

Procedures on Academic Reviews

These Procedures accompany the *Regulations on Academic Reviews* (https://www.mcgill.ca/secretariat/files/secretariat/regulations_on_academic_reviews.pdf) approved by Senate in December 2022. This document is intended to provide stakeholders in the review process with an overview of the process and their role(s) in it. Academic reviews are overseen by the Office of Academic Reviews (OAR) within the Office of the Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic).

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Abbreviations

APC Academic Policy Committee of Senate
Dean Dean of a Faculty
GPS Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
Head Chair of Department, Director of Institute/School, or Program Director(s)
OAR Office of Academic Reviews
Unit Department, Institute, School, or Program
Visit Site Visit (Full Reviews) or Stakeholder Meetings (Streamlined Reviews)

Overview of the Academic Review Process

Although reviewing academic programs is a requirement for all Quebec Universities, the purpose of reviews at McGill is 1) to ensure the quality of our academic activities (i.e., quality assurance); and 2) to facilitate and integrate planning activities at all three levels – Unit, Faculty, and University. The selection of what academic activities (e.g., unit, program) to review is decided by the Dean, often in consultation with the Office of the Provost & Vice-Principal (Academic), and for professional programs, normally aligned with other accreditation processes. Deans also have the choice between full reviews (includes external reviewers, site visit) or streamlined reviews (no external reviewers, no site visit)

Process for a Full Review:

- A date is determined by the unit and OAR for the visit
- At least three months in advance of the date of the visit, the Head provides OAR a ranked list of potential experts to serve as one of the external reviewers for approval by the Dean. OAR will provide a separate ranked list of potential external reviewers to the Dean to enable him/her to choose the other external reviewer.
- At least two months prior to the date of the visit, OAR provides a standard data packet to the unit. The standard packet includes undergraduate admissions (where relevant); graduate admissions; undergraduate and graduate enrolment; degrees granted; teaching activities; and graduate student funding. Deans' offices also have access to Tableau data to complement what is provided by OAR.
- The unit and OAR collaborate on preparing the schedule of meetings for the visit

- The visit dates are scheduled by OAR at least two months in advance.
- The Dean, on behalf of the unit, submits the Self-Study Report (using the template provided) to OAR two weeks prior to the date of the visit.
- The visit takes place
- The Review Committee submits its Report to OAR (on template provided) within one month following the visit.
- OAR sends the Review Committee Report to the unit for fact checking and to prepare its response (on template provided).
- The unit submits its response/action plans to OAR within one month of receiving the Review Committee Report.
- OAR sends the unit response/action plans to the Dean for his/her response (on template provided).
- The Dean submits his/her response within one month of receiving the unit response/action plans.
- OAR submits the completed review dossier, which consists of the Self-Study Report, the Review Committee Report, the Unit Response/Action Plans, and the Dean's Response, to the Provost & Vice-Principal (Academic) and APC.
- The unit begins implementation of recommendations agreed to by the Dean
- The unit submits a Progress Report (using the template provided) to APC via OAR one year after the review.

Process for a Streamlined Review:

- A date is determined by the unit and OAR for the visit
- At least two months prior to the date of the visit, OAR provides a standard data packet to the unit. The standard packet includes undergraduate admissions (where relevant); graduate admissions; undergraduate and graduate enrolment; degrees granted; teaching activities (where relevant); and graduate student funding (where relevant). Deans' offices also have access to Tableau data to complement what is provided by OAR.
- Meetings of stakeholders with the Review Committee are scheduled by OAR, in collaboration with the unit, at least one month in advance.
- The Dean, on behalf of the unit, submits the Self-Study Report (using the template provided) to OAR two weeks prior to the date of the visit.
- Visit takes places
- The Review Committee submits its Report to OAR (on template provided) within two weeks following the visit.
- OAR sends the Review Committee Report to the unit for fact checking and to prepare its response (on template provided).
- The unit submits its response/action plans to OAR within three weeks of receiving the Review Committee Report.
- OAR sends the unit response/action plans to the Dean for his/her response (on template provided).
- The Dean submits his/her response within three weeks of receiving the unit response/action plans.
- OAR submits the completed review dossier, which consists of the Self-Study Report, the Review Committee Report, the Unit Response/Action Plans, and the Dean's Response, to the Provost & Vice-Principal (Academic) and APC.
- The unit begins implementation of recommendations agreed to by the Dean
- The unit submits a Progress Report (using the template provided) to APC via OAR one year after the review.

