

Minutes of a meeting of the **APC Subcommittee on Courses and Teaching Programs (SCTP)** held Thursday, November 9, 2023 at 3:00 pm via Teams.

**PRESENT:** Chris Buddle (**Chair**), Jason Carmichael, Andrea Di Stefano, Jaye Ellis, Harsimran Kapoor, Lalia Katchelewa, Alissa Levine, Laurent Mydlarski, Josephine Nalbantoglu, Carolyn Samuel, Cindy Smith (**Secretary to SCTP**), David Stephens

**REGRETS:**

Information on SCTP Course and Program Guidelines and past SCTP meeting Minutes/Notes/Reports may be found at [www.mcgill.ca/sctp](http://www.mcgill.ca/sctp). Current eCalendars may be found here: <https://www.mcgill.ca/study/2023-2024/>.

Introductions were made and the Chair welcomed the newest members: Mr. Harsimran Kapoor, PGSS student representative, and Ms. Lalia Katchelewa, interim SSMU student representative [until a permanent 2023-2024 SSMU student representative is confirmed].

The Chair requested that SCTP members provide the Secretary, in writing, any suggested changes to documents in terms of grammatical errors or typos within 24 hours following the meeting so that the meeting Minutes may be completed promptly.

02.01 The Agenda was approved as circulated.

02.02 The Minutes from the last meeting held October 12, 2023 were approved as circulated.

### 02.03 **BUSINESS ARISING**

(a) Chair's Topic of Discussion: McGill Guidelines on Proposing Concentrations/Options  
– 23-SCTP-10-02REVISED

As initiated at the last meeting, SCTP is discussing revising point 5 of the Guidelines for Proposing Concentrations/Options, specifically in relation to “No concentration/option may be proposed for doctoral/Ph.D. programs, as the dissertation may focus on a related sub-topic/subject of the discipline/program.” The SCTP Secretary provided examples of existing doctoral/Ph.D. programs that currently offer a concentration/option.

The first element that SCTP wants to ensure is that a concentration/option of a doctoral/Ph.D. program has a distinct focus of study, while the second element is that the program have a minimum number of different credit requirements than the existing program. The goal is to make these guidelines as concise as possible and make the principles clear. SCTP's role is to ensure that program requirements align with the University's set parameters.

It was noted that students want to be able to take a concentration/option at this level in order to focus on a slightly different topic of the subject. Past discussion at SCTP during the creation of the guidelines included the concern that employers would not be in favour of a concentration/option appearing on student transcripts, that a concentration/option may dilute the main focus or subject of the program; a comment was made that no one looks at student transcripts.

It was suggested that when a unit proposes a new concentration/option of an existing program, that SCTP encourage the proposing unit to consider retiring obsolete or low-enrolment programs that they currently offer. The SCTP Chair noted that his Office conducts course retirement exercises periodically, and it is the role of the AP(T&AP) to review program offerings with the academic units.

It is important for a program to provide theoretical background of a sub-area within a program through courses. Many current programs include a vast choice of courses in the lists of complementary courses, many of which are offered by other units, which allows for flexibility without having the choices vary from the subject of the

### 02.03 BUSINESS ARISING

- (a) Chair's Topic of Discussion: McGill Guidelines on Proposing Concentrations/Options  
– 23-SCTP-10-02REVISED [continued]

program or area of the concentration/option; these courses provide coherence and sensibility to the pedagogy and curriculum.

In response to a query concerning whether a concentration/option would have a different comprehensive examination course from the existing program, it was noted that all doctoral/Ph.D. students, regardless of their program, take the same course offered by that unit – this is usually a single course that is numbered 701.

The SCTP Chair drafted the following revised text - it was noted that “~~minimal~~” should read “minimum”; also, the SCTP Secretary added “different” to the text:

**5. A concentration/option may be proposed for a doctoral/Ph.D. program provided it is a distinct program of study, and has a ~~minimal~~ minimum of 12 different credits selected from a list of required and complementary courses.**

SCTP approved the proposed text; the revised guidelines will be reported to APC for approval.

Mr. Di Stefano voiced concern that ES staff has in relation to point 3 of the guidelines that states “A concentration/option must have the same overall credit weight as the existing program, except in exceptional circumstances – accreditation purposes, for instance. A proposed concentration/option that has a higher program credit weight than the existing program must be justified and explained fully in the proposal’s rationale.”

The School of Human Nutrition offers a concentration/option of their M.Sc.(Applied) program that is 83 credits while the other programs under the same degree and major offered by the School are all 45 credits; even though ES does not include concentrations/options in their GDEU reporting of programs offered by the University to the Ministry, they are concerned that a student within the 83-credit program [these students are reported to the Ministry as being under the same major only] may be audited by the Ministry and the University will be asked to explain why the student is doing almost double the number of credits than other students within the same major [but with a different concentration/option]. He noted that Ms. Jocelyn Gilbert [ES] will discuss this issue with Mr. Real Del Degan [Office of the Deputy Provost (Student Life and Learning)]. Mr. Di Stefano queried whether the 83-credit program could be revised to have a different major, to which the SCTP Secretary responded that doing so would mostly likely result in the Ministry considering this to be a new program requiring their approval. The SCTP Chair agreed to have further discussion on this issue at a future SCTP meeting.

### 02.04 OTHER BUSINESS

The following document was received by SCTP – there were no queries.

- a) **FOR INFORMATION:** 2023-2024 AP (T&AP) Report 1 to SCTP – September 14, 2023.

The meeting ended at 3:24 pm.