



QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

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QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW PROCESS

For purposes of ensuring continued academic program quality and excellence, the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD University) has adopted a quality assurance program which includes a system of self-study, an external peer review, and a schedule of follow-up procedures. A quality assurance review process is essential to assuring the highest academic standards in order that NSCAD remains a primary university dedicated to the visual arts.

The Vice-President (Academic Affairs and Research) is charged with the overall responsibility for quality assurance program and procedures. The Vice-President (Academic Affairs and Research) will be a standing member of all Program Review Committees and will be responsible for monitoring the process and outcome of the reviews and for communicating results to the University community.

In order to complete Academic Program Reviews in a timely, efficient and economical way, the University has established a schedule of Academic Program Reviews (Table 1). In addition, every six (6) years, the University will evaluate the existing Quality Assurance Policy and Procedures to ensure best practice and alignment with Provincial quality assurance standards.

The University will endeavor to limit the number of degree programs reviewed in one year to two (2), when possible. Any new programs introduced will be reviewed after the first two (2) years of complete implementation, or sooner, depending on the requirements of the Maritime Provincial Higher Education Commission (MPHEC), or other body mandated to grant new program permissions.

Objectives:

A robust quality assurance review process provides the opportunity and requirement to assess program quality objectively with a focus on students' learning and experience.

The objective of an Academic Program Review is to ascertain the calibre of programs and to determine whether programs are meeting the University's objectives and students' needs. The Academic Program Review Process must be in alignment with MPHEC guidelines. The cyclical review provides an opportunity to assess resources, staff, standards, and other relevant aspects of University degree and certificate programs, and to use the results to inform decision making, including decisions related to budgeting and the improvement of programs and services.

The quality assurance review process is intended to work in concert with Academic Senate's ongoing curriculum and program review, and with faculty and staff performance assessment as articulated in collective agreements between Employer and Employee bargaining units.

Focus of Review:

The review will focus on the content and delivery of programs, and the configuration of the division, as well as relationship(s) with other academic units. A division, department or program under review should anticipate that the review process will require a substantial commitment of time and resources. Areas under review can expect statistical and other assistance from the Offices of Student Experience, Academic Affairs and Research, Finance and Administration, University Relations, and the Library.

Procedure:

The University will complete regular program reviews according to the established schedule.

The Program Review Committee will, as necessary, adapt the guidelines as set out in the External Review and Self-Study Guides. By October 15 of the year of the review, the Program Review Committee will review the Self-Study Report Guide and add specific elements appropriate to the program or programs under review. The Self-Study Committee and External Reviewers will complete reviews and reports in keeping with the guidelines provided by the Program Review Committee.

Academic Program Review process:

1. Academic Senate forms the Program Review Committee and appoints Chair of Program Self-Study Committee
2. Self-Study Report
3. Visit of the External Review Team
4. External Review Report
5. Report of Program Review Committee
6. Implementation of the Program Review Committee Report

Initiating the program review:**Program Review Committee**

According to the requirements of MPHEC, each program shall be reviewed at least once every seven (7) years.

In September, Academic Senate will announce the program(s) under review for the year and appoint two (2) faculty members with the rank of Associate or Full Professor to the Program Review Committee; Academic Senate will designate the Chair of the Program Review Committee. Under normal circumstances an individual should not be a member of both the Program Review Committee and the Self-Study Committee. The Vice President (Academic Affairs) will be a standing member of the Program Review Committee. The Program Review Committee is responsible for overseeing all reviews during the review year and circulating information gathered about quality assurance to the University community.

Self-Study Committee

The Program Review Committee will call for the formation of a Self-Study Committee comprised of the following members:

- ❖ three (3) Regular Full- or Pro-Rated faculty members from the program area (s) under review, elected by Regular Full- or Pro-Rated faculty teaching in the program area(s);
- ❖ one (1) Regular Full- or Pro-Rated faculty member from another program area, elected by Regular faculty in the area(s) under review;
- ❖ one (1) student from the program area(s), appointed by SUNSCAD.

The Self-Study Committee will elect its own chair. The Committee may wish to have a Regular Part-Time faculty member on the Self-Study Committee. In such circumstances, the chair will make application to the Vice-President (Academic & Research) for consideration of this request. If approved, the RPT member of the Self-Study Committee would be elected by Regular faculty teaching in the program area(s).