Review Dossier

THE SELF STUDY REPORT is the main document on which a review is based. Depending on the type of review, the length of these documents will vary between 10-15 pages for streamlined reviews and normally double that for full reviews, exclusive of appendices. The document is fully electronic, and no faculty CVs will be required. This document is expected to be a collaborative effort, which although lead by the faculty members, includes the administrative staff and the student members of the unit. The final Self Study Report should be submitted to the Deanery, who will review and submit it to OAR.

Self Study Reports for full reviews should address the points mentioned in the *Regulations on Academic Reviews*

(https://www.mcgill.ca/secretariat/files/secretariat/regulations_on_academic_reviews.pdf).

Self Study reports for streamlined reviews should address the points identified by the Dean, Head, and OAR. **This document is confidential.**

THE REVIEW COMMITTEE REPORT will contain observations, advice, and recommendations from the Review Committee. Authorship and length of the Review Committee Report will depend on the type of review. Reports for full reviews will be written by the two external reviewers with input from the two internal McGill members and are typically 10-15 pages in length but may be shorter. Reports for streamlined reviews will be a collaborative effort of all three committee members and are very brief and focused at 3-5 pages in length. OAR will provide a template to the Review Committees prior to the visit. Review Committee Reports for full reviews should also address the points mentioned in the *Regulations on Academic Reviews*

(https://www.mcgill.ca/secretariat/files/secretariat/regulations_on_academic_reviews.pdf). **This document is confidential.**

THE UNIT RESPONSE/ACTION PLANS document contains the unit's overall assessment of the Review Committee Report as well as their action plans to address the recommendations arising from the Report. The action plans must have timelines and milestones associated with them and be feasible. Units can choose not to accept a recommendation with proper justification. The action plans and timelines provided in this document form the unit's part of an agreement with their Dean concerning implementation of the recommendations, and these plans will be followed up centrally by APC. OAR will provide a template to the unit at the same time as it transmits the Review Committee Report.

This is the only document from the review process that will be made publicly available (posted on the OAR website).

THE DEAN'S RESPONSE is the Dean's part of an agreement concerning the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Review Committee Report. The Dean is asked to verify the action plans and timelines proposed by the unit. If the Dean does not agree with a proposed action plan and/or timeline, s/he can express this in their response document. OAR will provide a template to the Dean at the same time as it transmits the Review Committee Report and Unit Response/Action Plans.

This document is confidential.

Review Committees

A different Review Committee will be established for each review, whose membership will vary depending on what type of review – full or streamlined – is being conducted.

The composition of the Committee for a *full review* consists of the following members:

- Chair [chosen by OAR on behalf of the Provost & Vice-Principal (Academic)], who will be a senior McGill academic from a different Faculty than the Faculty of the unit under review.
- One faculty member from the same Faculty as the unit under review, but from a different unit, and who is not a member of the Faculty Administration [nominated by the Dean].
- Two external reviewers [one reviewer will be chosen from a ranked list provided by the unit under review, and one will be chosen by the Dean from a separate ranked list prepared by OAR]. External reviewers are from peer institutions, hold relevant expertise, and are senior members of the academic staff in their institution.
- One student member from an appropriate constituency in the same Faculty as the unit under review, but from a different unit. Student participation in the academic review process is important to the University and OAR will strive to ensure there is student participation on all review committees.

The composition of the Committee for a *streamlined review* consists of the following members:

- Chair [chosen by OAR on behalf of the Provost & Vice-Principal (Academic)], who will normally be a senior McGill academic from a different Faculty than the Faculty of the unit under review.
- Two other internal McGill members from other Faculties. These could be members of the academic or administrative staff, or of an appropriate student group.

Site Visit (Full Reviews) or Stakeholder Meetings (Streamlined Reviews)

Site Visits:

In addition to receiving the Self Study Report, the Review Committee will also meet with members of the unit under review as well as other members of the university community. During the 1-2 day site visit, which will take place in-person wherever possible, the Review Committee will meet with the Dean, the Dean of GPS (where relevant), the Head, faculty members, staff, and student representatives, as well as be provided a tour of the facilities available to the unit. A schedule of meetings will be prepared by OAR, in collaboration with the unit, and circulated together with the Self Study Report to the Review Committee and other relevant stakeholders approximately two weeks before the visit. OAR will normally provide a note taker for the Review Committee who will act as the on-site representative of the office. The unit will be responsible for securing a room (preferably within the unit) for the Review Committee to use as base, for identifying a local administrative contact person, and for hosting the external reviewers. OAR will be responsible for arranging the travel and accommodation of the external reviewers, as well as covering the associated costs of the visit (airfare, accommodation, incidental expenses, catering, honoraria).

