

McGill University Academic Program Review Process

The Academic Policy and Planning Committee (APPC) proposes that the portion of the McGill Cyclical Review Guidelines, approved by Senate on March 3, 1999, that deals with academic programs and teaching, be replaced by the McGill University Academic Program Review Process.

I. PREAMBLE

The McGill University Academic Program Review Process is tied in an iterative fashion to the Strategic Academic and Budgetary Planning Process. It is designed to maximize excellence and the related impact of resource allocation. It is also a means of supporting a culture that will enhance the academic offerings of the University so that McGill can rank with the best publicly-funded, research-intensive universities in the world.

Objective:

The fundamental purpose of academic program reviews is to ensure the ongoing quality and relevance of all of McGill's academic programs and teaching.

CREPUQ Policy:

Quebec universities, through CREPUQ, have agreed to carry out periodic program reviews. (See *Politique des établissements universitaires du Québec relative à l'évaluation périodique des programmes existants*, CVEP, adopted 1991, amended in 1994 and 2004 www.crepug.qc.ca). McGill must have a procedure in place and begin its program review process before 2005, at which time the CVEP (*Commission de vérification de l'évaluation des programmes*) of CREPUQ will schedule a site visit to review McGill's process.

McGill welcomes the CREPUQ policy that encourages the review of academic programs. McGill's Academic Program Review Process adheres to CREPUQ's policy while, at the same time, maintaining this University's individual and autonomous approach to academic program review.

II. FEATURES AND DEFINITIONS

A. General Features

Unlike previous cyclical reviews at McGill where the reviews focused on a unit as a whole, the Academic Program Review Process is a faculty-focused review of academic programs and pedagogy leading to plans for development. The Academic Program Review Process will be designed to be flexible enough to meet the varying needs of different faculties and accommodate different kinds of programs as well as have varying foci of review. It will also be designed to promote ongoing faculty practices of continuous review and development of their academic programs. Specific features of the Academic Program Review Process include the following:

- A coordinated framework will be provided for ongoing academic program review and development that takes place at the departmental and faculty level.
- All academic programs across the University will be reviewed within two to three years, with the cycle to be repeated after ten years.

- The focus of the process is on reviewing programs and/or groups of programs, not on reviewing a faculty or a department *per se*. A faculty's full repertoire of programs does not have to be reviewed at the same time, but rather it can be done in successive rounds.
- Wherever possible, programs will be reviewed with reference to peer programs in publicly-funded, research-intensive universities.
- Plans will iterate between APPC, faculties and departments with managerial oversight provided by the Associate Provost (Academic Programs).
- There will be flexible, faculty-determined units and levels of review to meet the needs of various types of programs and foci of review.
- External experts will normally be required, but the use of external experts can be flexible and optional based on an appropriate justification and approval by APPC.
- Faculties will be provided with guidelines, core questions, and specified university and cross-university data to be addressed as well as formats for reports.
- This process will be coordinated with accreditation reviews in a faculty.

B. Definitions

Faculty Program Review Group (FRG):

- **Membership:** The FRG shall be made up of academic members of the faculty as well as students. The academic members shall be proposed by the Dean in consultation with any appropriate committees and units of the Faculty. The student members shall be nominated by the appropriate constituencies. Student members must be currently registered and in good standing. The Dean will designate a Chair.
- **Mandate:** The FRG shall structure and coordinate the implementation of the Program Review for the faculty.
- The FRG will begin by determining the program groupings and a schedule for the faculty's program reviews (e.g. all Ph.D. programs in a faculty; all undergraduate multidisciplinary studies programs in a faculty; all Master's non-thesis programs in a faculty; a particular degree program in a particular department; subsets of undergraduate programs in a larger faculty; etc.).
- This group will subsequently coordinate all aspects of the program reviews, will add its recommendations to the review and will collaborate in developing action plans to achieve academic excellence and maximize resources. It will address any issues arising from the individual program reviews.

Program Study Group (PSG):

- **Membership:** In consultation with the academic units, and for each program¹ to be reviewed, the FRG will designate a group of people to do a study of the program under review. This group, the Program Study Group (PSG), shall be composed of both professors and students, at least some of whom are involved in the program being reviewed.
- The PSG will address university and cross university data and core questions, as well as the views of the professors and students involved in the program (the group should solicit the opinions of / interview professors, students, part-time instructors, graduates etc. as appropriate) in the interest of evaluating the program in question with reference to top-quality, publicly-funded, research-intensive universities.
- The PSG will produce a program review document for the program and will collaborate in developing action plans to achieve academic excellence and maximize resources. It will address any issues arising from its particular program review.