The Self-Study Committee Chair organizes meetings of the Committee, and coordinates the research for, and writing of the Self-Study Report.

The Self-Study Committee may ask departments, committees, or other groups to produce documents, reports, or other information to assist with the review. The Self-Study Committee will review all information collected and prepare a Self-Study Report.

The Committee will establish a timetable for the completion of the Self-Study Report. The Self-Study will be completed no later than May 15.

After reviewing the Self-Study Report, the Program Review Committee may request clarifications or additional documentation. The Self-Study Committee will submit any additional documentation within three weeks of the Program Review Committee's request or by June 15, whichever comes first.

External Study

By September 1, the Program Review Committee shall ask the University community to nominate respected Canadian or American academics from the program field(s) under review to establish a list of potential external reviewers. External reviewers should be experts in their disciplines or professions with experience in institutions with which NSCAD University compares itself in terms of quality, aspirations, and achievements. The Program Review Committee will circulate the list to faculty in the program area(s) under review, and, if applicable, to the Dean for comment.

By October 1, the Program Review Committee will present to the Vice-President (Academic & Research) a panel of suitable potential external reviewers, ranked in order of preference, from which two (2) to three (3) reviewers will be identified. The Vice-President (Academic & Research) or designate will contact the external reviewers on behalf of the University.

By October 15, the Program Review Committee will provide the external reviewers with documentation necessary in preparing for the external review. Such documentation will include (but may not be limited to):

- ❖ Self-Study Report
- ❖ University calendar and other pertinent material

- ❖ additional program information not included in the Self-Study Report
- ❖ External Review Guide

The external reviewers will be invited to visit the University for a period of 2 – 3 days between November 1 to 30th during which they shall meet with faculty, students, and staff as may be appropriate. Within one month of the end of their visit to the University, the reviewers will submit joint reports on their findings to the Program Review Committee with a copy to the Vice-President (Academic & Research).

Report of the Program Review Committee

The Program Review Committee will evaluate all of the documentation provided, including the report of the external reviewers, and will prepare a report indicating conclusions and recommendations on the program under review. Specific recommendations for actions will be articulated clearly, with suggested timelines for implementation. The Program Review Committee will forward copies of the report to the Chair of Academic Senate, the President of the University, and the President of SUNSCAD.

Implementation of the report

Each September for two (2) years following the review, directors or heads of the programs will report to the Academic Senate on the actions taken to implement the recommendations of the Program Review Committee.

For further information, please contact:

The Office of the Vice-President (Academic and Research)
3rd Floor, 5163 Duke St.
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3J6

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SELF-STUDY REPORT GUIDE

The following categories comprise a basic guide to what topics should be considered for inclusion in the Self-Study Report. These suggestions are not meant to restrict the Self-Study Committee in its choice of topics to be addressed.

The Self-Study Committee may ask departments, committees, or other groups to produce documents, reports, or other information to assist with the review. The Self-Study Committee will review all information collected and prepare a Self-Study Report.

1) Introduction

- Date of last review
- Brief description and history of program
- Relationship to other programs at NSCAD
- Identify indicators of program quality that are to be considered, such as curriculum, faculty qualifications, students, success of alumni
- Summary of program changes and developments in response to last review
- Anticipated program changes within the next two years, as a response to last review
- Faculty and University initiatives which could impact the review

2) Program analysis

- Current calendar listing including:
 - Course descriptions
 - Program requirements and prerequisites
 - Admission policies and standards
 - Academic regulations (including evaluation/grading policy)
- Summary table listing (for the last 5 years): Courses offered in each term, enrolment (program and non-program), instructors (including name and category of each appointment)
- Learning objectives (by course and program map)
- Number of students applying to the program each year over the last 5 years
- Number and proportion of interdisciplinary students taking classes in the program/division
- Student Graduation Ratios - Degrees awarded each year over the last 5 years in comparison to admissions
- Student time-to-completion (average length of program)
- Student-faculty ratios
- Grade distribution patterns
- Number of F/T tenured/tenure track, RPT, ICA faculty members including rank
- Comment on any impact of the University's diversity and equity policies on the program area
- Curriculum changes in past 5 years and rationale
- Relationship to the interdisciplinary program

