

**POLICY GOVERNING
UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM
APPROVAL AND REVIEW
AT
LAURENTIAN UNIVERSITY**

FINAL
March 30, 2005

PART A

PREAMBLE: GENERAL PRINCIPLES GOVERNING UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM APPROVAL AND REVIEW

1. As part of its commitment to offering undergraduate programs of high quality and standards, Laurentian University has adopted the Undergraduate Program Review Audit Committee (UPRAC) Review and Audit Guidelines. Under these Guidelines, universities undertake to establish, maintain and enhance the academic quality of their programs in accordance with their mission statements. To this end, and also with the goal of providing public accountability, Laurentian University is establishing clear policies and procedures for both the process for the approval of new programs as well as for the review of existing ones. These policies and procedures will undergo periodic audit by UPRAC.
2. The first step in ensuring the quality of undergraduate programs is a rigorous program approval process that ensures that the pertinent criteria have been addressed by the proper academic bodies of Laurentian University.
3. The objective of the institutional periodic undergraduate program approval and review process is to assess the quality of the undergraduate programs that Laurentian University provides.
4. Laurentian University is responsible for ensuring the quality of all components of programs of study, including those offered: i) in full or in part by its federated and affiliated institutions, and ii) in partnership with other higher education institutions (colleges and universities) through collaborative or other affiliation agreements.
5. The Undergraduate Program Approval and Review Process applies to all programs, including second-entry degree programs that are not subject to OCGS appraisal.
6. For the purposes of this policy, “program” is defined as a sequence of courses or other units of study prescribed by an institution for the fulfilment of the requirements of the particular degree, and is considered to be the comprehensive body of studies required to graduate with a specialization in a particular discipline (i.e., the “major”).
7. Although some programs are multi-disciplinary, the Undergraduate Program Review Process shall focus on departments/schools. Nevertheless, the quality of each major academic program and the learning environment of the students in the program must be explicitly addressed. Therefore, joint programs and multi- or interdisciplinary programs shall be assigned to one or another academic unit unless reviewed separately.
8. The Undergraduate Program Approval and Review Process derives its authority and legitimacy from the Academic Senate, the body responsible for academic matters at Laurentian University and who has mandated it. Notwithstanding the key role played by the Deans, Faculty Councils, the Council of English Language Programs (CELP) or le Conseil des programmes en français (CPF) and the academic units, the Academic Planning Committee (ACAPLAN) is responsible for the application of this policy.

9. Review of undergraduate programs will be on a regular basis, normally every seven to ten years. But in certain circumstances as determined by ACAPLAN more frequent reviews may be required. The general aim of the review process is to establish how well the units are doing with the resources that are currently in place.
10. The Faculty Council will serve as a "clearing house" for the review process. There will be a channel of consultation and co-operation linking the unit, the Faculty Council, ACAPLAN and Senate. ACAPLAN will ultimately make the recommendations to Senate concerning the review follow-up process. In the case of programs in the federated or affiliated colleges and universities, the Senates of the federated or affiliated facilities are also to be included in the consultation and cooperation. The Dean shall ensure that programs comply with the review process. The Dean is the facilitator for the program and the liaison person between ACAPLAN and the program under review.
11. All program evaluations must employ external reviewers, the program will submit the names of four experts in the field to the Vice-Presidents, Academic who, in consultation with the Dean, will select the external consultants. These external consultants must be at arm's length from the unit under review.
12. After review by ACAPLAN summaries of the program review shall be sent to the Senate and Board of Governors by June. In the case of programs in the federated or affiliated universities, the Senate and Board of Governors of each institution is also to receive summaries of the program review. The complete document for each program review shall be accessible for consultation by any member of the Senate and Board. By June, the Vice-Presidents, Academic shall forward to the Senate and Board an annual report that lists the programs whose periodic reviews have been completed over the year summarizing the results.
13. Implementation of the recommendations of the review is primarily the responsibility of the program. There will be monitoring by academic bodies, the Deans in collaboration with ACAPLAN and the Vice-Presidents, Academic.
14. Regular external evaluations for the purpose of accreditation will not in and of themselves substitute for the process outlined in the undergraduate program review guidelines. These external accreditation reviews can be used to satisfy the undergraduate review process to the extent that the accreditation reviews can be demonstrated to be consistent with the objective, structure and elements of the undergraduate review process. To this end, units/programs preparing to undergo an accreditation review shall submit the parameters of that external accreditation process to ACAPLAN six months prior to the beginning of this review in order for ACAPLAN to decide if it meets the undergraduate review guidelines.
15. Although ACAPLAN is responsible for the application of this policy, the administrative responsibility for ensuring that the application is in accord with the policy is vested in the Vice-Presidents, Academic, acting on behalf of ACAPLAN.