External Experts:

- External experts will normally be a part of the review process. External experts provide legitimacy, credibility and expertise in the process of program review; this is based on their recognized competence in the field of study or discipline of the program, and on the independence of their judgment.
- External experts are determined at the faculty level (by the FRG/Dean) after consultation with the units participating in the review. The external consultation can occur either after the program review document is complete or before the review begins (in cases where the external perspective can contribute to how the review will proceed or what issues it should address). The FRG may decide that there is no added benefit in having an external expert, and in such a case, it must provide justification to the Associate Provost (Academic Programs) for this decision and explain how the contribution of the external expert will be provided in an alternate manner. APPC will have final approval over the decisions concerning external experts.

III. PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES FOR THE CONDUCT OF MCGILL'S ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW PROCESS

The review process can be considered as having three general stages:

- **Stage 1** is the Planning and Approval Stage.
- **Stage 2** is the Program Review Stage, which will begin following Senate approval.
- **Stage 3** is the Development and Reporting Stage.

¹ Wherever program is used in the singular in this document, it is understood that more than one program may be reviewed in the same review.

STAGE 1: Planning and Approval

- 1.1 Managerial oversight will be provided by the Associate Provost (Academic Programs) and two staff resource persons involved in academic planning.
- 1.2 The Academic Policy and Planning Committee (APPC) will provide input into the University's Program Review Process and into the procedural guidelines.
- 1.3 The Associate Provost (Academic Programs) will meet with Deans to discuss and clarify the process with regard to possible procedures to be used in their faculties. Such procedures should include designating a group of people, including academic members of the Faculty as well as students, to be in charge of reviews at the faculty level (the Faculty Program Review Group).

STAGE 2: Program Review

- 2.1 The Faculty Review Groups (FRG) will structure an implementation plan, determine specific procedures for the faculty that meet the principles of the Academic Program Review Process and schedule their faculties' program reviews.
- 2.2 The Faculty, in consultation with the appropriate academic units, will designate Program Study Groups (PSG) to address data and review questions provided to them.
- 2.3 The FRG, with input from the units involved, and with the Dean's approval will, as appropriate, select external experts to participate in the program review process. If it is decided that there is no added benefit in having an external expert, the FRG will provide justification to the Associate Provost (Academic Programs) for this decision and explain how the contribution of the external expert will be provided in an alternate manner. The decision will be approved by APPC.
- 2.4 The PSGs will prepare Program Review Reports for the programs being reviewed.
- 2.5 The Faculty Program Review Groups, will comment on the reports and send them to the Dean and the Associate Provost (Academic Programs) who, with the Dean, or a designate, will present them to APPC for input.
- 2.6 The Program Study Groups will be asked to respond to the input provided by APPC, the Faculty Review Group, the Dean, and any external experts(s).

STAGE 3: Development and Reporting

(Steps 2.2 to 3.3 will be ongoing and will repeat for the reviews of various programs)

- 3.1 The Faculty Review Groups will formulate the final review documents, a summary and action plans in consultation with their Deans.

- 3.2 The Faculty will approve the Faculty's program review document and the Dean will forward it, with any action plans, to the Provost.
- 3.3 Faculty reviews and action plans will be reported to APPC and Senate.
- 3.4 Plans for program development will be integrated into future discussions of the University's strategic planning process.
- 3.5 In accordance with CREPUQ's policy, the plans will then be made public.
- 3.6 At the end of the first cycle of academic program reviews, the academic program review process itself will be reviewed, with a report to Senate.

IV. CONSULTATION AND APPROVAL TABLE

Approval Step	Action Required	Date Completed	Version Number
McGill Academic Program Review and Development Process	Draft		0.01
Deans	Presentation and discussion	February 25, 2004	0.02
Deans, Chairs, and Directors of teaching units	Presentation and discussion	March 17, 2004	0.03
APPC	Presentation and discussion	March 18, 2004	0.04
Reports from Deans and Chairs' meeting (March 17) posted on the Provost's web page	Information	April 1, 2004	
Faculties	Revised documents for consultation and input	From April 1 to May 1, 2004	0.05
SCTL	Presentation, consultation and input	April 26, 2004	0.06
APPC	Approval	May 27, 2004	0.07
Deans	Consultations	August 26, 2004	
APPC		September 2, 2004	0.08
PVP	Consultation	September 23, 2004	0.09
Senate	Approval	October 6, 2004	0.10
	Publication		0.11

HOW MCGILL'S ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW PROCESS MEETS THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE "POLICY OF QUEBEC UNIVERSITIES FOR THE PERIODIC EVALUATION OF CURRENT ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES"

Please note that the CREPUQ Policy states at the outset that:

"In order to simplify the process, the institution opting for (the) approach (by programme) may find it useful to evaluate, at the same time, programmes that are part of a learning sequence, programmes in the same discipline, or those which are related in another way."