- Joint programs, partnerships, co-operating institutions
- Identify any health or safety issues/concerns
- Links between the program/division and the local, national and international arts communities and organizations
- Visitors to the program (last five years)
- Special exhibitions/conferences/artist talks/panel discussions etc. organized within the program over the past five years
- Additional relevant information (including any special initiatives undertaken)

3) Teaching research and creative practice

- Current CV for each faculty member
- Table of name, rank, date of initial appointment
- Faculty/Program/Division's contribution to research and creative practice
- Impact of research and creative practice on teaching and student recruitment

4) Students

- Recruitment efforts and association with the Office of Recruitment and Admissions
- Admission practices for the University and the specific program(s)
- Orientation, advising and mentoring
- Employment/placement or status of students over last 5 years
- Identified student satisfaction and concerns
- Student organizations
- Student publications, exhibitions, theses

5) Alumni

- Events for alumni and follow-up
- Selected Alumni (Employment or status of notable alumni)

6) Resources

- Faculty and staff resource planning through next 5 years
- Current faculty space, lab space, studio space, student space, and staff space
- Description of facilities, spaces, special equipment, resources (including library)
- Equipment and support services and planning for next 5 years
- Annual operating budgets

7) 5-year academic plan

- Identify areas for future curriculum and program development

8) Major Areas of Interest for External Review

- Identify any specific areas of special interest which could be considered by the external review team

CONTENT AND FORM OF THE SELF-STUDY REPORT

- i. Cover page**
 - Name of program(s) under review
 - Signatures of Self-Study Committee and Chair/Director of Departments/Programs
- ii. Table of Contents**
- iii. Summary of Strengths and Weaknesses of Program Reviewed and Recommendations of the Committee**
- iv. Introduction**
- v. Program analysis**
- vi. Teaching research and creative practice**
- vii. Students**
- viii. Alumni**
- ix. Resources**
- x. 5-year academic plan**
- xi. Major Areas of Interest for External Review**
- xii. Numbered Recommendations**
- xiii. Appendices**
 - Any Relevant Documentation

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EXTERNAL REVIEW GUIDE

For purposes of ensuring continued academic program quality and excellence, the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD University) has adopted a quality assurance program which includes a system of self-study, an external peer review, and a schedule of follow-up procedures. A quality assurance review process is essential to assuring the highest academic standards in order that NSCAD remains a primary university dedicated to the visual arts.

To assure that the best possible standards in program assessment, the University will appoint external reviewers who are **experts in their disciplines or professions with experience in institutions with which NSCAD University compares itself in terms of quality, aspirations, and achievements.**

In preparing the External Review Report, please use the preliminary material provided by the Self-Study Committee as well as the information obtained during the site visit to respond to the following issues/questions. The categories are provided as a guide and are not intended to restrict the Reviewers from commenting on any additional areas of interest or concern not mentioned here.

1) Objectives and Identity

- What are the objectives of the program?
- How clear are the objectives?
- How do these objectives correspond to those of other similar programs?
- How do current trends in the disciplines relate to these objectives?
- What is the fit between the program objectives and the curriculum?
- Are there evidence of indicators demonstrating the achievement of the program objectives?
- What is the extent to which the program's goals and priorities match the academic plan of the University and the standards, educational goals and learning objectives of the degree?
- What are the strengths and limitations of the program?
- Comment on the program's involvement in ongoing self-assessment of the quality its program(s), its faculty, and its students?
- Comment on the appropriateness of the program in light of the University's mission, finances, and priorities

2) Curriculum and Pedagogy

Program Emphasis

- What are the primary areas of focus/expertise?
- What are the principal teaching, research interests and activities of faculty?
- In comparison with similar programs, are important activities or interests over or under represented?
- How has the curriculum changed to reflect current trends in the area of study?

- Comment on the clarity and coherence of the program requirements and designs
- Appropriateness of the number and variety of courses offered
- What, if any, is the public role of the program?
- Comment on the contribution of the program to public policy, environment, society and economy of Nova Scotia and beyond

Teaching and Curriculum

- What are the department's practices relative to identifying and remediating teaching issues and problems?
- How positive/negative are students' evaluation of teaching? What have faculty done to address student concerns regarding teaching, including those reflected in course evaluation?
- Comment on opportunities for initiatives in pedagogy and programming
- Comment on plans or proposals for future developments or initiatives

Inclusivity

- What initiatives has the program or unit made to become informed on issues of inclusivity in curricula, and/or to revise course content and curricula accordingly?
- Are programs available to students who wish to study part-time?
- Have any faculty members and teaching assistants in the academic unit acquired special expertise (training, consulting and/or publication) to better assure inclusive curriculums and institutions?