PART B

GUIDELINES FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF NEW UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS IN THE LAURENTIAN UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

1. The Academic Planning Committee (ACAPLAN) is responsible for the application AND execution of this policy.
2. The initiative for new programs normally rests with a Department/School/faculty group or the equivalent at an Affiliated College. However, academic program development can also be initiated by the office of the Vice-Presidents, Academic
3. A program is understood to mean a degree, diploma, certificate, concentration or specialization.
4. Having undergone the internal processes appropriate for the Faculty / College in question, new program proposals shall be presented to the appropriate Faculty Council(s) or the equivalent academic body in an affiliated institution. Such proposals may be rejected, referred back or approved.
5. New programs which have been approved by the appropriate Faculty Councils and the equivalent in the case of an affiliate institution are then considered by the ACAPLAN, after having been reviewed by the Council of English Language Programs (CELP) or le Conseil des programmes en français (CPF). It is the task of the Academic Planning Committee to assess proposals from the perspective of the institution's academic objectives, priorities, feasibility and continuing resources. In regard to the latter ACAPLAN will obtain budgetary information as appropriate. ACAPLAN may reject, refer back, or approve such proposals.
6. New program proposals that have been approved by ACAPLAN shall then be presented to Laurentian Senate for approval
7. New programs that have been approved by Laurentian Senate are then referred back to the Faculty Council(s) or the College academic body (bodies) for processing through the regular channels for curriculum change.
8. Even though Senate has given approval to offer a (new) particular undergraduate program at one of its member institutions, that program shall be presented in detail for consideration by ACAPLAN before it is approved to be offered at another site/affiliate/collaborator within the Laurentian system.

This requirement applies equally to the (new) program which may not involve any variance from the program in force at the other institution(s).

9. All program proposals shall require a clear articulation of the following points:
 - 9.1 consistency of the program with the general objectives of the institution's mission and academic plans and with the standards, educational goals and learning objectives of the degree;
 - 9.2 appropriateness of the admission requirements, e.g., achievement and preparation, for the learning objectives of the institution and the program;
 - 9.3 appropriateness of the program's structure and curriculum for its learning objectives;
 - 9.4 appropriateness of the mode of delivery (including, where applicable, distance or on-line delivery) to meet the program's learning objectives;
 - 9.5 appropriateness of the methods used for the evaluation of student progress;
 - 9.6 appropriateness of the utilization of the existing human/physical/financial/library resources;
 - 9.7 a sufficient number of faculty, including full-time appointments, with evidence of their quality and academic expertise in the area of the proposed program, or identified resources to provide a sufficient number of faculty as approved by ACAPLAN.
10. All program proposals shall be identified as either (a) undergraduate "Core Arts or Science" or b) "Non-Core" programs as per the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) regulations. In addition to the requirements of the above, "Non-Core" program proposals shall require convincing evidence of both student demand and societal need.
11. Faculties or Colleges submitting proposals for new programs shall complete the approved forms (check list) for new program approvals prepared by ACAPLAN and/or CELP or CPF.

PART C

GUIDELINES FOR PROGRAM AND UNIT EXTERNAL REVIEWS

THE UNIT

The unit chair/director will initiate and make sure the self-study is carried out. The self-study document will not exceed 25 pages although appendices can be as lengthy and specific as desired. Since it will be made available to the Review Committee, its content should, in a general sense, assist the Review Committee in examining the following aspects, and therefore should reflect the UPRAC Review Guidelines.

In order for the unit to assess the integrity and quality of the program, the unit self-study for existing undergraduate programs should address the following points:

- Consistency of the program with the general objectives of the institution's mission and academic plans, and with the standards, educational goals and learning objectives of the degree;
- Appropriateness and effectiveness of the admission requirements, e.g., preparation and achievement, for the learning objectives of the institution and the program;
- Appropriateness of the program's structure and curriculum to meet its learning objectives;
- Appropriateness and effectiveness of the mode of delivery (including, where applicable, distance or on-line delivery) to meet the program's learning objectives;
- The level of achievement of students, consistent with the learning objectives of the educational goals for the program and the degree, and institutional standards;
- Appropriateness and effectiveness of the utilization of the existing human/physical/financial/library resources;
- Definition of indicators that provided evidence of quality of faculty, student clientele (applications, registrations and workforce needs), student quality, quality of graduates and the outcomes of other program (graduation rate, length of studies, etc.) and achievement of its learning objectives.

