

 DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY Senate Policy for Academic Unit Consolidation, Renaming, Establishment, Termination and Transfer	<i>Policy Sponsor: Senate</i>	<i>Approval Date:</i> <i>Senate: May 10, 2021</i> <i>Board of Governors: February 15, 2022</i>
	<i>Responsible Unit:</i> <i>Office of the Provost and Vice President Academic and University Secretariat</i>	<i>Amendments:</i> <i>Senate: June 11, 2025</i> <i>Board of Governors: June 24, 2025</i>

A. Background & Purpose

This policy establishes a framework for guiding the organizational evolution of Academic Units at Dalhousie University. Specifically, it outlines requirements and procedures for academic unit consolidation, renaming, establishment, termination and transfer (AU-CRETT).

Senate has responsibility for academic implications that arise from change to governance, whereas the operational, financial, human resource and other such elements are in the purview of the Board. Other proponents and interest holders (including the governance bodies and leaders of Departments, Schools, Faculties, etc.) consider the factors within their respective purview when making decisions regarding changes described in this policy (AU-CRETT). The procedures in this policy are intended to collect the information needed at all stages of this review to ensure interest holders can make informed decisions.

B. Application

This policy applies where a pre-proposal planning document or full proposal for AU-CRETT has been initiated and prepared in accordance with the Procedures in Appendix A. Pre-proposals and proposals not prepared in accordance with the Procedures will not be considered by the Senate Planning and Governance Committee.

1. When Change(s) governed by AU-CRETT are contemplated, it is ordinarily required that a pre-proposal planning document (PPPD) be submitted to the Deans of the relevant Faculty(ies) and SPGC for consultation and feedback before preparation of a full proposal.
2. The decision to make a Change is typically made in consultation with faculty, staff, and students impacted by the Change, and other interest holders. The reasons for a Change, and its expected impacts, are described in a full AU-CRETT proposal, which proceeds through a formal approval process (**Pathway A** in Appendix A: AU-CRETT Procedures). An alternate process provides an

avenue for petition and resolution if a stage in the formal approval process cannot be completed (**Pathway B** in Appendix A: AU-CRETT Procedures).

3. PPPDs and Full Proposals may be brought forward by members of relevant Academic Units, by one or more Administrative Head(s) of an Academic Unit, or the Provost and Vice-President Academic (Provost).
4. Proposals shall be processed in a timely manner. Emphasis is placed on principles of inclusive excellence¹, transparency, and accountability in decision-making.
5. This policy excludes proposals for philanthropic or honorific naming or renaming (see the [Naming Policy](#)).

C. Definitions

1. **Academic Unit:** Faculty, College, School, or Academic Department.
2. **Change:** Unless otherwise indicated, includes Consolidation, Renaming, Establishment, Termination, and Transfer.
3. **Consolidation:** Combining two or more Academic Units into fewer Academic Units.
4. **Establishment:** Creating one or more new Academic Units (includes an existing academic sub-unit becoming a new Faculty or other standalone Academic Unit).
5. **Renaming:** Renaming one or more Academic Units.
6. **Termination:** Eliminating one or more Academic Units.
7. **Transfer:** Moving one or more Academic Units to be academic sub-units of another.
8. **Recommend/Approve** – Recommend indicates approval by a unit or governance body to a subsequent body of approval in the formal approval process. Approval is given by the final body in the process.

D. Policy

Proposals for AU-CRETT shall be assessed in accordance with the statements in this policy within the scope of each governance body. The most compelling arguments for AU-CRETT will be based on Dalhousie's strategic directions and values at the time of the proposal and Senate's Principles and Values, and be supported by administrative and operational justification. Policy statements are grouped into three logical categories based on the

¹ <https://www.aacu.org/publication/committing-to-equity-and-inclusive-excellence-a-campus-guide-for-self-study-and-planning>]

Change being sought: (i) Establishment, Transfer or Consolidation, (ii) Renaming and (iii) Termination.

