



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE PROVOST
UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY
589 MCNAIR ROAD
ANNAPOLIS MARYLAND 21402-1300

PROVOSTINST 5420.20J
VPAA
9 Sep 2026

PROVOST INSTRUCTION 5420.20J

From: Provost, U.S. Naval Academy

Subj: CURRICULUM REVIEW PROCESS

Ref: (a) PROVOSTINST 1531.50D Experimental and Topics Courses
(b) PROVOSTINST 1531.10A Humanities and Social Science Electives
(c) PROVOSTINST 1531.86 Academic Course Credit Guidance

1. Purpose

a. To describe the process for modification of curriculum and the roles played by several curricular committees.

b. This revision includes language to emphasize expected turnaround time for proposals related to core curriculum, expanded paragraph 7h at the request of and with recommended edits from Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee (FSCC), and minor edits to update references and titles throughout the document. Users should review this directive in its entirety to ensure familiarity with these clarifications.

2. Cancellation. PROVOSTINST 5420.20H CH-1.

3. Scope and Applicability. This instruction applies to all academic faculty and staff.

4. Background

a. Providing guidance for and approving changes to the academic program of the U.S. Naval Academy (USNA) is a primary responsibility of the Provost. Departments teaching courses for academic credit are responsible for maintaining, developing, and assessing their courses so that they serve the USNA Mission, remain relevant, and meet the needs of the Naval Service or serve to provide breadth or depth in specific disciplines. It is through the review process described in this instruction that changes to the academic program occur. For changes that have a significant effect on USNA resources or the academic demands on midshipman time, the Provost will seek concurrence of the Superintendent. Significant changes include the establishment or disestablishment of departments, majors, or minors.

b. Normally, departments originate assessment-driven changes to the curriculum, and representative groups of faculty members qualified in their disciplines, cognizant of the Naval Academy's high academic standards and aware of the needs of the Naval Service, examine proposals for curricular change and make recommendations to the Provost. The Provost may also initiate changes by working through departments, or by asking any of the standing curriculum committees to consider a particular issue. To facilitate this process and constructive communication, these changes should be presented as soon as practical to the appropriate Faculty Senate curriculum committee(s).

c. The curriculum committees assigned responsibility for review of curriculum change requests are nominated by the Faculty Senate and appointed by the Provost. The main standing committee is the FSCC. This committee has three standing subcommittees known as School Curriculum Committees (SCCs) in the Schools of Engineering, Computing, and Weapons; Mathematics and Science; and Humanities and Social Sciences (HUM/SS). The three SCC Chairs should also always be members of the FSCC.

d. The FSCC will review recommendations from the SCCs with respect to their impact on the total academic program of the Naval Academy and their relevance to educational standards and the mission of the Naval Academy. The FSCC may initiate a review of the curriculum (including the core curriculum) and may make recommendations for curricular modifications to the Faculty Senate and the Provost. The FSCC also will review curricular matters referred to it by the Provost or the Faculty Senate.

e. Routine changes follow a short review process. Non-routine changes follow a more thorough and formal review procedure, considered a full review process.

5. Committee Staffing

a. Membership of the FSCC will be in accordance with the instructions of the Faculty Senate bylaws, and the Chair of the FSCC will be nominated by the Faculty Senate in consultation with the Provost. The FSCC may establish ad hoc committees for the purpose of studying any curricular issue.

b. The three SCCs will be appointed by the Faculty Senate according to Senate bylaws. These committees are:

(1) School of Engineering, Computing and Weapons Curriculum Committee

(2) School of Mathematics and Science Curriculum Committee

(3) School of HUM/SS Curriculum Committee, which includes a representative from the Department of Leadership, Ethics, and Law.

6. Curriculum Review Procedure

a. Examples of routine and non-routine proposals are offered in the lists below. The lists are not comprehensive, and special cases may necessitate consultation with the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs (VPAA). With the exception of core and school courses, minor changes in course content and routine changes to a course syllabus are within the purview of the faculty members teaching the course and do not require review.

