School of Engineering Curriculum Committee (SOECC)

Guidelines and Procedures for Submitting Requests

The SOECC functions as follows.

Requests for Action

Changes to the Bulletin arise as requests for action signed by an appropriate department or program officer, who is usually the department chair or program director but may be a designee. The signature on the request signifies that it is the intent of a department or program. The SOECC does not act on requests from individuals.

Requests for action that require financial commitments from the school, such as hiring more faculty, must include a letter of financial support from the appropriate dean or a designee.

Substantive versus Nonsubstantive Requests

The SOECC chair categorizes each request as either substantive or nonsubstantive.

Nonsubstantive requests include course deletions, typographical errors and, more generally, edits that do not change the meaning of a description of a course or program. The committee and faculty are informed of these, but do not vote on them. The SOECC chair, in communication with the registrar, implements them immediately.

Substantive requests include any and all requests that change the meaning of a course or program description. The SOECC hears and votes upon these; those they approve are heard and voted upon by the SOE as a whole.

Feedback on Substantive Requests

To save time in the process, the SOECC chair may give feedback on substantive requests to the requesting department or program before the SOECC discussion. The SOECC chair may do the following.

- Suggest changes in language so that it conforms better to Tufts standards.
- Request more information, e.g., on prerequisites and course details.
- Forward questions from other SOECC members.

All suggestions of the SOECC chair are subject to departmental approval.

Discussion and Vote

Substantive requests for action are brought before the SOECC for discussion and a vote. The SOECC can act upon a request in four ways.

- **Approve the request**, in which case it goes before the SOE faculty for a vote.
- **Request more information or clarification**, in which case the request is tabled pending a departmental response to the request. The SOECC chair asks the department or program for the information.
• **Amend the request**, in which case the SOECC chair forwards the SOECC’s changes to the requesting department for a vote.

• **Reject the request**, in which case the department receives explicit feedback from the SOECC chair as to why it was rejected.

In practice, rejections are very rare. Grounds for rejection include the following.

- Inappropriate language in the description. This includes language that does not conform to Bulletin standards, as well as confusing or otherwise unenforceable requirements.

- Unacceptable overlap between the proposed changes and other courses or programs available to the same student populations.

- Unforeseen and/or deleterious effects on engineering programs, such as changes to a course that is required in several programs.

- Undocumented financial obligations the change would incur, such as a need to hire more faculty.

**Regular versus Consent Agenda for Faculty Meetings**

Once the SOECC approves a request, the SOECC chair classifies it as part of the regular or consent agenda of the next available SOE faculty meeting.

- A request included in the regular agenda is one the SOECC chair considers to have potential for impact on SOE as a whole, regardless of its details. Regular agenda items include all changes to programs. These items also include any requests the SOECC found to be controversial.

- A request included in the consent agenda is a course modification or new course proposal approved without dissent by the SOECC.

After each of its meetings, the School of Engineering Curriculum Committee (SoE-CC) will prepare a consent agenda for electronic distribution to the SoE Faculty. The consent agenda will comprise all new and modified courses approved with no opposing votes. The SoE Faculty will be given a review period lasting one week after the distribution date. During the review period, any voting member of the SoE Faculty may write to the SoE-CC chair with a request to remove one or more courses from the consent agenda. At the end of the week, all courses remaining on the consent agenda will be transmitted to the Registrar for inclusion in the Tufts online catalog. (Removed courses will be brought to an SoE Faculty meeting for further discussion and, if appropriate, a vote.)

If any member of the SoE-CC opposes a course proposal, that proposal cannot be placed on the consent agenda. Instead, the proposal will be returned to the sponsoring Department with feedback, so that the sponsoring Department has an opportunity to revise and resubmit. If the SoE-CC vote remains split after such a revision, the SoE-CC may decide by majority vote to send the course to a full SoE Faculty meeting for further discussion and, if appropriate, for a vote.
New program proposals cannot be placed on the consent agenda. If approved by the SoE-CC, new program proposals are sent to an SoE Faculty for further discussion and, if appropriate, for a vote. Note: Prior to being sent to the SoE Faculty, new program proposals must be approved by the SoE Dean. If approved by the Dean, by the SoE Faculty, and (in a parallel review process) by the Provost, new programs will be submitted to the Trustees for final approval. A full description of the provost review policy may be found at https://provost.tufts.edu/policies/guidelines-for-proposing-new-academic-programs/

Consent agenda approvals will be archived with the agenda of the following SoE faculty meeting.

Faculty Meeting Procedures
The following takes place during the next available SOE faculty meeting.

- Requests in the regular agenda are discussed and voted by the full faculty of the SOE.
- Requests in the consent agenda are distributed to the faculty.
  - If any one voting faculty member raises a concern about a consent agenda item, that item is promoted to be a discussion item and placed on the regular agenda of the next available SOE faculty meeting.
  - If no faculty members raise concerns about a consent item, the item is considered to be approved by unanimous consent at the faculty meeting.

Changes to the Bulletin
Requests for action approved by the full faculty of the SOE, by either explicit vote or unanimous consent, are entered into the Bulletin by the chair of the SOECC in communication with the registrar.

Special Considerations
- A department may offer a proposed course using a special topics, independent study, or experimental departmental number at most twice before it must ask the SOECC to include its description in the Bulletin.
- Until a course is listed under its own course number in the Bulletin, the SOECC considers it a new course, no matter how many times it may have been offered previously under an experimental or special-topics number.
- The SOECC chair much appreciates all efforts of the chair of the requesting department to seek the opinions of departments with similar courses on the impact of the request.
- Typically, a course description is developed by faculty stakeholders and voted by faculty of the department. This description should be in Bulletin language: a terse list of subjects to be covered, summarizing the academic content of the course.
• The department is free to publish an alternative description of each course in more accessible language on its website; this language is not subject to approval by the SOECC or SOE. This is one appropriate way to advertise a course to prospective students.

• The SOECC does not act on requests to cross-list courses; a cross-listing is a transaction between two department chairs and the registrar. For convenience, the form can be downloaded here.

• The SOECC does not act on requests to approve a course for fulfilling liberal arts distribution requirements. The Academic Review Board (ARB) in the School of Arts and Sciences is responsible for fielding such requests.