Course: Developing Technical Standards for UBC Professional Programs

By Dr. Jane Jarrow

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Traditionally, professional programs have developed technical standards that define those elements of practice that all students must demonstrate successfully to complete the program. If your program has such a “hands-on” component, but has never created a formal set of technical standards that students should consider when choosing a major, this class will help you think through your next steps. If your program has technical standards already in place that have not been reviewed for some time, this class will help you in reviewing your existing standards and considering a fresh start. Technology is changing the way we do almost everything. It is likely that some of your standards are tied to practices that have changed dramatically, while some of the things expected of new professionals in your field are not accounted for in your existing standards. There are also new parameters being established through legislation and significant court cases that should be considered. This four-week class will provide all that and more.

This course will prepare faculty to go through an interactive process, facilitated by expertise from course instructor Dr. Jarrow and the Centre for Accessibility, to create or reshape technical standards for their programs. The course will provide immediately practical and useful information on the most common issues, concerns, and solutions to develop appropriate standards/criteria for selection, inclusion, and successful completion of technical and professional programs. It will include specific direction for engaging faculty in the kind of studied review that will allow them to focus their technical standards on the curriculum to be mastered, rather than an arbitrary list of physical skills and abilities that are presumed to assure competence.

Topics to be presented/discussed:

• The 12 Operating Principles of developing technical standards
• Why are eligibility criteria/technical standards a common "battleground" in higher education, and why is it so important to get involved in this issue?
• What do "otherwise qualified" and "reasonable accommodation" mean as applied to technical standards and eligibility criteria?
• What common mistakes are encountered in framing eligibility criteria or technical standards?
• What general arguments are made for development of criteria/standards and for instance on questionable wording or requirement? How to combat stereotypes and bias
• Court cases and findings dealing with issues of standards/criteria
• A new way of thinking about (and developing) technical standards that are: faculty driven, curriculum-based and legally defensible.
• Trouble-shooting existing requirements, implementing new practices

Course delivery:

The course will be conducted solely through a private class email listserv. There is no synchronous component, no obligation to participate at a certain time or for a given length of time. You can be as active (posting
comments, questions) or passive (“listening in”) in participating as you wish. Each morning, you will receive a “lesson,” delivered through the class listserv, along with prompts for some discussion questions that might be of interest regarding the day’s content. The lessons will provide both information/explanation and a wealth of online resources to explore at your leisure.

**Phase 2: Ongoing Consultation**

Dr. Jarrow will be available through June 30, 2019, for email and telephone consultation, to review and comment on technical standards developed by various programs in response to training. The Centre for Accessibility is available on an ongoing basis for consultation.

*Source: Adapted from course descriptions by Dr. Jane Jarrow.*