

University of Prince Edward Island	Policy No: govsenacd0004	Revision
Policy Title: UPEI Senate Policy for Quality Assurance of Academic Programs		Revision Date: May 5, 2022
Review Date: May 2028		

1. PURPOSE

This policy provides an internal quality assurance framework to ensure that Academic Programs and their related functions at the University of Prince Edward Island (“UPEI” or “the University”) are engaged in an ongoing, cyclical quality assurance process. As a formative process, quality assurance of academic programs supports UPEI’s mission, vision, values, and long-term strategic goals, and demonstrates accountability and transparency.

- a) To encourage reflection on the mission of the University and the goals of the Academic Program unit and achievement of that mission.
- b) To support continual improvements in student-focused programming, learning experiences, and overall student success.
- c) To encourage planning and the identification of strategic directions.
- d) To enable continual improvements in teaching, learning, research and service
- e) To promote accountability within the framework of University autonomy.
- f) To inform UPEI’s learning community and the broader community about the activities of the University, its academic programs and ongoing commitment to quality education, educational experiences, and student achievement.

2. PRINCIPLES

The policy is based on the following principles:

- a) Evidence-based reviews are a crucial component of UPEI’s quality assurance activities.
- b) Formative reviews of Academic Programs encourage reflection on the mission, vision, and values of the University.
- c) 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.
- d) Faculty-based reviews of academic programs support continual improvements in teaching,

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learning, research, scholarly endeavors, and service through a student-centered assessment of program goals.

- e) Academic Program reviews are one means by which Faculties provide transparency to their stakeholders about their Academic Programs, planning, and initiatives.
- f) Academic Program reviews contribute to the ongoing development and delivery of quality programs and overall University experiences for students.
- g) UPEI is dedicated to making UPEI an open, accessible and welcoming community, and to the fair treatment of all persons. Program reviews are to be undertaken with a commitment to identify and remove barriers, encourage participation, and work towards an inclusive campus culture supported by equity, diversity and inclusion.
- h) UPEI is committed to reconciliation. Program reviews are to be undertaken with consideration of The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action and how programming and student learning opportunities reflect truth and reconciliation in their development and delivery.
- i) UPEI’s quality assurance of academic programs aligns with the Maritime Province Higher Education Commission’s (“MPHEC”) quality assurance framework.

3. DEFINITIONS

- a) “Academic Program” means a program or group of programs, including, but not limited to degrees, majors, honors, minors, specializations, diplomas, certificates and variations thereof at the undergraduate and graduate level, including options such as cooperative education and work integrated learning. The Academic Program typically encompasses all programs and related functions pertaining to a focus area (for example, all programming with the School of Mathematics and Computational Sciences, or a review of a discipline’s comprehensive offerings including majors, minors, etc.).
- b) “Faculty” means all UPEI Faculties delivering academic programs within academic units. UPEI academic units may exist within various structures (for example, the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine within the Atlantic Veterinary College or the School of Mathematical and Computational Sciences within the Faculty of Science). All academic units (including but not limited to Schools, and Departments) carry out internal reviews through their home Faculty.

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- c) “Dean” means the Dean (or delegate) of the Faculty that delivers the Academic Program(s) under review.
- d) “Program Lead” means the delegated academic leader of the Academic Program to be reviewed. Examples of Program Leads include, but are not limited to, an Associate Dean, Departmental Chair, Program Coordinator, or Faculty member with an appropriate level of experience in relation to the program(s) being reviewed, with a strong understanding of related functions, and institutional processes.
- e) “Advisory Team” means the review committee composed of external and internal members, appointed as per *Guidelines for Academic Program Quality Assurance Reviews* (as prepared by the Senate Academic Planning and Curriculum Committee as required by Senate Policy on Quality Assurance for Academic Programs) and *Guidelines for Advisory Teams Participating in UPEI Quality Assurance of Academic Programs* (as prepared by the Senate Academic Planning and Curriculum Committee as required by Senate Policy on Quality Management for Academic Programs).
- f) “Program Goals” are the goals and objectives defined by a program’s faculty in respect to student learning and outcomes. They help define and communicate what defines student success, what students can expect in respect to the programming education and experiences, and what students should achieve during their programming through to graduation. Program Goals are student-centered and establish expectations between curricular components and outcomes. Program goals also address long-term development of the Academic Program unit overall.

