University
of Victoria

Guidelines for External Reviews of Academic Units – Interdisciplinary Programs

Last revised: January 13, 2021

In light of the interdisciplinary nature of the programs and the proposal brought forward by Deans to rehouse them within single faculties, the AVPAP has developed for discussion a set of guidelines that outline the process for external review.

According to the External Review of Academic Units Policy, AC1145 2.00: "some programs without department-equivalent status (e.g. interdisciplinary inter/intra-faculty programs) […] *may be attached to a home academic unit for the purpose of external review or may hold a free-standing external review* (the term academic unit as used in this policy may refer specifically to an academic program in this instance); the Associate Vice-President Academic Planning and disciplinary dean(s) determine the most appropriate option".

This document is meant as a guideline for interdisciplinary programs to navigate the relevant parts of the policy and self-study. For a full breakdown of external review procedures, please see the External Review of Academic Units Policy, AC1145 and the External Review Checklist.

External Review Committee
A committee of three reviewers (two external, one internal) will be formed as the External Review Committee for each programs under review. The program director who oversee the program under review will nominate a member from outside the faculty/unit to serve as the internal reviewer. The internal reviewer may be a program director from another faculty.

Site Visit
The site visit will take place over a 2-3 day period and involve the following meetings and activities:
- Meeting with the AVPAP, the Deans of the Faculties; and the Dean of Graduate Studies (for programs with graduate components) at the beginning of the site visit and again at the end of visit;
- Meeting with the primary academic administrator and/or program director of each program;
- Meeting with faculty members who teach in the program;
- Meeting with majors enrolled in the program;
- Meeting with staff and academic advising who support the program;
- Other meetings as proposed by AVPAP, deans, or review team; and
- Half day – one day for report writing (optional, dependent on committee schedule).

Please see the External Review Itinerary Template for a sample itinerary setup.

A staff member from the unit will need to be identified by the Deans to liaise with the Office of the Associate Vice-President Academic Planning.

Self-Study Documents
The self-study document should include the following content:

(1) Data packet supplied by Institutional Planning and Analysis containing the following:
- List of Program Offerings

- List of Courses for each program
- Unique Annualized Undergraduate/Graduate Headcounts
- Unique Fall Term Headcounts for Undergraduate and Graduate Interdisciplinary Programs
- Interdisciplinary Graduate Program FTEs
- Interdisciplinary EETs

(2) The self-study completed by program lead should address the following:

Note: the numbers below refer to subsections of the [External Reviews of Academic Units Self-study.](#) Please reference the identified sections when crafting your response.

- <u>Context:</u> (1.1, 3.5) When did the program start? How much teaching is done by regular faculty members? How much instruction is done by sessionals?
- <u>Resources:</u> (1.7, 1.8) Comment on resource plan for supporting the program in the home Faculty
- <u>Opportunities within new Faculty-based Structure:</u> (1.9, 7.1) Comment on proposed administrative and governance oversight, opportunities for links with existing programs in the home faculty.
- <u>Impact and Alignment with Strategic Framework:</u> How does this program support the goals of the Strategic Framework and related UVic and Department/Faculty plans?
- <u>Learning Outcomes</u> (3.4)
- <u>Curriculum/Program Design:</u> (link to Calendar/website, for instance.) (2.3, 2.4, 2.5)
- <u>Communications:</u> Comment on strategies for promotion, marketing, visibility (2.3, 2.4, 2.5).

Should you wish to include aspects of the program which do not fit into these categories, please include after the Communications section. If you have questions please consult the Special Projects Assistant, Academic Planning at vpacapal@uvic.ca.

Guidance to External Review Team on Key Areas to Address in the Report:
- Executive Summary: please start with a 2-3 page summary of key findings, including a List of Recommendations with up to 8-10 recommendations to be implemented by the academic unit between now and the unit's next external review in 7 years. The executive summary (including the recommendations) may be publically available; the unit is required to provide a formal response and action plan that addresses the recommendations.
- Quality of the academic program: Is the range and depth of curriculum appropriate? Comment on the suitability of program-level learning outcomes (1.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.5, 3.7, 4.2, 4.3)
- Quality of teaching and learning environment: Are the teaching methods appropriate? (1.4, 3.3.)
- Opportunities for research-enriched and community-engaged education and experiential learning, including co-op and work placements, internships, and practica (3.8, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11, 5.1)
- Overall administrative, organizational, and governance structure (1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8)
- Student advising (3.12, 3.13)
- Advice on marketing and promotion to students (2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 4.1)
- Sustainability and financial considerations (6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4)
- Challenges and opportunities
- Additional Questions identified by the Academic Unit, Dean, or AVPAP

After the Site Visit
- External Review Committee completes report (8-10 weeks after review site visit);

- Within 6-8 weeks of receiving the final report, the program director completes a response along with the Action Plan document and sends them to the Faculty Dean for review. The Dean completes a separate response.
- The Faculty Dean sends both responses (program director response and decanal response) to the AVPAP, along with the completed Action Plan document.
- Follow-up meetings with the AVPAP, Faculty Dean, Chair/Director and Dean of Graduate Studies (for programs with graduate components) will be scheduled as per the AC1145 policy.