
ACADEMIC PROGRAM AND UNIT REVIEWS

AUTHORITY President

PRIMARY CONTACT

RELATED POLICIES

POLICY

Academic program and unit reviews shall be carried out under the general supervision of the Dean responsible for the program or unit and the Provost and Vice-President, Academic.

All academic programs and units will normally undergo a review every five years, although a review may be undertaken at any time if it is requested by the Dean or Provost and Vice-President, Academic.

The process involves the review of two components: the academic program to be reviewed and the unit in which the program is based. Many factors contribute to the academic quality of the program. The administrative setting, the research and scholarly activities of the faculty members, the material resources and physical infrastructure, and the governance mechanisms all affect the quality of academic programs and the educational experiences of students. Reviews are intended to ensure and improve quality of both the programs and the unit and to foster a culture of continuous improvement throughout the institution.

For those programs which are subject to external accreditation reviews, those reviews will normally be considered as fulfilling the requirements of the present policy, unless a additional review is considered necessary by the Dean responsible for the program or the Provost and Vice-President, Academic.

DEFINITIONS

- **Program:** For the purposes of this policy, a program is defined as a set of courses approved by Senate to constitute all or part of the requirements for an undergraduate or a graduate degree or certificate or diploma offered by UFV.
- **Academic unit:** An academic unit is an administrative grouping of faculty and staff and the organizational structure that delivers programs, such as a faculty, department, or school.
- **Program goals:** Program goals state for students, instructors and program/course evaluators of what the program expects to achieve.
- **Learning objectives:** Learning objectives are a statement of what the student should learn or accomplish at the end of the program or course.
- **Learning outcomes:** Learning outcomes demonstrate what the student actually learns or achieves.

PROCEDURES/GUIDELINES

The Purpose of Program Reviews

Program reviews are designed to:

1. Determine the coherence of the program standards, design, and goals and review the alignment of the program's standards, educational goals and learning objectives with the general goals of the institution, as well as external standards, as they apply.
2. Determine whether the program has been designed, structured and delivered so as to ensure that students have achieved their learning outcomes.
3. Determine the appropriateness of the admission requirements and practices of the method of delivery for achieving the learning outcomes.
4. Determine the appropriateness of the specific curricular and pedagogical policies and practices of the program in relation to the learning outcomes.
5. Determine the appropriateness of the methods used for the assessment and evaluation of student progress.
6. Determine that the number and expertise of the faculty and staff are sufficient to enable students' success.
7. Evaluate the administrative policies and practices of the unit delivering the program, and its efficient and effective utilization of human/physical/financial resources and, where necessary, to suggest improvements for effectiveness and efficiency.
8. Suggest solutions to existing or anticipated problems and offer advice on how the program may be enhanced and its delivery be improved.

The Focus of Program and Unit Reviews

The goals of a program and unit review will form the basis for defining the focus and scope of each review. The curricular content of a program, its admission requirements, its mode of delivery, and the basis of evaluation of student performance are all related to the overall quality of any academic program, as is the commitment of the necessary human and other resources for achieving the program goals and helping students achieve success.

Program reviews will focus on:

1. Indicators that provide evidence of quality of faculty, students and learning outcomes in terms of accepted standards for academic, professional and/or occupational programs:
 - Degree level standards;
 - Credential recognition;
 - Curriculum/program content;
 - Design and structure of the program;
 - Learning objectives and learning outcomes;
 - Pedagogic methodologies/program delivery;
 - Student admission, transfer and residency criteria;
 - Complement of faculty members;
 - Program resources;
 - Program advisory mechanisms;
 - Originality, particularly in relationship to academic programs offered by other post-secondary institutions in British Columbia;
 - Research opportunities for students;
 - Research productivity of faculty members;
 - Quality of research supervision (particularly for graduate programs);
 - Quality of supervision of field or clinical practica (where applicable);
 - International learning opportunities for students;
 - Relationship to university's strategic directions and stated mission in teaching, learning and

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- research;
 - Alignment with faculty, school, and/or departmental priorities and stated goals in teaching, research, and community service;
 - Alignment with existing academic strengths.
2. Program Administration:
- Administrative structure and support;
 - Technical support;
 - For graduate programs, research infrastructure;
 - Library and related support;
 - Teaching and learning assessment;
 - Utilization of resources, especially human resource.
3. Alignment with the needs of the community and/or industry:
- Labour market demand;
 - Post graduation experience/employment of students.
4. Enrolment, retention and student success:
- Enrolments in the program (effectiveness of existing strategies for student recruitment and projected; student numbers for the coming five years): trends over time;
 - FTE generated and other sources of program funding: trends over time;
 - Program completion and graduation rates;
 - Student demand: current and projected;
 - Potential of the program to attract new students (market);
 - Strategies for student retention and projected rates of retention and degree completion;
 - Availability of financial assistance and awards to students;
 - Specialized access programs, and associated costs, if required;
 - Access to academic advising.