(1) Examples of Routine Curriculum Changes that Warrant a Short Review

- (a) Change of course title or number.
- (b) Change in course requisites affecting only the originating department.
- (c) Changes in content of a course offered by that department and affecting only a major or minor offered by that department.
- (d) Change in sequencing of courses in a major or minor affecting only the originating department.
- (e) Change of courses allowed as major or minor electives within a specific major or minor affecting only the originating department and for which there are no resource implications.
- (f) Introduction of an experimental course. Such courses may be offered at most twice. See reference (a).

(2) Examples of Non-routine Curriculum Changes that Warrant a Full Review

- (a) The creation or discontinuation of a major or minor.
- (b) Any change in the name of a department, major, or minor.
- (c) Any change to a core or school course.
- (d) Any change to a course listed in the matrix of another major.
- (e) Any change in the number of credit hours or contact hours for a course.
- (f) Additions, deletions, or other significant changes to a major matrix.
- (g) Any change involving significant resource issues.

(h) Addition or removal of elective courses affecting programs in other departments or offered as HUM/SS. See reference (b).

(i) The introduction of a new course to the permanent offerings of a department, even if that course had been offered previously in an experimental status. See reference (a).

b. Department chairs are assigned responsibility for development and review of the curricula within their respective departments. Normally, curriculum change requests will be initiated within the academic departments. The Provost also can promote curricular changes through the departments affected, or through the FSCC. The FSCC, upon consultation with the departments concerned, may also initiate proposals for change.

c. To submit a proposal for either a routine or non-routine request, the department chair should prepare the proposal packet in accordance with the guidance provided in paragraph 7, which includes obtaining the approval of the appropriate school or division leadership, and submit it to the chair of the relevant FSCC standing subcommittee. The Physical Education and Seamanship and Navigation Departments should submit proposals for curriculum changes directly to the FSCC.

d. The FSCC chair will review the packet for completeness, make an initial determination as to whether or not the proposal warrants a short review, and log it into the Curriculum Change Proposal tracking system. If the FSCC chair and VPAA concur that it warrants a short review, then the proposal will be designated as such. Otherwise, it will be given a full review. A proposal can also be moved from the short review list to the full review list at any point in the review process if that is deemed advisable by the VPAA, any FSCC member, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, or any representative of school leadership.

e. The Provost may initiate curricular changes by asking the FSCC to consider a particular issue or by submitting a proposal directly to the FSCC. Such proposals would always warrant a full review.

f. Any proposal that relates to the core curriculum should undergo the full review process and should be considered by all three SCCs. When the FSCC reviews curricular issues concerning the core curriculum it should consider not only their impact on the academic program of the Naval Academy but also their relevance to Naval Service.

g. Items designated for short review (routine curriculum change proposals) will be processed as follows:

(1) The FSCC chair, VPAA, and relevant SCC chair will confer within one month of receiving the proposal and make a recommendation.

(2) The VPAA will forward their recommendation to the Provost for consideration.

(3) If the request is approved by the Provost, the VPAA will direct the Registrar's office to make the changes.

h. Items designated for full review (non-routine curriculum change proposals) will be processed as follows:

(1) The SCCs will provide their recommendations to the FSCC. For proposals initiated by the Provost, the FSCC chair will determine which SCCs should be consulted and will forward the proposal to those committees for consideration.

(2) The FSCC will provide their recommendation to the VPAA.

(3) The VPAA, FSCC and SCCs also may contact the proposing department or other stakeholders to request clarifying information or to suggest modifications to the proposal that they deem appropriate.

(4) The VPAA will forward the proposal and all committee recommendations to the Provost for consideration.

(5) If approved by the Provost, the VPAA will direct the Registrar's office to make the changes.

(6) Proposals for non-routine curriculum changes require thoughtful and broad consideration, but timeliness is also desirable. Reviews of proposals that relate to the core curriculum will take place on an expedited timeline, with a response provided within a month of submission. For all other proposals that require a full review, the process, from submission to final decision, normally should take between one and four months.