1. Establishment, Transfer or Consolidation of an Academic Unit (as applicable):

- a. **Rationale:** A Change that leads to the Establishment or Transfer of an Academic Unit or Consolidation of two or more Academic Units must have clear and sufficient justification. New or modified Academic Units must have an appropriate fit with Dalhousie's academic mission and strategic goals. Compelling justification will also include consideration of:
- i. **Inclusive Excellence and Core Values:** Commitment to enhancing the equity, diversity inclusion, and accessibility goals of the Unit, Faculty and University, particularly in relation to engagement with communities, should be clear throughout the proposal.
 - ii. **Unit Cohesion:** Academic Units share similar or common scholarly goals, and at least to some extent are inter-dependent and mutually reinforcing in the achievement of their respective goals, as well as the overall goals and academic mission of the university. A Change should not create duplications, inefficiencies, or a lack of organizational clarity.
 - iii. **Governance:** Academic Units should be of a size and complexity that permit efficiency and effectiveness in collegial governance—Academic Units should be involved in a meaningful way in governance through transparent decision-making. The effectiveness and equity of an Academic Unit's participation at the institutional level is also an important consideration.
 - iv. **Financial Implications:** The budgetary implications of any Change must be carefully considered and estimated, and any increases in costs justified with demonstrable benefits.
 - v. **Other Possibilities Considered:** proposals should provide a brief overview of other possibilities explored or considered and compare their benefits and drawbacks to the approach proposed.
- b. **Impacts:** The proposal should address:
- i. **Impacts on Programs and Students:** There must be a clear implementation plan for the proposed Change(s), including academic program continuity and student support.
 - ii. **Impacts on Unit Staff and Faculty:** Expected changes to the working conditions of staff and faculty must be described. The People and Culture unit should be consulted.
 - iii. **Impacts on Other Interest Holders:** These may include alumni, past and potential donors, employer partners, community partners, and others.
 - iv. Proponents should be particularly attentive to disparities in power among the interest holders consulted when developing the proposal, including (but not limited to) dissenting opinions, the impacts on equity-deserving groups, and the effects of structural authority.

2. Renaming an Academic Unit

- a. **Rationale:** The names of Academic Units will normally be reflective of the primary functional purpose of the Academic Unit. Well-justified Renaming will typically reflect accepted changes in the nomenclature of an academic field or discipline, updated terminology, or changes to the organizational makeup or membership of an Academic Unit.
- b. **Impacts:** The implications of renaming an Academic Unit for the Department, Faculty and/or university must be carefully considered (e.g., academic, budgetary, reputational, community relations and partnerships, legal, alumni relations, donor relations, etc.).

3. Termination of an Academic Unit

- a. **Rationale:** The termination of an Academic Unit may be related to the termination of one or more academic programs, the transfer/consolidation of other Academic Units, or financial viability or efficiency. The justification for the termination must be clearly presented, including why the status quo cannot be retained and why alternative solutions are not possible.
- b. **Impacts:** See D.1.(b), above.

E. Administrative Structure

- 1. **Authority:** This Policy falls under the authority of Senate and is administered by the Provost and the University Secretariat. The Provost may designate any responsibilities under this Policy to an Associate Vice President Academic.
- 2. **SPGC:** The SPGC shall be responsible for:
 - a. Considering and providing feedback on Pre-proposal Planning Documents.
 - b. Considering and making recommendations to Senate concerning full proposals.
- 3. **Record Keeping:** The record keeping pertaining to this Policy will be the responsibility of the University Secretariat and will follow the University's Records Management Policy.
- 4. **Reporting:** The SPGC will provide an annual summary report to Senate concerning the Consolidation, Renaming, Establishment, Termination and Transfer of Academic Units.
- 5. **Review:** This policy shall be reviewed every 5 years, or earlier as required, in keeping with the Policy on Policies.

