One University. One World. Yours.

Name:	Senate Policy on the Review of Programs at Saint Mary's University
Policy Number:	8-1015
Origin:	University Senate
Approved:	September 19, 2014
Issuing Authority:	University Senate
Responsibility:	University Senate
Supersedes:	Senate Policy on the Review of Graduate Programs at Saint Mary's University (8-1010) and Senate Policy on the Review of Undergraduate Programs at Saint Mary's University (8-1006)
Revision Date(s):	Sept. 19, 2014, Mar. 11, 2016, May 13, 2016, July 25, 2019
Effective Date:	July 25, 2019

Table of Contents

Senate Policy on the Review of   Page 1 of 7
Programs at Saint Mary's University
Effective date July 25, 2019

Senate Policy on the Review of Programs at Saint Mary's University

1.   Preamble

The Saint Mary's University Act, 1970 (including amendments to December, 2007), states that "Subject to the powers of the Board, the Senate shall be responsible for the educational policy of the university." The Program Review process is therefore carried out under the authority of the Academic Senate with detailed oversight the responsibility of the Academic Planning Committee, a standing committee of Senate chaired by the Vice- President, Academic and Research.

Graduate Programs

All graduate programs (graduate diplomas, and Master and PhD degrees) are the responsibility of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research (FGSR). While the FGSR is academically responsible for the programs, the delivery of the programs is accomplished in collaboration and in close working relationships with the Faculties of Arts, Science and Sobey School of Business. Individual graduate programs are facilitated by its Graduate Program Committee which is led by its Graduate Program Coordinator (roughly analogous to a Department Council and Departmental Chair, respectively, for undergraduate programs).

Graduate programs at Saint Mary's fall under either research-based or professional categories, following the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC) Degree Level Qualifications Framework. Examples of research-based programs include the MA in History, the MSc in Applied Psychology, and the PhD in Business Administration - Management. Examples of professional graduate programs include the Master of Business Administration, the Master of Finance, and the Master of Management of Cooperatives and Credit Unions.

For purposes of this policy, the term "program" is used in the broadest sense. It could refer to a review of graduate programs in an entire discipline (e.g. MSc and PhD in Astronomy; Graduate Diploma, MA and PhD in International Development Studies); all graduate programs housed within a given Department, academic unit or Centre; a specific interdisciplinary program; or a graduate program housed within a specific Department.

The term "graduate program" is used to represent the academic unit responsible for the program under review. While some graduate programs are housed within specific departments which are very closely involved in their delivery, this policy and process does not constitute a departmental review. The focus is on the learning environment, educational experiences, and research activities (the latter, especially for research-based programs) of graduate students in the program. Department resources and departmental service will be taken into account only to the extent that they shape this experience. All graduate programs offered for credit are subject to program review.

Undergraduate Programs

For purposes of this policy, the term "program review" is used in the broadest sense. It could refer to a review of programs in an entire Faculty (e.g., BSc, BA, BComm); some or all programs in a given Department or academic unit (e.g., Majors, minors, certificates); or a specific interdisciplinary program. When degree programs are required to be reviewed for accreditation compliance, they will be scheduled.

The term "department" is used to represent the academic unit responsible for the program under review, if appropriate. This policy and process does not constitute a departmental review. The focus is on the learning environment and the educational experiences of undergraduate students in the program. Research activities, department resources, and departmental service will be taken into account only to the extent that they shape this experience. All undergraduate programs offered for credit are subject to program review.

Senate Policy on the Review of   Page 2 of 7
Programs at Saint Mary's University
Effective date July 25, 2019

Policy Revision

To ensure that the policy stays current and relevant to its users, and reflects changes in quality assurance and program enhancement processes, the Senate Procedures for the Review of Academic Programs at Saint Mary's University will be revised as follows:

- The Senate Policy on Program Review will be reviewed every 7 years.
- Changes to the Senate Policy on Program Review may be scheduled at other times to accommodate necessary modifications to the document.

2.   Statement of Objectives

Program Review is a process of internal, formative self-evaluation combined with and guided by peer review. It is aimed at monitoring and improving student learning and the many facets that support learning. The program review:

- encourages continuous program enhancement through a process of self-evaluation;
- enables programs to maintain currency and academic credibility through the peer review process; promotes high-quality programs that are responsive to student needs, societal priorities, and the public good;
- enables programs to ensure that program goals are consistent with the University's mission and Academic Plan;
- assists programs with future development;
- informs institutional decision making and resource allocation.