4. SCOPE

- a) This policy applies to all UPEI Faculties, Schools and Academic Departments that deliver credit bearing programs. This includes interdisciplinary programs, joint degrees, articulated programs, and any other programming that provides an exit credential to students.
- b) Where an academic program unit comprises more than one discipline or significantly different academic programs (e.g., Sociology and Anthropology the review will normally include all academic programs run by that unit. However, an exception to this practice may be made if the responsible Dean and Vice-President Academic and Research believe that it would be more appropriate to review programs separately than together.

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- c) Where an Academic unit or a program is required to be accredited by a recognized external body:
 - i. accredited Faculty and its program(s) are to follow their respective accreditation review cycles;
 - ii. the results of accreditation reviews will normally substitute for the self-study and external review components of the quality assurance review as appropriate; and
 - iii. accredited Faculty must communicate accreditation report outcomes to the Office of the Vice-President Academic and Research for further information sharing with the UPEI Senate Academic Planning and Curriculum Committee (APCC) and as needed, MPHEC, to ensure there are no gaps in internal quality assurance processes.
- d) While preparing for an accreditation site visit (self-study phase), the Dean or designate will meet with the Vice-President Academic and Research to determine if there are factors outlined in this policy that may not be sufficiently assessed through the accreditation review. If any factors are identified, an agreed upon approach will be determined to address assessment of the identified factor(s).
- e) Academic Program Quality Assurance Reviews are to be carried out from a student-centered focus with consideration given to aspects that directly impact the quality of teaching and learning, and the full range of the offerings and activities of the program(s) as they apply to the full scope of UPEI students' overall university experience.

5. RESPONSIBILITY

- a) The Senate Academic Planning and Curriculum Committee ("APCC") (or another Committee named by Senate for this purpose) has overall responsibility for this policy. Administrative support for the policy will be provided by the Office of the Vice-President Academic and Research.
- b) The Senate APCC will, from time to time, develop and report to Senate guidelines for the application of this policy.
- c) The APCC will establish a schedule for reviews and report this schedule to Senate on an annual basis.
- d) In the Fall of each year APCC will notify Academic Program units that are to be reviewed

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during the following academic year and invite them to begin preparing for the review.

- e) The Vice- President Academic and Research will develop an annual budget for the application of this policy.
- f) The Vice- President Academic and Research will coordinate the production of statistical information needed to support the development of the self-study to assist in the formative reviews of academic units.
- g) The APCC will provide an annual update to Senate on the reviews of Academic Program units and the action plans developed by academic units as a result of the self- study and review processes.
- h) Each academic unit (interdisciplinary program coordinating committee, Department, Faculty, School, Centre, etc.) will review its activities and update plans at least once every seven years. In this respect, timely reviews of a Faculty’s Academic Programs within the review cycle are the responsibility of the Dean who has overall responsibility for the Faculty in which the Academic Program and related functions are delivered. The Dean works in coordination with the Program Lead and Faculty of the Academic Program being reviewed to ensure all aspects of the review are carried out and to address action items. Reviews of graduate-level Academic Programs are to include the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies to enhance institutional oversight and consistency in student experience and quality assurance of Graduate Academic programs.
- i) Results of Academic Program reviews are shared with key stakeholders through UPEI’s commitment to accountability and transparency.
 - i. As the Senate Committee with responsibility for quality assurance and academic program review processes, APCC receives and reviews Program Review reports and responses within the framework of this policy and related processes. This includes receiving and reviewing the Program Review Advisory Team Report and Reviewers’ Recommendations, as well as the UPEI Academic Program’s Action Plan and Response to Reviewers’ Recommendations. APCC also invites Faculty Program Leads to APCC to discuss the review, recommendations, and actions to address recommendations.
 - ii. UPEI Senate receives an annual update on internal quality assurance program reviews.
 - iii. Through institutional reporting, UPEI provides MPHEC with annual updates regarding completion of internal program reviews. If a program has additional reporting elements associated, this information is also updated as needed.
 - iv. Completion of Academic Program reviews are to be communicated with stakeholders

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through University communications as part of UPEI’s ongoing quality assurance process.

- j) Schedule of Reviews and Components of Quality Assurance Review are outlined in this policy under the PROGRAM REVIEW section.