Appendix A: Procedures

For Senate Policy for Academic Unit Consolidation, Renaming, Establishment, Termination and Transfer

A. Pre-Proposal Planning Phase

A pre-proposal planning document (PPPD) is ordinarily required when Change(s) governed by this policy (other than Renaming) are contemplated and is designed to be completable when a Change is expected but before the exact nature of the Change is known.

The PPPD should include a high-level overview of the need for the Change, some of the Changes that will be considered (if known), and a consultation plan for determining the Change and for assessing its feasibility and impacts. The PPPD is submitted to the Dean(s) of the relevant Faculty(ies) and the Senate Planning and Governance Committee (SPGC), offering an opportunity to make suggestions that inform the change process and the development of a full proposal.

Two or more interrelated Changes may be captured as part of a single PPPD where it is logical to do so.

Use the **AU-CRETT Pre-Proposal Planning Document Form** [Word] in Appendix B for more detailed information requirements.

B. Full Proposal phase

After the Pre-Proposal Planning Phase (if it is required), Proponents will document proposed Change(s) in a full Proposal. Two or more interrelated Changes may be captured as part of a single Proposal (e.g., renaming and transfer/consolidation) where it is logical to do so. If applicable, additions to / exclusions from the consultation plan in the PPPD should be noted. All proposals follow Pathway A for approval before, if necessary, entering Pathway B.

1. A Proposal includes the information requested in the relevant **Proposal Form**:
 - Appendix C - *Proposal for Academic Unit Establishment, Transfer or Consolidation* [Word]
 - Appendix D - *Proposal for Academic Unit Renaming* [Word]
 - Appendix E - *Proposal for Academic Unit Termination* [Word]
2. Feedback and previous decisions should be documented and included with the Proposal package as it proceeds through the approval and submission pathway. Proponents are expected to include review and input from relevant administrative units (e.g., Financial, Legal, Facilities Management, People & Culture, ITS, Registrar's Office) as needed.
3. **Approval and Submission Pathway A**
 - a. Proposal is recommended by School(s)/Department(s) and corresponding Academic Unit leader(s), if applicable;

- b. Proposal is recommended by Faculty and corresponding Academic Unit Head(s);²
- c. Proposal is recommended by SPGC (the proponent will be invited to SPGC to discuss the proposal);
- d. Proposal is recommended by Senate;
- e. Proposal is approved by the Board of Governors.

4. **Approval and Submission Pathway B: Petition and Resolution**

- a. This Pathway is open to proponents when a Proposal is not recommended at a stage in Pathway A. **This is not strictly an appeal process, but rather a mechanism to resolve disagreement on how to proceed.**
- b. Proponents concerned about a power imbalance may request support in this process from the Provost.
- c. **Petition to a dean or the Provost**
 - i. A proponent must submit their petition in writing within 14 working days of the original notification of decision to the relevant dean (if not recommended by an Academic Unit Head) or the Provost (if not recommended by a dean).
 - ii. The dean/Provost receiving the petition may request further information, and seek advice from experts on the sources of disagreement.
 - iii. The dean/Provost receiving the petition shall seek to resolve disagreement on how to proceed. If agreement is not reached, the dean/Provost receiving the petition will decide whether to recommend the proposal to the next stage in Pathway A.
- d. **Petition to a governance body**
 - i. A proponent must submit their petition in writing within 14 working days of the original notification of decision to the appropriate level of governance body:

Scenario	If the proposal is not recommended by:	Then the proponent may petition the:
A	a Department (or other Academic subunit) or a Departmental governance body	appropriate Faculty-level governance body
B	a Faculty or a Faculty-level governance body	SPGC
C	SPGC	Senate
D	Senate	Board

- ii. A proponent may request a petition for any reason but must stipulate the rationale for the petition in their notice, referencing the relevant part of the AU-CRETT policy upon which the petition is based.

² In lieu of step B. 2. b. 2., a full proposal may be recommended by the Provost on behalf of other stakeholder groups or as the sole proponent, where there is no pre-existing Academic Unit (Policy B.3).