In the case of units going through OCGS review or other external evaluations (such as accreditation), the material for that review may serve as the backbone of the undergraduate program self-study. Along with the self-study document, units will make dossiers concerning any aspect of the program available for consultation.

Units will select two upper-year students (one male, one female), who are majoring in a program offered by the unit, to participate directly in the preparation of the self-study and the appended dossier.

THE UNIT SELF-STUDY

The unit shall submit the self study through the office of the Vice-Presidents, Academic, in three separate parts:

- 1) THE PROGRAM
- 2) CURRICULA VITARUM OF THE FACULTY
- 3) LIST OF PROPOSED CONSULTANTS

1. THE PROGRAM brief is to contain the following information organized (as far as possible) in the following manner.

Introduction

- i. Brief listing of program(s).
 - ii. Objectives of the program(s) and mission statement.
 - iii. The learning objectives of the programs and expected outcomes.
 - iv. Review concerns (if any) expressed in previous appraisal, and actions taken.
 - v. Special matters and innovative features (if any).
- a. The Faculty
 - i. List of both full-time as well as part-time faculty, identify core, indicating impending retirements over next five years.
 - ii. Research Funding - for past five years by source (granting councils, industry, government, foundations, other).
 - iii. Current teaching loads (graduate and undergraduate), showing the number of courses taught by each faculty member.
 - iv. Career number, and current, supervisorship of bachelor's thesis and master's students, by faculty member (summary table).
 - v. Appropriateness and effectiveness of the utilization of existing human resources.
 - b. Physical Resources
 - i. Library resources - a summary statement on holdings pertinent to the program, collection policy, and expenditures for last five years (where available).

DO NOT SUBMIT DETAILED DOCUMENTATION ON LIBRARY HOLDINGS, but have available if required by consultants.
 - ii. Laboratory and computer facilities - major equipment available for use, commitments/plans (if any) for next five years.
 - iii. Space - list current faculty, laboratory, graduate student and general research office space, commitments/plans (if any) for next five years.

- iv. Appropriateness and effectiveness of the utilization of existing physical resources.
- c. Students
- i. Enrolment and graduations for past five years by program
 - ii. Educational and/or employment status of students graduating over past five years.
 - iii. Projected enrolments (FT; PT) for next five years, by program, with a rationale for the numbers provided.
- d. Program Regulations and Courses
- i. Regulations for the program(s) including: appropriateness and effectiveness of the admission standards and explanation of admission policies for each program; course requirements, examinations, evaluation procedures; thesis evaluation procedures, language requirements (if any), and other requirements; residence regulations. Also, a statement on the appropriateness of generic admission requirements is required.
 - ii. Total courses listed, including: courses actually offered with enrolments (past three years); combined graduate/undergraduate courses (if any) offered (past three years). A statement concerning the structural relationship between the undergraduate program(s) and the graduate program(s) is required.
 - iii. Collateral and supporting departments: list only those involvements that are substantial, indicating the nature of the co-involvement (i.e. joint research, graduate teaching, etc.).
 - iv. Course outlines and other documents relevant to the content of the courses.
 - v. Appropriateness of the program's structure and curriculum to meet its learning objectives. Rationales for curriculum organization - requirements, relevance and justification of courses. How courses are related and how they build on previous learning. An indication or demonstration of undergraduate student outcomes in relation to learning objectives of the program (value added education).
 - vi. Appropriateness and effectiveness of the method of delivering including distance and on-line to meet the program's learning objectives.
 - vii. A statement that explains how the program meets its learning objectives and how it fits into the mission of the University.
 - viii. Statistical summaries only of student course evaluations.

- e. Planning
 - i. Strengths and weaknesses: Conclusion
 - ii. How do you plan to reach your goals?

2. THE CURRICULA VITARUM OF THE FACULTY - to be presented in the same format for all faculty listed and also to be presented separately from the section on the program. Each C.V. is to be organized according to the Laurentian University format.

