivered if the periodic review is not completed before the next admission cycle has begun.

Programs shall be submitted for subsequent periodic review to the POC in the form of and with all the information required by the templates for:

- Periodic reviews submissions attached as [Appendix D](#) to this procedure, and
- Business case for a periodic review of a PACE program attached as [Appendix E](#) to this procedure.

Cessation of programs

Where the unit responsible for a PACE program decides to close the program before the end of three years, the unit shall meet the requirements of the PACE policy concerning reporting to a review by the POC before the cessation is announced and implemented.

7. APPENDICES

Appendices for this procedure may be found at the following links:

Appendix A: [Submission of proposed new PACE program](#)

Appendix B: [Business case for a proposed new PACE program](#)

Appendix C: [Submission of a major modification of a PACE program](#)

Appendix D: [Submission for periodic review of a PACE program](#)

Appendix E: [Business case for a periodic review of a PACE program](#)

8. INTERPRETATION, COMPLIANCE & REVIEW

Standard Statements

This policy was developed and adheres to Algoma University's Policy on Policy Development and its appendices.

The policy owner and the Policy Office at the University have the authority to address questions related to the interpretation and application of this policy and to monitor adherence to the policy.

Compliance with this policy is expected by all and at all times. Non-compliance with this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination or other determined consequences. Any instance of non-compliance with this policy should be reported immediately to the Policy Owner or Policy Office who will follow established procedures to assess and determine actions required.

Amendments to the policy may occur in response to changing circumstances or legislation, with regular reviews conducted according to the determined frequency at a minimum.

Algoma University recognizes the value of using existing best practice, guidelines, and frameworks established by other Universities and acknowledges their role in informing our own policies.