

Guidelines for Academic Units
Participating in UPEI Quality Assurance Reviews of Academic Programs
(Prepared by the Senate Academic Planning and Curriculum Committee as required by UPEI
Senate Policy on Quality Assurance of Academic Programs)

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The following *Guidelines for Academic Units Participating in UPEI Quality Assurance Reviews of Academic Programs* support the *UPEI Senate Policy for Quality Assurance of Academic Programs*.

Reviews of Academic Programs are to be formative and encourage reflection on the mission, vision, and values of the University. UPEI's mission, vision, and values focus on developing UPEI students to their full potential. In support of UPEI's mission and vision, program reviews are to be student-centered focusing on the quality of education and educational experiences UPEI delivers in its contribution to the betterment of students and society.

The criteria outlined in the following document are specific to the assessment process for the cyclical review of academic programs at UPEI. Specific detail is provided on the criteria relating to self-study, the Advisory Team, the Advisory Team report and recommendations, and resulting program action plan. Together, the criteria outline the role, duties, and expectations associated with reviews of credit bearing exit credential programs and their related activities at UPEI. The process supports continuous reflection and planning related to teaching, learning, research, creative endeavors and scholarship that underpin quality programs and student experiences.

The *UPEI Senate Policy on Quality Assurance of Academic Programs* requires reviews of programs to take place once every seven years. Program reviews are comprised of three parts:

1. creation of a self-study (by the Academic Program);
2. evaluation of the Academic Program (based on the self-study, site visit, and interviews) and resulting recommendations (by the Advisory Team); and
3. development of an action plan based on the self-study and the Advisory Team report and recommendations (by the Academic Program).

As the body with responsibility for overseeing the Senate Policy on Quality Assurance for Academic Programs, the UPEI Senate Academic Planning and Curriculum Committee (APCC) has developed the following guidelines for each of these review components.

Self-study

The self-study is student-centered for the purpose of assessing the program's strengths, challenges, areas needing improvement, risks, opportunities, and strategic direction. The self-assessment reviews each area of the programming rationale, planning and delivery, including but

not limited to:

- An overall review of teaching and learning, scholarship, research, and service with the lens of how the Academic Program is meeting its goals in respect to student learning, student experiences, and overall student success as addressed within the University mission, vision, and values.
- The self-study is both descriptive and analytical. It provides the opportunity for the program to assess its ability to meet defined goals and objectives, including learning outcomes that are communicated to students and broader stakeholders, and therefore serve as educational expectations.
- The self-study includes faculty and staff. In addition, the review includes current students and, if possible, recent graduates of the Academic Program/s being reviewed. The participation of key stakeholders, such as graduate employers, is also encouraged as is the engagement of student clubs and societies directly related to the program being reviewed.
- If an academic program falls under accreditation, the results of the most recent accreditation process and outcomes may substitute for this portion of review.
- In addition to the self-study, the Academic Program provides the Advisory Team with its last program review and reviewers' recommendations, as well as a summary of progress made by the Academic Program on recommendations. This provides the Advisory Team with context on program progress and changes.

In 10-20 pages (not counting appendices), the self-study should examine the following aspects:

1. *Fulfilment of Mission: Teaching*

This section of the self-study should establish the Academic Program's program rationale and structure, including student-focused programming goals and objectives, program design and delivery, and indicators of student success. Items to be considered include, but are not limited to:

- aims and objectives of programming curriculum;
- program structure, including pathway to graduation, curriculum objectives and program goals;
- teaching methods;
- modes of program delivery (including on-line and blended delivery) and supports for learners;
- types of experiential learning embedded in the program;
- methods of evaluating and assessing student achievement and learning outcomes;
- extent of curriculum renewal and changes to student learning outcomes;
- clarity of program student-centered program goals and assessment methods;

- identified gaps between curricular components and program goals;
- student satisfaction and opinion (Note: As part of the preparation of the self-study, the Academic Program unit should consult with current students and recent graduates to discuss the items identified above. This may include student societies and clubs directly related to the program.)

2. *Fulfilment of Mission: Research and Scholarly Endeavors*

This section should establish the programming goals and objectives with respect to overall faculty research and scholarly endeavors within the academic unit and how they contribute to programming and quality student learning and experiences. It should assess the general level and quality of research activity in context of these goals and objectives. Details of research activity and scholarly endeavors are to be reported in the appendices.

3. *Fulfilment of Mission: Service*

This section should establish the Academic Program's goals and objectives with respect to service activities. Considering these goals and objectives, it should assess the level and quality of service to the University, discipline, and community provided by members of the program.

4. *Fulfilment of Mission: Balance among Teaching, Research, and Service*

This section should assess and make recommendations about the relative weight and distribution of work among teaching, research, and service within the programming. The program should strive to identify a balance among the three that will allow the overall program and faculty members to fulfil all parts of the mission.

5. *Fulfilment of Mission: Relationship to Broader External Context*

This section should assess the overall goals and objectives of the program in relation to the current and future trends relating to the discipline or field of enquiry, the mission and goals of the University and, where applicable, the mission and goals of the relevant academic unit. This includes indicating the overall success of students throughout their program and beyond graduation.

6. *Infrastructure and support:* Taking into account budget, resource constraints, and realities and focusing on the ability of the program to achieve its aims and objectives, the Academic Program unit should assess and make recommendations about the levels and quality of support services and facilities. These might include:

1. staffing;
2. library facilities and supports;
3. facilities such as classrooms, laboratories, information technology; and
4. non-salary budget.

