**Major Modifications Proposal DRAFT May 16, 2019**

Major modifications are important to the continuous improvement of our programs by allowing the maximum flexibility for programs to evolve over the curriculum cycle. Major modifications are a recognized component of the Quality Council (QC) Framework and are recognized in the McMaster University Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP).

While both the QC and IQAP policies provide guiding principles and high level examples of major modifications, a specific list of standard major modifications has not yet been formalized by McMaster.

We expect that one of the recommendations from our November 2018 audit will be to review how McMaster identifies and categorizes these to improve the efficiency of the administrative process and to provide clarity to programs wishing to evolve their curriculum.

In the absence of the formal audit report, the School of Graduate Studies wishes to propose two categories of major modifications related to the University’s commitment to internationalization.

Specifically, we propose that any currently approved and operating graduate program be permitted to add either a *collaborative stream* or *dual degree* pathway to its existing offerings through a major modification. In both cases, the documentation for approval must address how the program requirements, delivery and structure meet the University and Provincial standards for graduate work.

**Collaborative Stream**

In consultation with the relevant Associate Dean, SGS, programs would be permitted to add a *stream in collaboration with an international partner*. Formal MOUs, signed through the Office of International Affairs, would be required prior to moving through the curriculum process. Tuition arrangements and other matters related to funding would be included therein.

In a Collaborative Stream, existing program requirements would be adapted to include an international experience as an equivalent requirement to an existing component of the program. The benefits of the collaboration must be justified in detail in the curriculum documentation and meet the threshold of existing degree level expectations. The documentation must address how the design, structure, requirements and delivery of the stream support the program learning outcomes and degree level expectations.

**Dual Degree**

In consultation with the relevant Associate Dean, SGS, programs would be permitted to add a *dual degree pathway in conjunction with an international partner*, which would allow students to study in two approved degree programs at the Masters level at the same time and complete the requirements of both.

Formal MOUs, signed through the Office of International Affairs, would be required prior to moving through the curriculum process. Tuition arrangements and other matters related to funding would be included therein.

In the Dual Degree Pathway existing program requirements would be adapted to include an international experience as an equivalent requirement to an existing component of the program. The benefits of the dual degree must be justified in detail in the curriculum documentation and must meet the threshold of existing degree level expectations. The documentation must address how the design, structure, requirements and delivery of the stream support the program learning outcomes and degree level expectations

Proposed Approval Process

Both the collaborative stream and the dual degree pathway would require the following documentation:

* A copy of the signed MOU between McMaster and the partner institution.
* A list of the full requirements, including placements, major research project, etc. of each of the original programs.
* A clear indication of how students would progress to complete the requirements of each program (through the collaborative stream or dual program pathway) including what happens if the student is unsuccessful in any component.
* Identification and explanation of : 1) any double counting and where the international experience will satisfy an equivalent requirement, and 2) indicate any additional material that would be required in place of an original requirement (portfolio, component of the major research project, etc.)
* A clarification of the time expected for completion and which program the student is expected to be enrolled in at either institution.
* A clarification of which streams of the existing program are open to this pathway.

All curriculum documentation and supplementary material will be approved through the normal curriculum process at McMaster and be reported to both Quality Council and the Ministry on an annual basis in accordance with our normal reporting requirements.