

Academic Program Review Procedure

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| Parent Policy | Academic Program Review Policy |
| Policy Category | Academic |
| Policy Sponsor | Provost and Vice-President, Academic |
| Policy Contact | Manager, Programs and Planning, OPVPA |
| Procedure Contact | Manager, Programs and Planning, OPVPA |
| Effective Date | January 30, 2025 |
| Review Date | January 30, 2030 |

1. Purpose

Athabasca University's Academic Program Review process is a quality assurance exercise that facilitates continuous improvement. It is designed to ensure that the University continues to provide relevant programs that meet provincial and national expectations for efficacy and rigor. This Procedure outlines the responsibilities of the OPVPA and Faculties in the Review Process.

2. Scope

This Procedure applies to all faculties and Academic Programs.

3. Definitions

| Term | Definition |
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| Academic Experts and Tutors: | CUPE members. An academic expert or tutor is an academic staff member who guides students through a course and marks assignments and exams. The assignment of a tutor versus an academic expert to a course is dependent on the Faculty in which the course resides. |
| Academic Planning, Policy, and Standards Committee (APPSC) | This committee is a sub-committee of General Faculties Council (GFC). The mandate of the APPSC includes responsibility for the oversight of the program review process. |
| Campus Alberta Quality Council (CAQC): | An arms-length quality assurance agency that reviews and recommends Alberta degree programs to the Minister of Advanced Education for approval. CAQC |

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| | also monitors AU's degree programs to ensure they continue to meet its standards through a 5-7 year cyclical audit of AU's degree program review and degree proposal processes. |
| Faculty of Graduate Studies Faculty Council (FGS FC) | The FGS FC was established pursuant to the Post-Secondary Learning Act (PSLA) and has powers established by the PSLA which are subject to any GFC conditions and/or restrictions. The FGS FC receives graduate program self-studies and Program Council review reports, and the Dean, FGS participates in graduate program reviews, each with the view to ensure implementation and compliance with quality assurance recommendations that directly concern all graduate students. |
| Institutional Data Analysis (IDA): | IDA plays a pivotal role in collecting, analyzing, and disseminating comprehensive institutional data and information across AU. IDA ensures the university's data needs for planning, decision-making, and performance measurements are met by delivering accurate and timely data. IDA supports the program review process by providing key internal and external program data, surveys, focus groups or key informant interviews of students and alumni and in some cases faculty and other supervisors, e.g. preceptors, practicum supervisors, and employers. |
| Office of the Provost and Vice President, Academic (OPVPA) | The OPVPA is the Provost and Vice President, Academic's designate responsible for facilitating program reviews and providing overall coordination and support. |
| Program Council / Program Advisory Committee | Each program has a Program Council or Program Advisory Committee made up of constituent contributing members that reports to the Faculty Council. |
| Program Director | This person is responsible for writing the program self-study with the support of the Program Council / Program Advisory Committee. The Program Director coordinates the development and production of the |

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| | <p>program self-study, organizes meetings of the Program Council/ Program Advisory Committee for the purpose of the program review, and recruits faculty and tutor participation in the virtual site visit. These coordination tasks may be delegated elsewhere within the Faculty.</p> |
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4. Procedures

4.1.

The OPVPA may develop and release further guidelines and resources in addition to these Procedures to support faculties in carrying out the required Program Reviews.

4.2. Review Process

Athabasca University's Academic Program Review process is expected to be faculty-driven via the Program Council / Program Advisory Committee, is student-focused and academically relevant.

The components of the program review are summarized as follows:

- a) The production of a self-study by the members of the program leadership;
- b) A site visit and report by a team of external reviewers;
- c) The production of a subsequent response report by the program. The response report will include:
 - i. key issues;
 - ii. a program action plan including implementation activities, positions responsible for implementation, and associated timelines;
 - iii. measures to assess the success of those activities; and
 - iv. Faculty dean feedback on the program review and action plan.
- d) The creation of a program review summary document for public posting on the OPVPA website;
- e) Annual reporting on the implementation of the above action plan, to indicate how the results of those activities are informing continuous program improvement.

4.3. Timing of Cyclical Reviews

- a) Reviews are organized on a five-to-seven-year cycle and are commissioned by the OPVPA.
- b) The timing of the review is approved by the Dean in consultation with the OPVPA. The size and complexity of the program and the availability of external reviewers may influence the schedule.
- c) The schedule of program reviews is approved annually by APPSC. Programs may be reviewed at any time outside of the review cycle at the discretion of the OPVPA.
- d) The length of the review process is intended to take no longer than 18 months, however, if delays are experienced, consultation with the OPVPA and PVPA is required.

4.4. Externally Accredited Programs

- a) In cases where programs have additional external accreditation review requirements, wherever possible, duplication of documentation will be minimized.
- b) It is incumbent on the University to assure quality over its own programming and not delegate that authority to an external organization.
 - i. Externally accredited programs are required to complete all aspects of AU's cyclical review process.
 - ii. Certain information provided to external accreditors may be used to inform the self-study as appropriate to prevent duplication of documentation.

4.5. Coordination and Support

- a) The OPVPA will hold official copies of all Program Review materials in accordance with the [*Alberta Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*](#) (FOIPPA) and the University's Records and Information Management Framework.
- b) The OPVPA will provide the resources necessary to complete program reviews. Expenses covered by the OPVPA include:
 - i. An amount paid to the Faculty to cover expenses related to the review, such as editorial payments, student participation incentives, research assistant costs, or partial tutor block coverage for the faculty member

developing the self-study. Amounts are set by the PVPA and posted within the program review guidelines.

- ii. External Review Team honoraria (administered by the OPVPA).
- c) The OPVPA will act as the sole liaison to External Review Teams, including Internal Observers, for the duration of their engagements.
- d) The OPVPA will liaise with the Program Director to develop a virtual site visit agenda. The OPVPA arranges the virtual site visit and is responsible for sending out all meeting calendar invitations and recruiting student and alumni participants.
- e) The OPVPA is responsible for coordination of annual program report submissions to FGS FC (for graduate programs), and for all programs to the June meeting of APPSC.

4.6.

All participants involved in the Review Process must ensure that they are familiar with and follow the requirements for carrying out the review and submission of any reports or documentation established by the OPVPA.

5. Applicable Legislation and Regulations

[*Post-Secondary Learning Act*](#)

6. Related Policy, Procedures and Documents

[Academic Program Review Policy](#)

Academic Program Review Guidelines

[Campus Alberta Quality Council Handbook](#)

[Alberta Credential Framework](#)

Document History

| <i>Date</i> | <i>Action</i> |
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| January 30, 2025 | Revised Policy Approved by General Faculties Council (Motion #090-05) |
| June 15, 2016 | Approved by General Faculties Council (Motion #32-03) |