Stakeholder Meetings:

OAR and the unit will collaborate on scheduling a set of meetings of the Review Committee with the relevant stakeholders. The modality of these meetings will be decided jointly between OAR and the unit. If in-person, the unit will be responsible for securing a room (preferably within the unit) for the Review Committee to use as base, for identifying a local administrative contact person, and for hosting the external reviewers. If virtual, OAR will provide the Zoom link to be used.

Post Review Follow Up by APC

Following the receipt of the review dossier by OAR, the action plans are entered into a tracking system to be provided to APC on its secure website. OAR will provide progress reports on reviews to APC twice per year (normally at the November and April meetings). The review dossiers would be made available to members of APC beforehand, and they would be asked to address cases where obstacles have arisen which impede the completion of action plans.

Roles and Responsibilities in the Review Process

Academic reviews are complex efforts, involving coordination amongst multiple participants. The distinct roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder are outlined below:

A) Responsibilities of the unit under review

- Provide OAR with a ranked list of potential external experts.
- Prepare and submit the Self-Study Report to the Dean, who will review and submit the Report to OAR. Ensure to include a detailed organizational chart of the unit.
- Collaborate with OAR to prepare for the visit, including creating the schedule and booking the room(s).
- Distribute Self Study Report and visit schedule to all faculty members, all staff and student representatives
- Identify a host for the Review Committee (usually the Head).
- Submit the Unit Response/Action Plans to OAR.
- Submit the Progress Report one year after the review.

B) Responsibilities of the Dean

- Approve the list of potential external reviewers provided by the unit.
- Approve the list provided by OAR for the second external reviewer.
- Provide OAR the name of an academic member of the Faculty to serve on each Review Committee from outside the unit under review.
- Consult with the unit during the drafting of the Self Study Report
- Approve and submit the unit's Self Study Report to OAR
- Meet with the Review Committee during the visit.
- Submit the Dean's Response to OAR
- Collaborate with the Head on implementation of action plans

C) Responsibilities of OAR

- Select and brief the Chair of the Review Committee
- Act as the liaison between the University and the external reviewers.
- Populate Review Committees
- Collaborate with unit to prepare the visit schedule.
- Facilitate the visit, (e.g., catering, note-taking, travel, hotel, and other expenses for external reviewers, etc.).
- Receive and review documents: Self-Study Report; Review Committee Report; Unit Response/Action Plans; Dean's Response
- Receive Unit Progress Report
- Post review documentation on the secure website and ensure all relevant participants have access to it
- Perform follow-up on recommendation implementation with Heads, Deans and APC.

- D) Responsibilities of the Review Committee Chair
- Read the Self-Study Report prior to the visit.
 - Manage the visit, including any necessary troubleshooting (e.g., work with OAR on-site personnel if issues arise vis-à-vis the catering, the room, the technology etc.).
 - Write the Executive Summary for the Review Committee Report, which will be written by the external reviewers, and submit the Report to OAR by the deadline.
 - Liaise on behalf of the Review Committee with OAR both prior to the visit and as it takes place.
- E) Responsibilities of the External Reviewers
- Read the Self-Study Report prior to the visit.
 - Actively participate in the visit, e.g. ask pertinent and probing questions, stimulate discussion, provide insight into issues that are raised
 - Write the Review Committee Report and ensure that the Review Committee Chair receives it in sufficient time to be able to submit it to OAR by the deadline
- F) Responsibilities of the Internal Review Committee Members
- Read the Self-Study Report prior to the visit.
 - Actively participate in the visit, e.g. ask pertinent and probing questions, stimulate discussion, provide insight into issues that are raised
 - Provide input to the external reviewers as they write the Review Committee Report
- G) Responsibilities of the Associate Provost (Teaching and Academic Planning)
- Acknowledge receipt of the Unit Response/Action Plans on behalf of the Provost & Vice-Principal (Academic).
 - Request the Progress Report one year after the review
- H) Responsibilities of APC
- Ensure implementation of Unit Response/Action Plans is carried out on the timeline agreed to by the Unit and Faculty.
 - Request additional Progress Reports when applicable
 - Conduct remedial activities for those not meeting the agreed to details in the action plans

Timelines

The timeline for a review depends on the type of review undertaken. Full reviews, which include visits and external reviewers can take between 4-6 months from launch until the action plans are received by OAR, whereas streamlined reviews would take about 2-3 months.