New Program Approval Process

Policy:
Northwest Community College supports high quality education programs and values both internal and external quality review processes to ensure relevancy, quality, access and accountability in education programs.

PROCESS
Scope
This policy:

- Addresses the educational merit of new program proposals
- Applies to program proposals intended to award new credentials and credit
- Does not assume budget approval for new programs

Procedure
Stage I: Program Concept Development- Information and Review
A concise concept paper stating the program rationale, overall objectives, credential, student target market and labour market focus will be submitted by the proponent department/cluster to the Dean responsible.

The Dean, within 2 weeks of receiving the concept paper, will respond to the department whether the proposal will be brought forward to EMC and clarify any points needing elaboration.

If so determined by the Dean, the concept paper will be placed on the agenda of the next Education Management Committee to determine whether further development of a program proposal is merited. EMC will reach this decision based on the following factors:

- feasibility of program given existing human, physical and financial resources
- consistency of program with Education Plan, College Mission and Operating Principles and priorities of community advisory committees.
- uniqueness of program within institution, region and province
- need for program given emerging labour market development priorities.

If approved by EMC, the proponent department will be authorized to proceed with development of a Program Proposal.

Stage II: Program Proposal Development

1. A Program Proposal will be developed containing the following elements:

Title
- What is the title of the new program?
Expected Start Date

- when is the new program expected to start? (Please provide the month and year.)

Credential

- what credential will be awarded to graduates?
- what is the rationale for that level of credential?
- what is the duration of the program (in weeks, months, and semesters)?
- how is this program relevant to the institution's current offerings and/or mandate?

Purpose and Benefits

what is the purpose of the program?
how will the program ensure educational effectiveness (e.g., retention rates, completion rates, success rates for employment, or progression to further education)?
how will the program address equity by decreasing systemic barriers (e.g., flexible delivery)?

Delivery

how will the program include Prior Learning Assessment (PLA), modularization, part-time delivery, distributed learning, or other alternate modes of delivery?

Consultations

were other schools consulted? Name them and provide details of the consultations.
how many similar programs are offered at other schools? Provide details.
with which non-educational agencies did you consult (e.g., local/regional employers, professional organizations, licensing agencies, trade groups and others)? Include details and evidence of their comments and recommendations.
how does this program fit within current provincial priorities?
were other programs consulted to avoid duplication?

Labour Market Demand

what is the regional and provincial labour market demand for this program? Include data from Job Futures and Statistics Canada, letters of employer support, and any related newspaper employment postings.
what kinds of jobs can graduates expect upon finishing the program?
what is the current supply of people for these occupations?

Student Demand and Enrolment

are students interested in or requesting this program? Provide evidence.
what is the institution’s marketing strategy for the program and for student recruitment?
what are the anticipated student enrolment numbers?
is there sufficient lead time for students to complete prerequisites for the program?

Curriculum

how will the curriculum:
incorporate national, provincial and industry standards?
be outcomes-based and available for part-time learners?
improve or enhance employability skills?
incorporate practical and theoretical components?
reflect diversity and be accessible to equity groups?
provide students with an awareness of and an ability to operate in an international context (if appropriate), such as cross-cultural communication skills and international business practices?

Institutional Resources

what expertise, equipment, facilities and library resources are currently available to support the new program? Ensure that required new resources are included in ‘Costs’ below.

Costs

what will be the non-recurring start-up costs (e.g., equipment costs/other), the capital costs (facilities), and the operating costs (including the program weight or justification of a new program weight, and the number of FTEs)?
how will the new program be cost-effective? Indicate the intended source(s) of funding for development and delivery.

Transferability and Laddering

what is the articulation of the program with high school courses and programs, other programs at the institution, and other post-secondary programs across the province? Provide evidence that transfer arrangements exist or are being arranged.

Work Experience
what clinical, practicum, cooperative, or other placement arrangements have been made for students of the new program? 
how does the work experience fit into the program structure? Provide evidence of the projected availability of placement positions.

Evaluation

where does the program fit in the cycle for program review?

Planning

what is the proposed starting date of the program?

Upon review, Program Coordinator/Academic Head forwards the Program Proposal to the appropriate Dean. In discussion with the Dean, the Program Proposal will be revised as necessary. The Dean will bring forward the Program Proposal to the Education Management Group (EMC).

Stage III: Program Approval

EMC, in consultation with appropriate parties, reviews the Program Proposal against the following criteria:

Mandate

The program proposal is consistent with:

Legislated mandate of the College
Mission statement
Operating Values and Principles
Strategic Plan
Education Plan
Provincial policy directions
Educational Quality

Complementary to College’s current and planned program mix
Opportunity for Niche Programming
Labour Market Demand / Employability Skills

Demonstrable Labour Market Demand / Student Demand
Provincial educational context
Resources

Efficient use of resources and space planning
Educational

Opportunities for partnership with other institutions / partners
Evaluation timelines are sound
Reflects Diversity / Culturally sensitive
Planning

The planning framework is sound, pending budget approval
Program longevity
Program Priority
Stage IV: New Program Implementation

If the Program Proposal is approved, the appropriate Dean oversees the implementation of the final development process.

If the program is not approved by EMC, a written rationale is provided to the Dean, who in turn informs the department and person who initiated the Program Proposal.

The Dean submits the Program proposal to Education Council and to First Nations Council for advice and then to EMC for final educational approval.

Upon final educational approval, the proposal will be posted for external peer review for thirty days, in accordance with the Non-Degree Program Peer Review Process defined by MAVED. Comments received through the system-wide review process will be reported back to the proponents, and the proposal adjusted accordingly, if required.

Subsequent to approval, the appropriate Dean oversees the development of the program/ curriculum.

Course outlines will be developed and vetted through the Cluster, Dean and forwarded to Education Council (CPAC) for review. Upon review, CPAC will forward to Education Council for final approval.

Education Council Chair will forward approve course outline to the Registrar’s office.
Stage V: Budget Approval

The Appropriate Dean will submit the Program Proposal, along with a budget, to the Core Administrative Team for Budget consideration.