- iii. The governance body will meet within 30 days of receiving the petition to consider the case. They may invite presentations from the proponent and other interest holders.
- iv. If, after considering the case outlined in the petition, the governance body agrees to move forward with an attempt at resolving the differences, the governing body shall establish an Ad Hoc Resolution Committee.
- v. The governance body shall invite the proponent(s) to provide input on the members appointed to the Ad Hoc Resolution Committee.

e. Ad Hoc Resolution Committee

- a. Membership excludes, to the extent possible, anyone impacted directly by the Change, and anyone with a conflict of interest.
- b. Membership should include members who have expertise on the primary source of disagreement, whether it be financial, human resources, academic discipline, etc.
- c. In addition to specific expertise on equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility (EDIA), the committee's composition should reflect the diversity of the University.
- d. Members should be chosen such that the committee includes:
 - i. Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility expertise
 - ii. Individuals with expertise (financial, etc.) on the primary source of disagreement
 - iii. At least 1 Academic Unit senator
 - iv. At least 1 faculty member
 - v. At least 1 student enrolled in programs affiliated with the affected Academic Unit
 - vi. At least 1 dean
 - vii. At least 1 senior leader with expertise in organizational change similar to that under consideration.

More than one of the above requirements may be met by the same person.

f. Resolution

- 1. The Ad Hoc Resolution Committee will review the package, meet with or obtain written submissions from the proponent, impacted units and their senior leaders, consult or engage external reviewers if deemed necessary, and with any others who would provide an informed perspective.
- 2. The Ad Hoc Resolution Committee shall submit its recommendation within 16 weeks to the governance body that created it.
- 3. The governance body will decide whether it recommends the Proposal to the next governance body in Pathway A.
- 4. If the governance body that received the petition is the Board, the Board will decide whether it approves the Proposal.

Appendix B – Pre-Proposal Planning Document for Academic Unit Consolidation,
Establishment, Termination and Transfer
*For Senate Policy for Academic Unit Consolidation, Renaming, Establishment, Termination and Transfer
(AUCRETT) [\[LINK to policy repository\]](#)*

Relevant Academic Unit Name(s)/Host Faculty(ies):

Changes being considered: ☐ Consolidation ☐ Establishment ☐ Transfer ☐ Termination

Contact and Team: *name, relationship to Academic Unit, and contact information.*

Section 1.

Provide a high-level overview of the need for Change. If known, what Change(s) will be considered?

Section 2.

Identify the data and information you will gather to inform this change process.

Section 3. Identify the groups that will be consulted during the change process, including those that will be important for assessing and mitigating impact of any proposed Change and preparing an implementation plan. These typically include:

- All involved and affected units
- Financial experts within units/institution
- Human resources
- Academic leaders, faculty, staff, students

Section 4. Confirm that you have consulted with the Dean(s) prior to submitting the PPPD to the Senate Planning and Governance Committee (SPGC) by including a letter from the Dean(s) of relevant units. This letter should include any interest holders the Dean consulted when reviewing the PPPD.

Appendix C – For Proposals to Establish, Consolidate or Transfer an Academic Unit

For Senate Policy for Academic Unit Consolidation, Renaming, Establishment, Termination and Transfer (AUCRETT) [\[LINK to policy repository\]](#)

Proposal: ☐ Establish ☐ Consolidate ☐ Transfer

Current Academic Unit Name/Host Faculty (if applicable):

Proposed Academic Unit Name/Host Faculty: *name of the new or transferred/consolidated Academic Unit*

Proposal Contact: *name, relationship to Academic Unit, and contact information.*

Summary:

Provide a high-level overview of the need for the Change(s), proposed Change(s) and justification.

Structure:

Please describe in detail, and attach documentation as appropriate, the proposed governance and administrative structure of the new or transferred/consolidated Academic Unit.

Rationale:

Please describe why the New or Consolidated Academic Unit is being proposed. What are the objectives of the unit? Please include discussion of each of the Policy statements below [\[LINK to policy\]](#).

