

Policy on Creating Interdisciplinary Schools

Category:	Academic
Senate Approval:	Initial approval Jan 13, 2015; May 17, 2022
Date for Next Review:	September 2026
Responsibility:	Provost and Vice President Academic
Contact Officer:	Manager, Office of Provost and Vice President Academic

Policy Statement and Scope

This Policy applies to the introduction of any new school to the University and defines a process for the creation of a new school that will be equivalent to an academic department at the University. The creation of a school will adhere to the Principles and Process as outlined in this Policy.

As set out in the Trent Act, authority to establish and maintain schools at the University rests with Senate. A recommendation to create a school will be made to Senate by the Chair of the Academic Planning & Budget Committee.

Authority to approve schools with respect to finances and facilities rests with the Board. Subsequent to Senate approval, a recommendation will be made to the Board of Governors by the President or Provost.

Definition of a School

A school is a duly constituted academic administrative unit approved by Senate and the Board. A school may be comprised of faculty members drawn from a host of disciplinary and interdisciplinary areas who are committed to fostering research, teaching and outreach activities on an interdisciplinary basis.

Principles

The structure and operations of a school may vary however at a minimum, will be guided by the same overarching principles and criteria, as follows:

- be established to meet the University's strategic goals
- be established for purposes of philanthropy and external relations
- be established to realize a critical mass of scholars in an area of societal and intellectual significance
- align with and support approved academic and institutional priorities
- pursue academic and financial partnerships outside the University
- function as an academic administrative unit and be equivalent to an academic department
- may be responsible for one or more undergraduate and graduate degree programs
- may include the affiliation of one or more research centres

Proposal

The Dean, in consultation with the relevant academic units and faculty, will prepare the proposed recommendation as per the procedures set out in this Policy. The Proposal will include the following documentation:

- 1. Name of New School**
- 2. Effective Date** – on which the new school will commence
- 3. Rationale** – provide a detailed rationale for the proposal to create a school, highlighting how the proposed school aligns with and supports approved academic and institutional priorities
- 4. Degree Programs** – list all undergraduate and graduate degree programs for which the school will be responsible
- 5. TUFA Members** – list all TUFA members who wish to request to be appointed or cross-appointed to the new school or be affiliated with the school, at the time of submission. TUFA faculty can request to be appointed or cross-appointed to the school according to the provisions of the TUFA CA III.9.
- 6. Research Centres** – list all research centres that will be affiliated with the school, at the time of submission
- 7. External Partnerships** – list any external partnerships (current and proposed) that the school will maintain and foster
- 8. Governance Model** – outline the proposed governance model that details organizational processes and structure, including responsibilities of Director, Associate Director (if applicable) and Program Coordinators for specific degrees and programs. Model should be consistent with Article VI.10 Role of Department Chair/Director and VI.11 Appointment of Chairs/Directors and include mechanisms to ensure that disciplinary or interdisciplinary backgrounds of all members of the school will be fairly considered.
 - Director – A school will be headed by a Director who will be a member of TUFA with all the rights and responsibilities of a Chair. They may be assisted by one or more faculty members who serve as coordinators for degree programs for which the school is responsible. The Director will report to a Dean(s) and will work with the Provost & Vice President Academic and the Vice President Research & Innovation on matters of academic partnerships and research and with the Vice President External Relations & Advancement on philanthropic matters.
 - Provisions in the TUFA Collective Agreement referencing departments apply mutatis mutandis to schools. Members appointed or cross-appointed to a school are members of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Arts and Science.
- 9. Budget** – highlight anticipated revenue flows and expenses, including any new anticipated resources required, e.g., staff, space and infrastructure.

Institutional Process

A proposal to create a school may be initiated by faculty, Chair/Director, Dean or the Provost. If the creation of a new school results in one or more academic departments being closed or merged, the relevant parts of the Policy on Creating, Merging or Closing Academic Departments will be followed simultaneously, including formal consultation between the appropriate Dean(s) and the

department(s) in question.

Regardless of where the proposal to create a school is initiated, the Dean(s) will be responsible for following the process below.

1. **Provost's Planning Group** – bring the plan for the school to PPG for discussion
2. **Formal Consultation** – Dean will present plan and invite feedback from:
 - TUFA members who will or may be affected by the proposal
 - Relevant Decanal Councils and the Graduate Program Directors' Committee, as appropriate
3. **TUFA Joint Committee** – Dean consults with Joint Committee for consistency of the plan with the TUFA Collective Agreement
4. **Revision of Proposal** – based on feedback, the Dean(s) may ask the proponents of the proposed school to provide additional information and/or to modify their plan
5. **Academic Planning & Budget Committee** – the Dean will bring the proposal to AP&B for consideration and recommendation to Senate for approval.

The submission will include:

- Decanal Recommendation
- Summary of process and consultation conducted with relevant dates
- Proposal

6. **Senate and Faculty Board** – the recommendation from the Academic Planning & Budget Committee will be forwarded to Faculty Board for Information and to Senate for Approval

Note: Senate Notion of Motion – According to Senate By-law V, motions to Senate to alter the status of any academic department require notice of one month, duly made at the previous Senate meeting.

7. **Board of Governors** – Once approved by Senate, the President or the Provost & Vice President Academic will take the proposal forward to the Board of Governors
 - For Information – If the proposal does not include additional finances or facilities, the Board of Governors will be notified of Senate's decision
 - For Approval – If the proposal requires additional finances or facilities, the full proposal will be submitted to the Board of Governors for approval

Communications Plan

Subsequent to approval by Senate and the Board of Governors (if applicable), the relevant Dean(s) will be responsible for overseeing a communication plan that includes notifying:

- Those affected by the decision, including Chairs/Directors, faculty members
- Those responsible for Websites, Viewbook and Academic Calendars
- Office of Registrar and Recruitment & Admissions
- Students, as appropriate
- Office of External Relations and Advancement
- Trent University Alumni Association
- External partners and stakeholders, as appropriate

Faculty – Transfers and Revised Letters of Appointment

- The relevant Dean will provide affected members with updated letters of appointment or

cross-appointment to reflect affiliation with the new school.

- The Dean will confirm the applicable written criteria for tenure or permanency and promotion for each faculty members, in a manner consistent with Article VII.3.3.2 of the TUFA Collective Agreement.
- In cases where faculty are moving to a newly established school where there is no 'receiving unit', decanal agreement will be sufficient to approve the transfer, in reference to III.9 Voluntary Transfers and Cross-Appointments Between Academic Units and Campuses.