The Review Process

The goal is that reviews should be open, objective, critical, and constructive. The process for reviewing each program (or set of programs) shall consist of the following main elements:

1. The preparation of a self-assessment report by the academic unit delivering the program to be reviewed;
2. The selection of a review committee, in consultation with the Dean of Provost and Vice-President, Academic as appropriate. Normally, the committee would consist of one internal member, two external members, of which one external member is appointed chair;
3. A site visit by the review committee;
4. The preparation of a review report by the review committee;
5. An opportunity for the unit delivering the program and the Dean to respond to the review report;
6. A review of the response prepared by the academic unit and the Dean by the Provost and Vice-President, Academic; and,
7. An action plan for addressing the conclusions and recommendations of the review report and response.

The review process will be supported by the Office of Institutional Research. A budget for academic reviews will reside in the Office of the Provost and Vice-President, Academic and funds will be transferred to respective Deans to cover the costs of the reviews. Normally, the review process is coordinated by the Office of the Dean in consultation with the unit under review.

The order in which programs are reviewed will be determined by the Provost and Vice-President, Academic in consultation with the Deans of the respective Faculties and Faculty Councils, and will

form part of an institutional multi-year program review plan. Under exceptional circumstances, a Dean may request a review of a particular program and/or academic unit.

Program reviews are conducted by a review committee and guided by a self-study conducted by the academic unit responsible for a program or set of programs. Additional information may be requested by the committee before or during the site visit by the review committee. A self-study report is an opportunity for the unit to engage in self-reflection and an analysis of the strength and weaknesses of all aspects of a program or set of programs. Review committees are appointed by the Provost and Vice-President, Academic upon the recommendation of the Dean responsible for the program or unit under review. The review committee normally will consist of two reviewers external to UFV, and a third who is a UFV faculty member from outside the Faculty of the program under review. This faculty member should be someone familiar with the operation of the program under review and shall participate fully in the review. The chair of the review committee normally will be selected from the two external members.

The self-study will be developed in cooperation with the Office of Institutional Research.

The purpose of the external review is to:

- Provide an opportunity for the members of a unit to reflect on the quality and possibilities of their programs;
- Provide an external perspective on the program in terms of its comparability with similar programs elsewhere, its stature on a provincial and national scale, and its success in terms of its stated objectives;
- Make constructive recommendations and suggest actions that will improve the program.

Stages in the Review Process

1. An overall multi-year institutional plan for program reviews is developed by the Provost and Vice-President, Academic, in consultation with Deans and Faculty Councils, and is submitted and approved by the Senate.
2. The Provost and Vice-President, Academic, in consultation with the Deans of the respective Faculties, confirms annually the programs to be reviewed in the following year. The Dean then informs the academic unit(s) responsible for the program(s) to be reviewed.
3. An orientation session is organized for those responsible for self-studies in academic units and programs designated to conduct reviews in the subsequent academic year. This session will include an examination of the process, the required contents of the self-study document and the nature of the data to be provided by the Office of Institutional Research.
4. The academic unit establishes a committee to prepare its self-study of its program. This committee may also, where appropriate, seek the advice of others such as representatives of industry, professions and practical training programs.
5. The academic unit shall develop a list of at least four potential external and two potential internal reviewers. The Dean, in consultation with the Provost and Vice-President, Academic, shall appoint the review committee, taking into consideration the recommendations from the department.
6. Selection of an external review committee and the Chair by the Dean, in consultation with the Provost and Vice-President, Academic.
7. The Office of Institutional Research provides academic units with survey outcomes and enrolment data and other relevant information.
8. The academic unit conducts the self-study.
9. The academic unit submits the self-study to the Dean, who either accepts or returns it to the unit for further revisions.
10. The self-study report is reviewed and assessed by the external review committee.
11. The academic unit submits additional documentation if requested by the external committee.
12. Site visit.