The self-study should be undertaken with due regard for fiscal and resource possibilities and

constraints. It is understood that every program and home faculty at UPEI would offer students more choices and do more research and service with additional resources. An indication that there is a need for new resources to deliver the program and associated outcomes in the manner promoted to students should be accompanied by data. Suggestions to expand the program/s being reviewed should be supported by evidence of enrolment demand, associated sector trends, and demonstrate connectivity to the goals and objectives of the program, and the strategic goals of the home Faculty. In all cases, program changes must strive to support fulfilment of the University's mission, vision, and values. Cases for programming expansion need to be accompanied by an analysis of the fiscal implications (expenditures and revenues) for the University.

7. *Appendices*

To provide appropriate information and context to members of the Advisory Team, the following information is to be appended to the self-study.

1. **Program Profiles (summary of last seven years or since last review)**

Program profiles are organized by the Office of the Vice-President Academic and Research on behalf of APCC and are generated from University data. The profiles provide quantitative summaries of:

- a) faculty and instructional resources;
- b) support staff resources;
- c) courses and sections taught;
- d) course enrolments;
- e) student retention/attrition;
- f) graduated students;
- g) class size;
- h) research grants held; and
- i) non-salary budget.

The Office of the Vice-President and Research coordinates and provides the Program Profile to the Academic Program Lead and Dean to inform the self-study.

2. **Summary of Quality Assurance Progress Since Last Program Review**

To demonstrate continual improvement and provide transparent timely communications, a summary on steps taken by the Academic Program unit to implement changes resulting from most recent self-study and external review should be appended.

3. **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)**

- a) provide an overview of EDI as it relates to the program/s teaching complement, and staffing;
- b) EDI as it relates to the student body; and
- c) report on ways in which the Department and Faculty encourage EDI within the

learning environment through curriculum as well as recruitment.

4. Reconciliation

- a) report on ways in which the Program and Faculty encourage truth and reconciliation within the learning environment (including curriculum, teaching, research, service, and learning outcomes);
- b) provide an overview on how reconciliation is accounted for in recruiting faculty, and staff, and pathways to recruiting and admitting students; and
- c) demonstrate how the Program and Faculty engage with University Indigenous leaders.

5. Results of Surveys of Current Students and Recent Graduates

On behalf of APCC, the Vice-President Academic and Research Office distributes surveys to current students and graduates of program/s being reviewed. Survey data is provided to the respective Departmental Chair and Faculty Dean. The current student survey and recent graduate student survey are outlined in Appendix A. Up to two changes to survey questions are allowed through a request to and approval by APCC.

6. Faculty CVs

Current CVs are to be provided for each program faculty member teaching in the program undergoing review.

7. Academic Calendar

Sections of the Academic Calendar that pertain to the program/s, courses, and related information of the programming undergoing review are to be provided.

8. Course Outlines

Samples of course outlines as well as student assignments, tests, exams, and evaluation methods should be provided to provide the Advisory Team with information on program content, delivery, student evaluation, etc.

9. Survey Instruments

Examples/copies of student survey instruments should be provided for the Advisory Team's information.

The Advisory Team and Report

Advisory Team

1. See *Guidelines for Advisory Teams Participating in UPEI Quality Assurance of Academic Programs* for details on expectations for and responsibilities of Advisory Teams.

Summary of Advisory Team composition:

- a) at least two external review experts, with one ideally being from a University outside the Atlantic region;
- b) the Advisory Team will identify one of the external review experts as the Advisory Team Lead. The Advisory Team Lead will be responsible for coordination, preparation, and submission of the Advisory Team Report and Recommendations.
- c) one internal reviewer (a senior faculty member from a UPEI Faculty other than the home Faculty of the program undergoing review) to assist the external reviewers in the process and provide clarifications on institutional context;
- d) participants should avoid any real or perceived conflict of interest as per *MPHEC Guidelines for the Selection of External Program Assessors*; and
- e) consideration of UPEI's commitment to EDI is required in selecting the Advisory Team.

Advisory Team Report

1. Based on examination of the program's self-study (including student, program, research, and financial data), as well as the site visit, interviews, consultations, and expectations outlined in the *UPEI Guidelines for Advisory Teams*, the Advisory Team will submit its report to the UPEI Office of the Vice-President, Academic and Research, no later than one month following its site visit. The Office of the Vice-President, Academic and Research, will distribute the Advisory Team Report and Recommendations to APCC for review.
2. In summary, the Advisory Team report will:
 - a) include an executive summary;
 - b) consider and address criteria outlined in this document; and
 - c) provide recommendations to program leadership that can be used as a critical reference for the development of a multi-year Action Plan by program Faculty and leadership that outlines continual improvements to ensure the ongoing quality of the academic program, program delivery, and student experiences.

Action Plan

1. No later than one month after of receiving the Advisory Team report, the Academic Program unit will develop an Action Plan that responds to the Advisory Team report and recommendations.
2. The Action Plan is to provide a concise report and should be structured similar to the self-study and Advisory Team report.

3. An Action Plan based on recommendations of the Advisory Team report is required to be shared with APCC for review and approval. The outcome of the review and APCC decision will then be shared with UPEI Senate as part of APCC's annual update to Senate on quality assurance reviews.
4. The Action Plan must be student-focused and:
 - a) provide a multi-year plan to address any identified challenges, opportunities, or recommendations, and provide an outline for strategic directions, continual improvements, and related initiatives to ensure quality of academic programs, delivery, and overall student experiences;
 - b) establish a schedule of annual reporting to provide the UPEI Senate (via APCC) with progress on stated goals;
 - c) include a communication plan through which the program leadership will provide an update to the UPEI learning community and stakeholders on the results of its quality assurance process and key deliverables; and
 - d) provide an estimate of resource implications associated with the plan.