Alignment with Dalhousie's academic mission and strategic goals

New or modified Academic Units must have an appropriate fit with the academic mission and strategic goals of the university. A compelling argument will demonstrate an increased potential for the proposed Academic Unit to deliver on the academic mission, reinforce strategic goals and support external engagement through a clearer narrative about Dalhousie's value proposition and/or specialization.

Inclusive Excellence and Core Values

The new or modified Academic Unit should remain committed to enhancing the equity, diversity and inclusion goals of the Faculty and University, particularly in relation to engagement with communities, and this commitment should be clear throughout the proposal.

Unit Cohesion

Academic Units share similar or common educational goals, and at least to some extent are inter-dependent and mutually reinforcing in the achievement of their respective goals, as well as the overall goals and academic mission of the university. A Change should not create duplications, inefficiencies, or a lack of organizational clarity.

Governance

Academic Units should be of a size and complexity that permit efficiency and effectiveness in collegial governance—Academic Units should be involved in a meaningful way in governance through transparent decision-making. The effectiveness and equity of an Academic Unit's participation at the institutional level is also an important consideration.

Financial Viability

The budgetary implications of a Change must be carefully considered and estimated, and any increases in costs justified with demonstrable benefits.

Other Possibilities Considered

Proposals should provide a brief overview of other possibilities explored or considered, and compare their benefits and drawbacks to the approach proposed.

Impacts and Implementation Plans:

Please discuss the impacts of establishing, consolidating or transferring the Academic Unit on each of the following groups, as applicable. Include or attach evidence of consultation and plans to address the needs of each group.

Programs and Students

There must be a clear implementation plan for academic program continuity and student support, particularly for students from underrepresented and marginalized groups, where programs are not being terminated.

Unit Staff and Faculty

Describe the expected changes to working conditions of staff and faculty and plan for implementation of Change(s), including support for faculty and staff. It is advisable to consult People and Culture for this aspect of the proposal.

Impacts on Other Interest Holders

The implications for impact on alumni, past and potential donors, community partners, and others must be considered.

Resources:

Please discuss the resources required for the new or modified Academic Unit, including identification of required full-time and possibly part-time academic and support staff and space for the Unit. This should be accompanied by detailed budget estimate.

In the case of Academic Unit Transfer or Consolidation, the proposal must be reviewed by all relevant Academic Units (e.g., current host department/faculty and proposed host department/faculty). Please add entries below as applicable.

Date of Review by Department/School :

Date of Review by Faculty:

Date of Submission to University Secretariat:

Attachments: All attachments are required unless otherwise stated.

1. A copy of the final PPPD (*only required if one was created*).
2. Documentation that provides context for the Academic Units being modified, which might include self-studies, reviews, strategic plans, accreditation submissions, integrated planning submissions, annual reports, etc.
3. A curated set of data and information that informs this Change.
4. Evidence from any internal consultations undertaken (e.g., People and Culture, Registrar's Office, Financial Services, Facilities Management).
5. Reports or assessments by external bodies (including reviewers, accrediting bodies, consultants, community-based organizations) that inform the Change, with a preference for **neutral third parties** (*optional but highly recommended*).
6. Evidence of consultation/feedback with impacted interest holders.
7. Estimates of the financial impact.
8. Organizational chart describing the status quo and what is proposed for the new or transferred/consolidated unit.
9. Approval from the Provost.
10. Outcomes of the votes at all previous governance bodies.
11. Statements from academic leaders of units earlier in the approval pathway who have reviewed and approved the proposal.
12. A report from the resolution process in Pathway B (*only if this Pathway was employed*)

Appendix D—For Proposals to Rename an Academic Unit

For Senate Policy for Academic Unit Consolidation, Renaming, Establishment, Termination and Transfer (AUCRETT) [\[LINK to policy repository\]](#)

Current Academic Unit Name/Host Faculty:

Proposed Academic Unit Name:

Proposal Contact:

Background and Rationale: Please provide a detailed rationale, including perceived benefits, for the proposed renaming.