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13. The external review committee submits its confidential report to the Dean (within a set period of time after the site visit).
 14. The Dean forwards the reviewers' report to the unit.
 15. The academic unit develops its response, within a set period of time, after receiving the reviewers' report, and submits it to the Dean.
 16. After consultation with the Provost and Vice-President, Academic and the academic unit, the Dean submits to the Senate: a) the self-study; b) the reviewers' report; c) the academic unit's response, and d) his/her executive summary (commenting on the outcomes, findings and conclusions of the review and providing recommendations arising from the review – including an “action plan” for implementing the recommendations emerging from the review).
 17. When some of the recommendations arising from the review go beyond the purview of the Dean, the Provost and Vice-President, Academic provides a response to Senate.
 18. The Provost and Vice-President, Academic reports annually to the Senate and the Board of Governors on the results of all program reviews, including copies of the “Dean's Executive Summary” for each review concluded during the previous year.

Program Self-Study by the Academic Unit

The self-study conducted by the academic unit provides an opportunity to assess every dimension of the program's academic quality. The background and history of the program and the academic unit responsible for the program shall be summarized as a context for the delivery of the program.

The self-study produced by the academic unit should follow a recommended format, and should include:

- ❑ A statement of the goals and learning objectives of the program, changes in these since the last review or since the program was initially approved, and their consistency with the mandate and academic priorities of the university.
- ❑ The past, present and projected student enrolment in the program, including majors and number of full-time equivalents (FTEs).
- ❑ Admissions information, including:
 - admission requirements and qualifications of incoming students;
 - enrolment targets and numbers of students registered; and,
 - enrolment patterns with respect to entrants, transfer students, and/or other categories relevant to the program.
- ❑ The program, including:
 - the curriculum as presented in the calendar, incorporating course titles and hours;
 - major options/streams within the program, if applicable; and,
 - the identification of any courses that are not offered on a regularly accessible basis.
- ❑ A summary of how each course contributes to achieving the goals and learning objectives of the program. This may include:
 - subject matter, methods of delivery, especially approaches to pedagogy;
 - typical class sizes and trends in student enrolments;
 - all course outlines, as an appendix; and,
 - procedures used to evaluate and address course and instructional quality.
- ❑ Student retention and graduation rates.
- ❑ The structure, content, and objectives/focus of the program relative to its comparators in universities inside and outside of British Columbia (with an explanation of the rationale for the choice of comparators).
- ❑ An explanation of any variations from UFV standard policies on grading, promotion, and academic standing, if applicable.
- ❑ Faculty and staff, including:
 - Full-time and part-time instructional resources;
 - Curricula vitae of all faculty members who have been teaching in the program in the last three years; and,

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- A summary of faculty in the program indicating:
 - name
 - highest earned degree and year
 - tenure status
 - teaching assignments
 - summary of teaching evaluations
 - scholarly activity, which could include a listing of peer-reviewed and other journal articles (current and preceding five years), chapters, monographs, policy papers, reports, presentations, conferences
 - community service activities
 - Description of the resources available to the program (labs, student spaces, computing facilities, library resources, equipment, and other categories as appropriate).
 - Information about collaborative arrangements (with other academic units or institutions) when applicable.
 - The findings of representative surveys (conducted by the Office of Institutional Research) of current students' and recent graduates' perceptions of the program's effectiveness in preparing them for careers and graduate studies.
 - The results of surveys/consultations with representatives of industry, professions or practical training programs, as appropriate.
 - Details of the unit's operating and capital budgets for the previous five years.
 - Assessment of program strengths and weaknesses and level of success in meeting its stated objectives (with a description of the criteria, performance indicators, and evaluative tools employed by the program as a basis for its self-study), including:
 - consistency of the program with the university's mission and strategic plan and the standards, goals and learning objectives for the degree;
 - appropriateness and effectiveness of the admission requirements;
 - appropriateness of the program's structure, curriculum, delivery modes and evaluation methods to satisfy the learning objectives;
 - appropriateness and effectiveness of the utilization of resources, especially human resources; and,
 - evidence of quality of faculty, students and overall program success.
 - A preliminary response by the academic unit to the program's strengths and weaknesses identified through the self-study.

Reference: The Board policy on Development and Review of Administrative Policies (BRP-220.06) empowers the President to create and revise policies and procedures consistent with Policy Directions of the Board. This policy is guided by Board policy direction University Education Directions and Planning (BPD-202) and section 35.2 (6) (f) of the University Act.