6. PROCESS

This policy is to be carried out in conjunction with the:

- i. *Guidelines for Academic Program Quality Assurance Reviews*; and
- ii. *Guidelines for Advisory Teams Participating in UPEI Quality Assurance of Academic Programs*.

Each review will comprise the following steps:

- a) self-study by the Academic Program unit;
- b) review of the self-study, a site-visit, interviews, and resulting report and recommendations by the Advisory Team; and
- c) preparation of an action plan by the Academic Program unit based on the self-study and Advisory Team report and recommendations.

Review leaders and participants should consult the aforementioned guidelines for specific review criteria and guidelines.

a) Self-study

- i. Self-study of Academic Programs are to be student-centered and assess quality of teaching, learning, research, scholarly endeavors, and overall student experience in the context of the University’s mission, vision, and values and the goals of the Academic Program.
- ii. The purposes of the self- study are: to identify strategic options and directions for the Academic Program unit in relation to the discipline or field of enquiry, the external community context facing the unit, the mission and goals of the University and the mission and goals of the Academic Program; to stimulate internal evaluation of quality and development of student-focused plans to improve quality; and to prepare, internally, for site-visits by external reviewers providing information that will be needed by the Advisory Team.
- iii. The Dean and Academic Program Leader will follow the *Guidelines for Academic Program Quality Assurance Reviews* in carrying out reviews.

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b) Advisory Team

- i. The Advisory Team will comprise two scholars from relevant units at other universities as well as one UPEI faculty member from a cognate discipline. In areas of greater breadth, there may be a need for more than two external scholars. Selection and composition of Advisory Teams is based on *MPHEC Guidelines for the Selection of External Program Advisors*. Selection of Advisory Team members will be made with consideration of UPEI's commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI).
- ii. The advisory team will be selected by the Vice-President Academic and Research in consultation with the Academic Lead of the Academic Program unit being reviewed and the responsible Dean, from among names suggested by the Academic Lead of the unit being reviewed.
- iii. Each member of the Advisory Team will receive a copy of the self-study document prepared by the Academic Program unit.
- iv. The Advisory Team will visit UPEI where they will examine the facilities and meet and interview relevant faculty, staff, administrators, students and if applicable external stakeholders.
- v. The Senate APCC will provide the Advisory Team with the *Guidelines for Advisory Teams Participating in UPEI Quality Assurance of Academic Programs*.

c) Academic Program Action Plans

- i. In light of the self-study and the report and recommendations from the Advisory Team, the Academic Program unit will develop a multi-year plan to outline strategic directions and to address identified shortcomings and recommendations. This Action Plan will be shared with APCC through presentation and discussion.
- ii. The Academic Program Unit provide its Dean and APCC with an update on Action Plan progress annually.
- iii. The annual updates of the Academic Program unit's Action Plan will be shared with Senate through an annual update by APCC.

6. SCHEDULE OF REVIEWS

- a) Internal quality assurance reviews of existing Academic Programs are to take place on a cyclical basis every seven years. If a new program is implemented, an Academic Program review is required following the graduation of the first cohort of students, in keeping with MPHEC requirements, and then every seven years thereafter.

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- b) APCC will communicate upcoming Academic Program reviews in the Fall of each year and report this schedule to Senate on an annual basis.
- c) Each Fall, APCC will inform Deans of Academic Programs that are to be reviewed in the upcoming year, and request that they submit a schedule of dates associated with their respective reviews.
- d) Deferrals of Academic Program reviews will only be granted under exceptional circumstances. Requests for deferrals must be made in writing by the Faculty Dean to APCC for consideration.
- e) In order to ensure participation of students, reviews will normally take place in the Fall and Winter terms. In appropriate circumstances, an Academic Program review may take place during Spring or Summer.
- f) Three examples of review schedules are provided for reference.

	Reminder by APCC of Upcoming Review	Unit Profile	Review Committee Process	Identification of Potential Reviewers	Student Surveys	Self-study Document	Site Visits	Review Committee Report and Action Plan	Response to Report and Action Plan
	Review Planning		Self-study Preparation			External Review	Response to Report and Action Plan Development		
Timeline 1	January	May	June to August			November	November to April		
Timeline 2	January	August	September to December			March	March to September		
Timeline 3	January	December	January to March			July	July to January		

7. POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed at least every seven years by the Senate APCC (or by another Committee named by Senate for this purpose).