The names of Academic Units will normally be reflective of the primary functional purpose of the Academic Unit. Renaming may be sought to accommodate accepted changes in the nomenclature of an academic field or disciplines, updated terminology, or changes to the organizational makeup or membership of an Academic Unit.

Impacts: What are the implications of renaming the Academic Unit? Responses should be evidence based and supported by the outcome of consultations or additional documentation (Attachment 2).

The implications of renaming an Academic Unit for the Department, Faculty and/or university must be carefully considered (e.g., academic, budgetary, reputational, community and alumni relations and partnerships, legal, donor relations, etc.).

Date of Approval by Department/School (for department or school name changes only):

Date of Approval by Faculty Council:

Date of Submission to University Secretariat:

Attachments: All attachments are required unless otherwise stated.

- a An environmental scan or other evidence to support that the Change is to match updated nomenclature of an academic field or discipline (if applicable).
- b Evidence of consultation/feedback with impacted interest holders.
- c Outcomes of the votes at all previous governance bodies.
- d Statements from academic leaders of units earlier in the approval pathway who have reviewed and approved the proposal.
- e A report from the resolution process in Pathway B (*only if this Pathway was employed*).

Appendix E-Proposal for Academic Unit Termination

For Senate Policy for Academic Unit Consolidation, Renaming, Establishment, Termination and Transfer (AUCRETT) [\[LINK to policy repository\]](#)

Academic Unit Name/Host Faculty: *name of the Academic Unit to be terminated.*

Proposal Contact: *name, relationship to Academic Unit, and contact information.*

Rationale:

Please explain why the Academic Unit should be terminated.

The Termination of an Academic Unit may be related to the termination of one or more academic programs or the Transfer/Consolidation of other Academic Units, or financial viability or efficiency.

Other possibilities considered:

Proposals should clearly articulate how the proposed model will address or resolve any precipitating factors and consider the benefits and drawbacks of various approaches or options, and why these are not possible/feasible.

Impacts and Implementation Plans:

Please discuss the impacts of terminating the Academic Unit on each of the following groups, as applicable. Include or attach evidence of consultation and plans to address the needs of each group.

Programs and Students

There must be a clear implementation plan for academic program continuity and student support, particularly for students from underrepresented and marginalized groups, where programs are not being terminated.

Unit Staff and Faculty

Describe the expected changes to working conditions for staff and faculty and plan for implementation of the termination, including support for faculty and staff. It is advisable to consult with People and Culture for this aspect of the proposal.

Impacts on Other Interest Holders

The implications of terminating an Academic Unit for alumni, past and potential donors, community partners, and others must be considered.

Financial Impact:

Please discuss the financial implications of terminating the Academic Unit.

Date of Review by Department/School:

Date of Review by Faculty:

Date of Submission to University Secretariat:

Attachments: All attachments are required unless otherwise stated.

- a A copy of the final PPPD (*only required if one was created*).
- b Documentation that provides context for the Academic Units being modified, which might include self-studies, reviews, strategic plans, accreditation submissions, integrated planning submissions, annual reports, etc.
- c A curated set of data and information that informs this Change.
- d Evidence from any internal consultations undertaken (e.g., People and Culture, Registrar's Office, Financial Services, Facilities Management).
- e Reports or assessments by external bodies (including reviewers, accrediting bodies, consultants, community-based organizations) that inform this Change, with a preference for **neutral third parties** (*optional but highly recommended*).
- f Evidence of consultation/feedback with impacted interest holders.
- g Estimates of financial impacts.
- h Approval from the Provost.
- i Outcomes of the votes at all previous governance bodies.
- j Statements from academic leaders of units earlier in the approval pathway who have reviewed and approved the proposal.
- k A report from the resolution process in Pathway B (*only if this Pathway was employed*)