3.   Guiding Principles

Guiding principles for the development and implementation of the program review process represent principles inherent in the collegial governance environment of academia. These include:

- Academic Freedom: Respecting the university's commitment to the principle of academic freedom, reviews should be open, fair, inclusive, critical and constructive.
- Peer Review: As a central tenet of the academy, external assessment by peers remains a central feature of all program reviews.
- Accountability: Participating in a regular cycle of program reviews demonstrates accountability in the pursuit of program enhancement to a university's many communities: to students, faculty and staff, as well as to government, funding agencies, and the general public.
- Transparency: The university community will be informed of the program review outcomes for each review cycle. This information will be included in the Academic Planning Committee's annual report to Senate and posted on the Senate Office website.

4.   Scheduling of Program Reviews

A seven year program review cycle has been developed by the Academic Planning Committee, a Committee of Senate, in consultation with the Deans.

- Each program will normally be reviewed once in every seven year cycle.
- All new programs will normally be reviewed after five years and subsequently added to the review schedule.
- Programs subject to accreditation should follow the Guidelines for Program Review Subject to Accreditation (see Appendix A).

Senate Policy on the Review of   Page 3 of 7
Programs at Saint Mary's University
Effective date July 25, 2019

- Notwithstanding the normal seven year cycle, reviews may be scheduled at other times to accommodate accreditation review timelines, to allow for thematically similar programs to be reviewed simultaneously (e.g., independent minors, minors outside of a department, or freestanding minors), or to facilitate the timely discussion of significant issues in the discipline and/or program.

5.   Steps in the Review Process

Academic Program Reviews are initiated annually by the Vice-President, Academic and Research, on the advice of the Academic Planning Committee. Core elements of the review process include:

- A notification letter from the Chair of the Academic Planning Committee will be sent to programs confirming their upcoming program review.

- A Self-Study Committee will be established by the program and a Chair will be appointed.

- An orientation workshop for Self-Study Committees undergoing a program review will be facilitated by the Manager of the Program Review Process at the beginning of the review process each year. The main purpose of the workshop is to outline and discuss the policy and processes (e.g. timelines, resource availability, etc.) prior to the start of the review process each year. Continuing support will be offered throughout the program review process.

- The Self-Study Committee will produce a Self-Study Report according to the timeline outlined in the Program Review Policy Handbook. The Self-Study Report must include elements required by MPHEC, which are outlined in the Program Review Policy Handbook.

- The relevant Dean(s) must provide a response to the Self-Study Report according to the timeline outlined in the Program Review Policy Handbook.

- A Program Review Committee (PRC) will be selected, consisting of:

  o one faculty member internal to Saint Mary's who is not involved with the program and who will serve as Internal Chair of the PRC (if an internal faculty member cannot be secured, the Manager of Program Review will serve), and

  o two faculty members external to Saint Mary's who are established scholars in the field with experience in program development.

- An on-site review will be conducted by the Program Review Committee (PRC).

- A PRC Report will be submitted to the Office of the Vice-President, Academic & Research.

- The program will draft a response to the PRC report.

- The relevant Dean(s) will draft a response to PRC report and the program response.

- The PRC Report, responses from the program and relevant Dean(s), will be submitted to the Academic Planning Committee. APC will produce a report, including recommendations with timelines, for submission to Senate. The APC Report will also be copied to the Deans and the Program.

- Senate's consideration of the APC Report will result in a Senate Report, including recommendations and actions to be taken by the Department, with accompanying timelines.

- The program will develop of an Action Plan based on the Senate Report, which is to be submitted to the Academic Planning Committee within 60days of receiving the Senate Report.

Senate Policy on the Review of   Page 4 of 7
Programs at Saint Mary's University
Effective date July 25, 2019

- A One-Year Report is to be submitted to Academic Planning by the program on the progress made during the year on the Action Plan. This report will be submitted one-year following the receipt of the Senate Report and will include commentary by the Dean on the progress. The report will be reviewed by APC with an update submitted to Senate.

- A Three-Year Report is to be submitted to Academic Planning by the program on the progress made on the Action Plan since the One-Year Report. This report will be submitted three years following the receipt of the Senate Report and will include commentary by the Dean on the progress. The report will be reviewed by APC with an update submitted to Senate.