"In carrying out its mandate, the Commission acknowledges that the implementation of the Policy may sometimes require that the universities adapt the policy's requirements to their own particular circumstances, as long as they respect the intent and purposes of the Policy."

CREPUQ Policy	McGill's Academic Program Review Process
The primary purpose of the periodic evaluation process is to improve the quality and relevance of academic programs offered by the universities at all levels and in all academic areas, with a view to fostering their further development.	Yes. Reflected in "McGill University Academic Program Review Process" and stated in Objectives
The focus is on programs.	Yes.
The institutional policy... must consist of three distinct stages , as follows: a) Self-evaluation by the faculty members and students involved in the appraised program, based on the record compiled during the previous periodic evaluation, the follow-up on recommendations and the results of continuing evaluation.	Yes. Program Study Groups designated by the faculty will address the data and review questions provided them and produce reports for the Faculty Program Review Groups.
b) Opinion of at least two external experts who are specialists in the discipline, and, if need be, the opinion of those who are in charge of professional internships or of representatives from the socio-economic sectors concerned.	Yes. Recommended, but optional and flexible if justification is provided and approved.
c) Final evaluation report by an institutional committee composed of faculty members who are not involved in the program being evaluated and, depending on the institutional policy, academic administrators.	Yes. Final review documents and action plans are submitted to Faculty Program Review Groups. Faculty academic program development plans reported to APPC and Senate.
Evaluation Criteria	
The institutional policy for periodic evaluations must specify that the evaluation of a program should be based, as a minimum, on the following criteria:	Yes.
a) clarity and validity of the program's learning objectives; b) compliance of the program's objectives with the institution's mission and development plans; c) appropriateness of admission criteria for the program with respect to the learning objectives; d) appropriateness of the program's structure with respect to learning objectives; e) consistency between the content of learning activities and the development of the discipline or field of study;	Will be developed with the faculties.

<p>f) appropriateness of teaching, learning and assessment strategies with respect to the program's objectives;</p> <p>g) appropriateness of human resources, including part-time faculty members and instructors, with respect to the training provided, considering especially the professorial resources required to ensure adequate supervision of students, and in the case of graduate programs, to constitute a critical mass of active researchers;</p> <p>h) appropriateness of physical and financial resources with respect to the program's objectives;</p> <p>i) relevance of the program under three aspects: institutional relevance (status of the programme within the institution), inter-university relevance (status of the program within the Quebec university system), social relevance (with respect to society's expectations and needs regarding the education provided by the program).</p>	
<p>Evaluation procedures</p>	
<p>The institutional policy must:</p> <p>a) designate an authority to be in charge of its implementation;</p>	<p>Yes. Managerial overview provided by the Associate- Provost (Academic Programs) and two staff resource persons</p>
<p>b) provide for the preparation of an institutional manual for periodic evaluations;</p>	<p>Under preparation.</p>
<p>c) determine the frequency of evaluations, which must not exceed a ten-year cycle for an institution's entire range of programs;</p>	<p>Yes. Reviews within two to three years. Cycle to be repeated after ten years.</p>
<p>d) provide, in the case of programs offered through the cooperation of several units or several institutions, that the procedures for periodic evaluations will be determined in the agreement protocols or other relevant documents;</p>	<p>Will be developed.</p>
<p>e) determine who will be in charge and what procedure will be followed in order to implement the recommendations set out in the evaluation reports, and to establish an action plan;</p>	<p>Yes. The Provost, through the University's Strategic Planning Process.</p>
<p>f) provide for the dissemination, both internally and externally, of the evaluation results (strengths and weaknesses, major recommendations, etc.).</p>	<p>Yes. At APPC, Senate and through the <i>McGill Reporter</i>.</p>
<p>Information to be forwarded to the Program Evaluation Review Commission</p> <p>In order for the Commission to carry out its mandate, it must be well informed as to the evolution of periodic evaluation policies and practices and their consequences within the universities. To this end, each institution shall forward to the Commission:</p> <p>1) its institutional policy, together with manuals for periodic evaluations and other tools that might be developed for its implementation; ...the Commission shall be notified as soon as possible as to any update of these documents;</p> <p>2) copy of the text to be used for the publication of the results of completed evaluations.</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>The University is in contact with a representative of the Commission and will continue to forward all relevant information.</p>