

Complete Policy Title:  
**Procedures for University Reviews of  
Academic Departments**

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Responsible Executive:  
**Provost and Vice-President, Academic**

Enquiries:  
[\*\*Policy \(University Secretariat\)\*\*](#)

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## Procedures for University Reviews of Academic Departments<sup>1</sup>

### I. Preamble

- I.1 Early in each academic year, the Committee on Departmental Reviews, consisting of the Provost, the Vice-President (Research and International Affairs), the Dean of Graduate Studies and the Associate Vice-President (Academic), shall meet with each Faculty Dean in order to identify Departmental Chair selection processes expected during the coming year.
- I.2 The Faculty Dean shall provide copies of the most recent reviews of the Departments conducted by the Ontario Council on Graduate Studies (OCGS), Undergraduate Program Reviews (UPR), accreditation or other reviews, together with any updates on the Departments.
- I.3 The Faculty Dean may recommend a formal review of the Department, in which case the procedures set out below shall be used.
- I.4 The Committee on Departmental Reviews may decide that a formal review will be conducted in accordance with the procedures set out below if it has reasonable grounds to believe that there are academic or non-academic issues that need to be addressed.
- I.5 The Department may request a formal review in accordance with the procedures set out below if neither the Faculty Dean nor the Committee on Departmental Reviews has requested one.
- I.6 If a formal review is to be conducted, every effort shall be made to coordinate it as fully as possible with any OCGS, UPR, accreditation or other reviews currently underway or planned.
- I.7 The Faculty Dean may ask the Committee on Departmental Reviews for an Extraordinary<sup>(a)</sup> review at a time other than that called for above (section 1.1).
- I.8 If no formal review is to be conducted, the Faculty Dean shall proceed to establish an *ad hoc* selection committee for the Department Chair in accordance with the “Procedures for Selecting Department Chairs”.

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(a) Henceforth, unless there is a possibility of ambiguity, the word “Department” or “unit” should be taken to mean “Department”, “School” or other academic administrative unit, including “Areas” in the Faculty of Business. “Chair” should be taken to mean “Department Chair or Director,” and “Dean” should be taken to mean the individual to whom the unit reports.

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## **II. Purpose**

- II.1 These procedures provide for regular reviews of all academic Departments. They apply in all Faculties, and supersede the “Procedures for University Reviews of Departments, Schools and Major Instructional Programmes,” which were approved by the Senate and the Board of Governors in the 1994-95 academic session.
- II.2 The purpose of these procedures is to provide for a review of the objectives of a Department, the Department's success in attaining those objectives, and the appropriateness of the objectives in the context of the wider objectives of the Faculty of which it is a part.
- II.3 Management of the review is the responsibility of each Faculty, which enables the Dean to use it effectively in developing the Departments under his or her jurisdiction. Consideration of University-wide issues is the responsibility of the University Planning Committee, at whose meetings the results of the review are presented.
- II.4 For reviews of units offering academic programs, and for reviews of Departments in certain Faculties, some of the procedures described below may not be applicable, because the objectives of, and administrative arrangements for, such units vary. These reviews should nevertheless follow these procedures as closely as possible.

## **III. Administrative Support**

- III.1 A review of a Department shall be conducted through the office of the Dean, which shall make all the necessary organizational arrangements, including the provision of any secretarial support.

## **IV. The Review Team: Selection and Roles**

- IV.1 The review team shall consist of at least three members. At least one member of any team shall be an external reviewer. The members of the review team from within the University shall normally include one person from a different Faculty, in addition to members of Departments in the same Faculty as the Department under review.
- IV.2 External members of the review team shall normally be individuals in the same discipline as the Department under review. They shall be selected from a list of at least six suggested individuals, submitted by the Department under review. The list shall include, for each proposed external reviewer:
- (a) name;
  - (b) rank and position;
  - (c) institution or company and current address, telephone and fax numbers, and electronic-mail address;
  - (d) degree(s) held, including the granting institution(s) and the date(s) earned;
  - (e) area(s) of specialization;

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- (f) professional experience or expertise relevant to the Department's activities;
  - (g) evidence of recent, relevant scholarly activity (e.g., bibliographic references to three or four recent publications);
  - (h) details of any previous affiliation with the University, and any association with individual members of the Department (e.g., co-author, previous student, friend)<sup>2</sup>.

This information should not be solicited from the nominees, nor should they be contacted regarding their nominations as reviewers.

IV.3 Internal members of the review team shall be selected by the Dean.

IV.4 In the case of Departments reporting to the Provost, the Provost shall select all internal members of the review team.