3. THE LIST OF PROPOSED CONSULTANTS - to be presented in the same format for each nomination and also to be presented separately from the other two sections (II.4 and II.5). The list is to contain the following information organized in the following manner:
 - a. name
 - b. rank/position
 - c. institution/firm - current address, please also include telephone number
 - d. degrees - designation, university, discipline, date
 - e. professional experience/expertise relevant to the consultancyship
 - f. previous affiliation with University (if any), and association with individual members of the faculty, e.g. student/professor relationship, co-author, close personal friendship, etc.

4. With respect to the LIST OF PROPOSED CONSULTANTS, the Departments/Schools must:
 - a. present at least 4 nominations
 - b. designate the nominees by program
 - c. not contact the nominees with respect to the nominations.

ROLE OF THE DEAN

- Submits the unit self-study report and the names of external consultants to the Vice-Presidents, Academic who will make the initial contact with the external consultants

- Communicates with the external consultants and finds an appropriate time for the on site two day visit

- Makes up a written agenda to include:
 - Meeting with unit head
 - Meeting with faculty members
 - Meeting with students
 - Meeting with President(s) of federated or affiliated college(s) (where applicable)
 - Meeting with Vice-Presidents, Academic
 - Meeting with director of the Library and/or other persons if desired
 - Visit of facilities if desired

Make sure accommodations and travel arrangements are coordinated with visitors.

THE REVIEW TEAM

The review team will operate as a sub-committee of the Faculty Council which will serve as a "clearing house" for all the reviews of the Faculty. The review team consists of the external consultant(s), two Laurentian faculty members (one outside of the unit but from within the Faculty*; a second from outside of the Faculty) and one student representative from each language group from the unit. If the unit offers programs in both English and French, there will be a Francophone external consultant for the French program and an Anglophone external consultant for the English one, unless a fluently bilingual consultant can be engaged. The internal faculty members and student representative will be selected by the unit in consultation with the Dean. The review team shall reflect the bilingual nature of the university and reasonable gender balance. The linguistic policies of the unit must be reflected in the composition of the review team. The members from other universities must not have any past or current formal affiliation with the unit, or with members of the unit (e.g. supervisor, co-author, etc.).

The Committee will review the self-study submitted by the unit, request any additional information that is needed, and then spend at least two days visiting the unit. During the on-campus visit, the Committee will first meet in camera to discuss procedures, concerns and additional information that might be required. The Committee must then meet with faculty, staff, undergraduate students within the unit, the Dean, the Vice-Presidents, Academic along with any other member of the university community that can provide information (e.g. Librarian, Director of Computing Services, etc.). Prior to concluding the visit, the Committee must meet with the Vice-Presidents, Academic and the Dean for a debriefing session to provide preliminary oral feedback on the outcome of the visit and an evaluation of the process.

* In the case of a program exclusively offered by a federated or affiliated university, the Faculty representative would be a member of a unit, other than the unit undergoing the review, within that federated or affiliated university.

THE REVIEW TEAM'S REPORT

The review team will produce one report. The main body of the report will be authored by the external consultants. The report is to be submitted to the Vice-Presidents, Academic (and, in the case of a federated or affiliated university, the President of the university) no later than six weeks after the on-site visit. The Vice-Presidents, Academic will forward the report to the unit and to the Dean. The unit will then have one month's time from receipt of the report to formulate a response to the contents of the report. After the unit submits a response to the Vice-Presidents with a copy to the Dean, the review team's report will be circulated to CELP, CPF, ACAPLAN and to Senate. All of these bodies are encouraged to provide feedback (to be submitted to the Vice-Presidents, Academic before the report is acted upon by ACAPLAN) in order to help ACAPLAN make its recommendations.

After the lapse of the unit response deadline, the report will be on the next ACAPLAN agenda for study and recommendations. In cases where there is a unit response, both the report and the response will reach ACAPLAN. At that stage, the review results are public.

ACAPLAN will recommend an appropriate course of action to any of the following appropriate levels: Dean, Faculty Council, Council of English or French Language Programs, as appropriate, Vice-Presidents, Academic, Senate, Budget Committee and the Board of Governors.

GUIDELINES FOR THE REPORT BY REVIEWERS

The review team will prepare a report which addresses aspects of the department / faculty / institution that influence the quality of the undergraduate program. The spirit of the review should be constructive. The report should state what the unit has done since its last review.

The report should respond to issues identified in the department's self study report and issues which arise during the site visit. It should provide a considered overview of the program's strengths and weaknesses with supporting evidence. Recommendations to improve the program can be made and whether or not additional resources are required should be noted.

