

POLICY ON UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM REVIEW AT TRENT UNIVERSITY

The mission of Trent University is to be Canada's outstanding small university, committed to liberal education and the centrality of the individual student. In both its undergraduate and graduate programs, the University seeks to advance learning through the creative interaction of teaching and research of the highest quality. The process of Undergraduate Program Review (UPR) is a vital means of promoting that mission.

Purpose:

The objective of the institutional periodic undergraduate program review process is to evaluate the quality of the undergraduate programs offered by the University, including joint and multi- or inter-disciplinary programs leading to degrees, diplomas, or certificates. The review process is designed to assist departmental/program¹ committees in maintaining and, where needed, strengthening the quality of their programs.

Principles:

1. UPR is a self-regulatory process conforming to the principles of the Ontario Undergraduate Program Review Audit, and is subject to periodic audit by the Ontario Undergraduate Program Review Audit Committee (see details in the attached Appendix, Undergraduate Program Review at Trent: History and Context).
2. Senate is responsible for maintaining the quality of the review process and for ensuring that the recommendations of reports on program reviews are adequately followed up.
3. Program reviews are open processes involving faculty, staff, and students; summaries of reports are public documents circulated to Senate and the Board of Governors.
4. To ensure that national standards and expectations are met, external assessment is a central feature of all reviews.
5. To ensure consistency and fairness, and effective promotion of the University's mission and Senate's academic policies and priorities, a sub-committee including faculty members not directly involved in the programs under review will collaborate in the review process.

Structure:

1. The core elements of the review include:

- a critical and reflective self-appraisal of the programs under review, by both faculty and student members of the department, past and present;
- an external review by an expert in the field from another university, who shall be at

¹ Hereafter "department" is used to cover undergraduate departments, programs and schools at Trent; and "program" is used to cover a set of curricular offerings leading to a degree, diploma, or certificate.

arm's length from the department whose programs are under review (ie, not relatives, recent or current collaborators, supervisors, supervisees, etc.); and

- an internal collaborative report by a committee of Trent professors who are not members of the department whose programs are under review, at least one of whom comes from outside that department's division (Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences).

Where appropriate, there may be expert or professional assessment by non-university personnel, including representatives of industry, professions, and practical training programs.

2. Senate is responsible for the administration of the UPR policy. Detailed oversight is the responsibility of the Academic Planning Committee (APC), and its Sub-Committee on Undergraduate Program Reviews (SUPR). SUPR is chaired by the Vice President (Academic). Its membership includes three faculty members (one from each division) nominated directly to SUPR by the Nominating Committee for a minimum two-year term and a student member chosen by the TCSA, with the Dean of Arts and Science as a consultant. The Assistant to the Vice President (Academic) serves as its secretary and keeps its records.
3. SUPR approves the schedule of program reviews, chooses external assessors, oversees review processes, writes the internal reports, and monitors action taken on recommendations included in its reports. APC reviews the internal reports, distributes approved summaries to Senate for adoption and to the Board of Governors for information, and ensures that steps are taken to follow up on recommendations. In its year-end annual report to Senate, APC provides the final summary report on the program reviews initiated three years previous, comments on the in-year review process, outlines the upcoming year's schedule, and makes any recommendations for changes to UPR policies and procedures. Senate then forwards the report to the Board of Governors.

Criteria for Undergraduate Reviews:

- appropriateness of the department's mission and/or objectives;
- appropriateness of the program's structures and curriculum for the department's educational objectives;
- consistency of the program with Trent's mission statement and Senate's academic policies and priorities;
- appropriateness of university - and, where appropriate, program - admission requirements for the educational objectives of the university and the program;
- appropriateness of the department's approaches to teaching and learning and of the methods used for the evaluation of student progress;
- appropriateness of utilization of faculty, staff, financial and physical resources;
- presentation of evidence demonstrating quality of faculty and students, including information on percentage of faculty with PhDs or equivalent; number and kind of faculty publications, research grants and honours; student retention rates and graduation rates; and student career choices after graduation;
- assessment of the program's interaction with, and contributions to, other academic programs within the University, both graduate and undergraduate; and
- any other criteria deemed appropriate by Senate.