IV.5 The Dean shall select the external reviewers, after consultation with the internal reviewers. The University Planning Committee shall receive, for information, details of the final composition of the review team, in the form of a letter to the reviewers indicating that a copy of these review procedures is being provided to each member of the review team and stating what material is available to the reviewers to assist with their review.

IV.6 One of the internal members of the review team shall normally act as chair of the review team. The chair shall be responsible for coordinating the preparation of the reviewers' report.

## V. Conducting the Review

V.1 Once the composition of a review team is determined, each member shall be provided with a Department status report of no more than ten pages. This status report shall contain, *inter alia*, a description of the Department's objectives, and shall be accompanied by the following documents (where appropriate):

- (a) the report from the last University review of the Department, and details of any recommendations that were accepted for implementation;
- (b) the results of the most recent reviews of academic programs conducted by OCGS, UPR and accreditation bodies, including comments on progress toward the implementation of any recommendations arising from those reviews;
- (c) the most recent submissions by the Department to any other external agencies, and the agencies' reports on the Department;
- (d) the following statistical data on the Department, and the Faculty as a whole, covering at least the past seven years:

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(e) The purpose of this is not to disqualify any individual who has such an affiliation, but rather to ensure that the affiliation is acknowledged at the time the individual is nominated.

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- i. full and part-time undergraduate enrolments, by degree and level;
  - ii. full and part-time graduate enrolments;
  - iii. the cross-teaching adjusted number of full-time-equivalent (FTE) students;
  - iv. the number of FTE faculty members;
  - v. the ratio of students to faculty;
  - vi. the number of FTE support staff;
  - vii. the value of research grants earned;
  - viii. student units taught, by level;
  - ix. average section size;
  - x. distribution of class size;
  - xi. all the statistical data required by OCGS (for years since the last Program Brief was submitted);
- (f) a description of the Department's undergraduate and graduate programmes, and any other material prepared by the Department regarding its activities (e.g., handbooks for students, research reports);
  - (g) any additional reports or documents pertaining to the Department that the Dean believes is appropriate to bring to the attention of the review team;
  - (h) the *curricula vitae* of all members of the Department (including associate members);
  - (i) the Department's by-laws and regulations;

V.2 As appropriate, the review team shall address, but not be restricted to, the following:

- (a) the appropriateness of the Department's objectives, in relation to those of the Faculty;
- (b) the general effectiveness of the Department in fulfilling its objectives;
- (c) the strengths and weaknesses of the Department's:
  - (i) undergraduate and graduate offerings and programmes;
  - (ii) research and scholarly activities;
  - (iii) record in University (and, where relevant, community) service;
  - (iv) service to part-time teaching;
- (d) the adequacy of:
  - (i) consultation (including the committee structure) within the Department;
  - (ii) communication within the Department, and between the Department and students;
  - (iii) procedures on appointments, tenure and promotion;
  - (iv) support staff;
  - (v) physical facilities for instruction and research.

V.3 As appropriate, the review team shall interview the Dean, the Chair, Department members, support staff, graduate and undergraduate students, past students from the

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undergraduate and graduate programs, and such other individuals as may be deemed appropriate by the review team (e.g., Dean of the Graduate School).

- V.4 The report of the review team shall address all the issues listed in item V.2 above, or explain why commentary on any is unnecessary.
- V.5 The review team shall circulate a copy of its draft report to, and invite comments from, the Dean and the Chair.
- V.6 The review team shall submit its final report to the Dean.

## **VI. After the Review**

- VI.1 The report shall be circulated to all Department members and support staff, and to those students and past students who were interviewed by the team. These individuals shall be invited to provide comments to the Dean.
- VI.2 The Chair shall be responsible for preparing the Department's response to the report.
- VI.3 Based on the report, the Department's response, any other responses received, and discussion of the report at the Faculty's Academic Planning Committee, the Dean shall prepare a submission to the Committee on Departmental Reviews. This submission shall consist of the report, the Department's response, and a commentary relating the report's recommendations to the academic plan of the Faculty. The commentary shall discuss the desirability of acting upon the recommendations in the light of the academic plan.
- VI.4 In the event that the Dean indicates an intent to act on any of the recommendations, the submission to the Committee on Departmental Reviews shall also contain a timetable for implementation of the recommendations.
- VI.5 The Committee on Departmental Reviews shall submit the results of the review to the University Planning Committee, together with its own recommendations for action.
- VI.6 The Dean shall provide periodic reports to the University Planning Committee of progress made with implementation of the recommendations, until such time as implementation is complete.
- VI.7 The University Planning Committee shall report on the review, for information, to the Open Sessions of the Senate and the Board of Governors.