The reviewer's central objective is to assess how current offerings could better serve the students within the available resources. In light of financial restraints, it may not be realistic to recommend increased faculty or resources, although some resources may be made available on a one time basis.

The report should include, but is not limited to, the following:

- an outline of the visit (who interviewed, facilities seen, other relevant activities);
- Consistency of the program with the general objectives of the institution's mission and academic plans, and with the standards, educational goals and learning objectives of the degree;
- Appropriateness and effectiveness of the admission requirements, e.g., preparation and achievement, for the learning objectives of the institution and the program;
- Appropriateness of the program's structure and curriculum to meet its learning objectives;
- Appropriateness and effectiveness of the mode of delivery (including, where applicable, distance or on-line delivery) to meet the program's learning objectives;
- The level of achievement of students, consistent with the educational goals for the program and the degree, and institutional standards;
- Appropriateness and effectiveness of the utilization of the existing human/physical/financial/library resources;
- Definition of indicators that provided evidence of quality of faculty, student clientele (applications and registrations), student quality, and the outcomes of the program (graduation rate, length of studies, etc.) and achievement of its learning objectives.

PROCESS FOR FOLLOW-UP

As is the case for the OCGS and other external reviews, the review of academic quality for undergraduate programs must provide for well defined action as far as the programs are concerned. For example, OCGS reviews or other external evaluations (such as accreditation), result in the continuation of good quality graduate programs, in the closure of unsatisfactory ones (which may, however be granted a period of time to improve their quality). An undergraduate program deemed unsatisfactory after the periodic review should be allowed an appropriate period of time for improvement. A follow-up review would then be conducted, within a prescribed space of time.

The Dean would monitor the program's progress both before and during the follow-up review. Eighteen months following the completion of the review, the Vice-Presidents, Academic (ACAPLAN Chair) will contact the unit to monitor implementation of the agreed action plan. This information will be forwarded to the Faculty Council, Council of English or French Language Programs, as appropriate, ACAPLAN (which has a central role in the follow-up process) and to Senate. The nature of the unit's implementation of the original recommendation will have a definite impact on the budgetary exercise. However, depending upon the resources that are available at the time, the University will recognize achievement and success by means of forms of support for the unit. The support may assume any number of guises. The process for follow-up will also include a re-evaluation of the unit's previous category (i.e. consolidation, maintenance, major revision, etc.).

APPENDIX 1---REVIEW TIMETABLE FOR ANY GIVEN YEAR

- March 1 The Vice-Presidents, Academic notify the unit in writing of forthcoming review and provide it with criteria / preparing Self-Study Report.
- August 1 The unit submits names of recommended external consultants who are at arms length from the unit, to the Vice-Presidents, Academic who will choose and contact the consultant.
- August 1 The unit submits Self-Study Report to the Vice-Presidents, Academic and the Dean. Internal review team is struck by the Dean.
- September 15 –
November 15 Period during which “Review Committee” work takes place, including the on-site visit of external consultant(s). (Note: The Review Committee is made up of the internal review team and the external consultant(s).)
- January 15 The report of the external consultant(s) and the internal reviewers is submitted to the Vice-Presidents, Academic who immediately forward it to the unit and the Dean.
- February 15 The unit submits "Unit Response" to Vice-Presidents, Academic and to Faculty Council through the Dean. Faculty Council is invited to offer feedback to the Vice-Presidents, Academic.
- March-April ACAPLAN studies the report and any feedback, and formulates recommendations.
- May/June ACAPLAN recommendations go to Senate and the Board.

APPENDIX 2---REFERENCE MATERIAL FOR EXTERNAL CONSULTANT

- Consultant's Guidelines.
- Tentative schedule of meetings.
- University (and applicable Federated or affiliated University) Mission Statement and Strategic Plan.
- Unit's self-study will include all off-site programs if appropriate
- ACAPLAN Undergraduate Program Review Document.
- Report from unit's previous review.
- Enrolment data, current, projected and for the preceding seven-year period.
- A tabulation of current teaching loads, showing the number of courses taught by each faculty member (undergraduate and graduate).
- Information regarding the quality of teaching in the unit (e.g. teaching awards to faculty, student evaluations of teaching).
- A grade distribution profile of undergraduate courses.
- Operating funds for the unit (excluding salaries) with a breakdown of major budget categories.
- Other material will be made available during the consultant's visit as necessary. In addition, copies of accreditation reports or reports of departmental or graduate program appraisers may be made available if desired.