3) Regulation and Governance

- What are the current regulations for the program? (i.e. admission requirements, courses required, regulations and procedures for comprehensive examinations, regulations and procedures for theses and the examination of theses, academic standing, minimal grade point average, scores on language tests, i.e. TOEFL)
- Comment on the organizational structure and effectiveness of academic units, including governance, administration and resource management

4) Students

Enrollment

- What are the trends in enrollment and what might these trends illustrate?
- What is the quality and diversity of the students in the program taking into account self-designated groups?

Recruitment

- What are the current sources of referral/recruitment of students to the program (i.e. how do students find out about and choose academic programs)?
- What recruitment initiatives have been designed to attract students? Are there any special preparation programs to enable a wide range of students to qualify for admission to the program?

Selection

- What are the selection criteria for admission?
- What consideration has been given to remove non-academic barriers for capable students?
- Do the general profiles of the students admitted match the University's overall standards and goals?

Financial Support

- What proportion of students receive financial support and in what ways? (I.e. scholarships, bursaries, student employment, etc.)
- Are there any scholarships or bursaries which have been made available especially to any members of specific groups?
- What proportion of scholarship recipients are members of under-represented groups relative to their proportion in the academic unit?

Graduate Rates and Employment

- What is the average time to complete the degree? What proportion of students complete the degree?
- How are graduates of the program employed?

Performance

- Is the level of achievement of the students consistent with the educational goals of the program?

Student Experience

- What are the overall student satisfaction/concerns?
- Student participation in Co-op, exchange and experiential learning activities.
- What is the level of student involvement in extra-curricular activities (attendance at openings, lectures, etc.)?

Other Issues

- What student participation mechanisms exist in the unit's governance? In what ways are students now participating in governance?
- What issues emerged from the instructional assessment forms?

5) Faculty Profile

- Assess the quality of teaching in the program
- What are the principle areas of expertise?
- What are the faculty's current research activities (publications, presentations, shows, exhibitions, grants, contracts, commissions, etc.)?
- In what types of research work are faculty involved (e.g. individual or teamwork, within program, outside program, outside University)?
- How do these profiles fulfill the objectives of the program?
- In what ways do faculty research interests provide a range of scholarly/creative perspectives from which students may benefit?
- Appropriateness of faculty teaching loads
- What is the role/participation of graduate students in the program delivery? What courses are taught?
- How are graduate teaching assistantships and research assistantships determined?
- What is the balance between senior and junior faculty; full-time and part-time faculty; and areas of expertise of faculty?

- Are the faculty representative of the University's diversity and equity policies?
- Comment on the faculty/student ratio.
- Comment on the overall staffing for the program based on the total workload required of the Department?
- What vulnerabilities and opportunities does the unit face in terms of anticipated retirement and hiring?

6) Resources

- Are the library holdings adequate to sustain the program?
- Are the computing facilities sufficient for students and faculty?
- Are the equipment and facilities (space, materials, etc.) sufficient for the program(s)?
- Do students have space to study? Socialize?

7) Please include an executive summary of recommendations

CONTENT AND FORM OF THE EXTERNAL REVIEW REPORT

When preparing the External Review Report, please refer to the headings and subheadings below for suggested content and form.

- i. Cover Page**
 - Name of program reviewed*
 - Names of reviewers, signatures and date*
- ii. Introduction**
- iii. Objectives and Identity**
- iv. Curriculum and Pedagogy**
 - a) *Program Emphasis*
 - b) *Teaching and Curriculum*
 - c) *Inclusivity*
- v. Regulation and Governance**
- vi. Students**
 - a) *Enrollment*
 - b) *Recruitment*
 - c) *Selection*
 - d) *Financial Support*
 - e) *Graduate Rates and Employment*
 - f) *Performance*
 - g) *Student Experience*
 - h) *Other Issues*
- vii. Faculty Profile**
- viii. Resources**
- ix. Conclusions**
- x. Executive Summary of Recommendations**

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