7. Curriculum Change Proposal Packet Preparation. Every curriculum change proposal packet should contain the following items:

a. A cover letter, signed by the department chair, stating the nature of the proposed change, providing the rationale for the proposed change, and either citing the results from the departmental assessment supporting the change or providing a rationale for making the proposed change absent relevant assessment results.

b. A completed USNA 1531/18 Curriculum Change Request (CCR) form. This form becomes an official document once approved by the Provost to be used in the preparation of catalogs and majors program publications. USNA 1531/18 should be signed by the department chair and the school or division leadership before the proposal is submitted to the relevant SCC.

c. A copy of the existing major matrix and the proposed matrix if the proposal involves any change to a matrix.

d. A detailed description of changes to a course, along with a course syllabus, if the proposal involves addition of a course or significant alteration of an existing course.

e. A clearly delineated section containing a detailed description of how the proposed curriculum change would affect resource use and allocation, including answers to the following questions with each answer presented after a restatement of the question.

(1) Why should the Naval Academy expand, contract, or change in this specific area of study? How does this proposed curriculum change support the mission of the Naval Academy?

(2) How will this curriculum change affect the overall faculty teaching loads within the department or other departments?

(3) What additional resources are required and what recurring costs will be incurred for classroom or laboratory equipment, for faculty and staff, or for other facilities such as the library?

(4) For a new course, are the necessary textbooks, manuals, etc. available or will they be developed in-house?

(5) For a new course, does the proposed course overlap others already offered, whether by the proposing department or others? If so, why is this course needed and what will its effect be on those overlapping course(s) and the departments that offer them?

(6) For a new course, which other course(s) are midshipmen not likely to take if this course is offered?

(7) For a new elective course, with what frequency will the course be taught and what enrollment is expected at each offering? How many faculty members are capable of and interested in teaching this course, and for how long is it expected that this course will be sustained?

(8) For a new course or for a change in contact or credit hours to an existing course, what are the expectations for midshipmen time in and outside the classroom, and how does that align to the desired contact and credit hour allotment? Reference (c) provides guidance on academic credit.

f. Note that further information is required for a new course to qualify as a HUM/SS elective. This information is detailed in reference (b).

g. If multiple departments, schools or other parties are affected or involved in the curricular change, statements regarding their support for or concerns with the proposal must be included in the proposal.

h. The plan for determining the success of the proposed change(s).

(1) The plan must minimally identify:

(a) The responsible party or parties, timeline, and method of documentation.

(b) Evidence aligned with the rationale for the proposed change(s) as stated in 7a that will be collected.

(c) Criteria for success, as appropriate, if the proposal is approved.

(2) In the case of experimental courses and departmentally approved topics courses being proposed as permanent courses in accordance with reference (a), the CCR for the permanent offering should include a reflective memo indicating how the efficacy of the course was determined including the assessment of the learning outcomes listed in the syllabus, faculty interpretation of the course's efficacy, and changes that were made during the pilot phase to improve the course.

8. Records Management

a. Records created as a result of this instruction, regardless of format or media, must be maintained and dispositioned per the records disposition schedules located on the DON Assistant for Administration, Directives and Records Management Division portal page at <https://www.secnav.navy.mil/doni/Records%20Management%20Schedules/Forms/AllItems.aspx>

b. For questions concerning the management of records related to this instruction or the records disposition schedules, please contact your local records custodian or the USNA Records Manager.

9. Review and Effective Date. Per OPNAVINST 5215.17A, VPAA will review this instruction annually around the anniversary of its issuance date to ensure applicability, currency, and consistency with Federal, Department of Defense, Secretary of the Navy, and Navy policy and statutory authority using OPNAV 5215/40 Review of Instruction. This instruction will be in effect for 10 years, unless revised or canceled in the interim, and will be reissued by the 10-year anniversary date if it is still required, unless it meets one of the exceptions in OPNAVINST 5215.17A, paragraph 9. Otherwise, if the instruction is no longer required, it will be processed for cancellation as soon as the need for cancellation is known for the following guidance in OPNAV Manual 5215.1, of May 2016.

10. Forms. USNA 1531/18 Curriculum Change Request can be obtained from the USNA Official Forms web site at <https://www.usna.edu/AdminSupport/FormsProgram/USNAOfficialFormsList.php>. Forms must be submitted with the curriculum change request to the relevant SCC per paragraph 7b.

S. L. FIREBAUGH

Releasability and distribution: This instruction is cleared for public release and is available electronically only via the Provost Instructions website:
<https://www.usna.edu/Academics/Provost/RulesRegulations/Instructions.php>