



Academic Endorsement Principles

As of 03.08.2017

UArctic endorsement:

UArctic endorsement of academic activities at its member institutions shall be a prestigious additional sign of quality. The UArctic Endorsement supplements and builds on, but shall not replace, formal academic quality assurance carried out at higher education institutions by institutional academic senates, national accreditation bodies, and similar entities. UArctic endorsement is proof of adherence to the UArctic values.

General:

- **Endorsement is open to many formats**, from full degree programs, formally endorsed by the host institution to "Thematic Network-based teaching" (teaching consortia, PhD networks, short courses, field schools, etc.) and to programs and courses at any university level (Undergraduate, Masters, PhD).
- **A program of study follows the ECTS definition** of "A set of educational components, based on learning outcomes, which are recognized for the award of a specific qualification".
- **UArctic requires prior approval by institutions involved.** The programs and courses need to have passed the member institution's normal academic quality assurance procedures for content, as well as any required inter-university agreements.
- **UArctic endorsement focuses on UArctic values.** The review will consider whether the program is relevant to circumpolar, inclusive and reciprocal, and UArctic's mission.
- **Programs and courses must be ready to accept students**, if not yet delivering teaching.
- **Programs and courses in a planning stage can receive a support letter from UArctic**, but will not be awarded endorsement before operational. Exceptions may be made for one- time offerings or other special circumstances.

Endorsement criteria for a study program or course:

- **The activity must be offered by a network whose lead partner is a UArctic member**, and the program/course should already be in the UArctic Catalogue

Database. Joint programs by networks of UArctic members are especially valued, particularly programs offered by Thematic Networks and UArctic Institutes. This includes single courses at one institution that are part of a UArctic-related international education cooperation.

- **Single UArctic-institution courses or programs may be considered** if of special importance and circumpolar scope.
- **UArctic welcomes both joint, parallel, and other forms of shared offerings**, noting however, that in joint degree-granting programs, special university, national, or international requirements may apply.
- **There should be a strong international networking component.** This can be demonstrated through delivery location, joint teaching, joint curriculum development, and inclusion of student and faculty mobility.
- **There should be strong northern relevance in content** and learning outcomes.
- **UArctic values (circumpolar, inclusive, and reciprocal) and practice:** respect for multiple systems of knowledge, promoting multidisciplinary understanding, and balance across different regions of the North.

Benefits:

- Highlighted on UArctic website (News, Catalogue, etc.)
- A special UArctic endorsement logo that can be used by the program or course in their promotional materials.
- Noted as newly endorsed program or course at annual meetings of the UArctic Council.
- Granted right to issue UArctic certificates to students who complete the program/course.

Further expectations:

- Report student numbers annually
- Funding statement (estimate of funding sources and amounts), every 3 years
- Review of program every 3 years to verify that it is still functioning and criteria still met.

Endorsement Process

- Applications are reviewed by the Academic Leadership Team and approved by UArctic Vice-President Academic.
- Endorsement requests will be submitted via an e-form on the UArctic website.
- Applications will include a letter of commitment from relevant dean or similar official stating how the program meets the host institution's endorsement criteria.

- The office of the VP Academic acknowledges requests and ensures completeness of submitted materials before forwarding them to the Academic Leadership Team.
- Applications can be submitted at any time and will be reviewed three times a year, and review process will take no longer than 2 months.
- Yearly deadlines will be:
 - May 15
 - September 15
 - January 15

Endorsement Follow-up

- The office of VP-Academic will provide a template for a UArctic diploma to be issued by leaders of endorsed programs and courses.
- The office of VP-Academic shall collect statistics on student numbers and diplomas issued, and submit this information to the UArctic International Secretariat as part of the annual reporting process. The VP-Academic shall present annual results to the Council.
- The Council and its leadership review endorsement principles regularly.

For questions about this process or the status of applications, please contact:

Marie-Sylvestre Olesen
UArctic Academic Programs Coordinator

University of Alaska Fairbanks
+1 (907) 474-2679
molesen@alaska.edu