6.   Framework for Review of Academic Programs

6.1 Program Goals and Needs

Provide a description of the program goals and an overview of how the program structure, courses and delivery are linked to the program outcomes. Consider this in the context of program need (local, regional, national), student enrollment characteristics, internal factors (University Mission; Academic Plan), and external factors influencing the program. External factors include accreditation as well as political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal forces impacting the program. If a program has external accreditation factors to consider, identify the status of these external requirements. .

6.2 Program Description

Characterize typical student progression through the program by providing a year-by-year description and analyzing factors such as pedagogical practices and modes of course delivery and teaching/learning resources (physical infrastructure, equipment, etc.). For graduate programs, identify research expertise, research funding, and collaboration with other programs or institutions.

6.3 Outcomes

Provide a description of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes students develop as a result of taking the program Provide an explanation of how these outcomes are achieved and/or measured by identifying general principles and methods of assessment used in the program.

6.4 Resources

Identify and critically analyze how human, physical, and financial resources affect and contribute to the teaching and learning environment for students in the program. Consider deployment of faculty (FT/PT), physical infrastructure, professional development of faculty and staff, and advising/mentoring of students.

6.5 Continuous Improvement Process

Program Review is a process of internal, formative self-evaluation, combined with and guided by peer review, to encourage continuous program improvement. Provide a description of your program development process, planned or contemplated curriculum change and/or changes to relevant research activities, as well as the program strengths and challenges considering your discipline or field regionally, nationally, and internationally. Feedback from students must be included. Feedback from graduates of the program and other relevant stakeholders should be included.

Senate Policy on the Review of   Page 5 of 7
Programs at Saint Mary's University
Effective date July 25, 2019

7.   APPENDIX A

Guidelines for Program Review subject to Accreditation

Combining a Program Review and an Accreditation Review can be challenging, and the feasibility of doing so may well be discipline specific.

Accreditation is a process by which a program is evaluated to determine if it meets certain pre-determined minimal criteria or standards. A program review process is an on-going and continuous evaluation of a program for the purpose of quality improvement. Both of these processes can be described as quality assurance processes and often include assessing, monitoring, guaranteeing, maintaining and improving.

There are several factors that need to be considered when deciding how to combine, coordinate or completely segregate a program review with an external accreditation review including:

- o   Levels of complexity of program(s) offered (undergraduate, graduate, professional)
- o   Review cycle of both the program review and accreditation
- o   Qualifications required for reviewers evaluation criteria
- o   Issues currently facing program(s) and the University

MPHEC states: that the self-study report or the external site visit (and the report) "when and where appropriate, the results of accreditation may be included and/or substituted for this component, or a portion thereof".

As a first step, the degree of alignment or overlap of the processes should be determined by comparing the accreditation review template with the templates for the program review self-study and the external review team report. Depending on the outcome of the comparison, it may be determined that:

- o   the accreditation review meets all or most of the criteria for the program review and that some part of the program review process can be fulfilled through accreditation review; or,
- o   the accreditation review will not sufficiently meet the requirements of the program review and a regular program review process must be followed.

Academic units should consult with the Dean's Office and the Faculty of Graduate Studies & Research as appropriate to make this determination.

Senate Policy on the Review of   Page 6 of 7
Programs at Saint Mary's University
Effective date July 25, 2019

Version History

Version	Date Changed	Updated by	Description of Change
1.0	September 19, 2014	Academic Planning Committee	Document creation. Date of Senate Approval: September 19, 2014. Merges the Senate Policy on the Review of Undergraduate Programs, and the companion document for Graduate Programs 12, 2010.
1.1	March 11, 2016	Academic Planning Committee	Addition of subsection for Policy Revision within the Preamble.
1.2	May 13, 2016	Academic Planning Committee	Addition of process for programs subject to accreditation.
1.3	July 25, 2019	Academic Planning Committee	Addition of statements: 1) all graduate and undergraduate programs offered for credit are subject to program review, 2) add flexibility for the coordination of program review and accreditation processes, 3) add reference to the Guidelines for Program Review, 4) add clarification for reviewing thematically similar programs together. Revise Section 5 – Steps in the Review Process and add requirement for a three-year report. Revise Section 6.1 - Program Goals and Needs to clarify External factors. Revise Section 6.5 – Continuous Improvement Process to make student feedback a requirement for all review processes.

Senate Policy on the Review of
Programs at Saint Mary's University
Effective date July 25, 2019

Page 7 of 7