Typical Process:

1. After appropriate consultation with chairs, the Vice President (Academic) will recommend to SUPR a schedule of reviews such that all programs will be reviewed within a ten-year cycle.
2. In the Winter Term, the Vice President (Academic) will notify two to four departments that their programs will be reviewed in the following academic year.
3. Each department whose programs are to be reviewed will provide the Vice President (Academic) with the names of at least three possible external assessors, with background information and a rationale for each suggestion. SUPR will review the list and choose a preferred candidate. The Vice President (Academic) will attempt to ensure that an external assessor is named early in the Fall Term. Departments that offer programs that have distinctive science and social science or humanities offerings may request that two external assessors be asked to review their programs. In such cases, departments shall furnish the Vice President (Academic) with the names of five possible external assessors.
4. By the end of April, the Vice President (Academic) will organize an information session for chairs of departments whose programs are to be reviewed in the following academic year.
5. Each department whose programs are under review, with the collaboration of student members and in consultation with one faculty member of SUPR assigned to that program review, will conduct by early in the Fall Term an internal self-assessment and prepare a written document for the external assessor and SUPR. The document should pay particular attention to the quality of the undergraduate programs offered by the department, indicating both strengths and weaknesses, as identified by faculty and students. The document should include:
 - a statement outlining the department's mission or objectives and its place within the University's mission and Senate's academic priorities;
 - an appraisal of the program's place within its field of study provincially, nationally, and internationally;
 - an account of the curriculum, recent and planned curricular developments, and appraisal of its strengths and weaknesses;
 - an overview of the research and professional activities of the department's members, and comments on individual and collective activities and accomplishments;
 - an appraisal of the relationship of the departmental research and professional activities to teaching;
 - an appraisal of the quality of the undergraduate teaching in the program, including where possible summaries of written evaluations by students;
 - an appraisal of the attractiveness of the program to students (majors base, retention, etc.), student satisfaction with the program, and performance while at university and after graduation;
 - an appraisal of the adequacy or inadequacy in the provision and use of support elements: library, computer facilities, staff, resource and research facilities, budgets, etc; and
 - any other aspects of program development or problems that are deemed pertinent by the department, the Vice President (Academic), the Dean, or SUPR.
6. This critical self-appraisal will be sent to the external assessor and the members of SUPR, along with basic documentation (calendar copy, brochure, members' CVs, course syllabi, student surveys, etc.), as prepared by the department.

7. The external assessor will visit the Trent campus at least once in the Fall Term and meet the Vice President (Academic), the Dean, the Chair, members, students, and staff of the department, other members of SUPR, and others deemed appropriate to the process. The external assessor will be guided by the principles and criteria outlined in this policy, particularly those which relate to the quality of the programs relative to regional and national standards.
8. The external assessor will produce a report to be presented to the Vice President (Academic) one month after visiting Trent. This report should review the strengths and weaknesses of the programs and make recommendations for the future.
9. After presenting the external assessor's report to SUPR, the Vice President (Academic) will distribute a copy to the department, which will then be asked to provide a response to SUPR one month after receiving the report.
10. In the Fall Term of the following academic year, SUPR will review the departmental self-appraisal, the external assessor's report, and the departmental response to these reports. The faculty member of SUPR assigned to that review process, in consultation with the Dean, will draft a report in response to the three documents, for consideration and adoption by SUPR. The Vice President (Academic) will take SUPR's report to APC for discussion and adoption. The Vice President (Academic) will present to Senate for discussion and adoption a summary report (excluding all identifying information). The summary report will focus on the strengths and weaknesses of the programs and the main recommendations of the external assessor and SUPR.
11. After Senate adopts APC's report (in whole or in part), the report and recommendations will be conveyed to the department, together with guidelines and a timetable for implementation developed by the Vice President (Academic) and APC. The report to Senate will be forwarded to the Board of Governors for information.
12. The department will present a follow-up plan to SUPR no later than March 1.
13. By March 1 of the following academic year, the department will submit a report on its follow-up plan to SUPR. By April 1, SUPR will review the recommendations contained in APC's summary reports to Senate concerning undergraduate program reviews completed in the previous academic year to evaluate the extent to which the recommendations have been followed up. SUPR will convey its findings to APC. The Vice-President (Academic) will include in APC's annual year-end report to Senate a final summary report on the program reviews completed in the previous academic year, an update on the in-year review process, the upcoming year's program review schedule, and any recommendations for changes to UPR policies and procedures. The report to Senate will be forwarded to the Board of Governors for information.

TIMEFRAME

Winter Term: The Vice President (Academic) will notify departments whose programs will be reviewed in the following year.

The department will provide the Vice President (Academic) with names of possible external assessors

by the end of April: The Dean will organize an information session for all departments whose programs will be reviewed in the following year.

Year 1:

beginning of the Fall Term: The Vice President (Academic) will name an external assessor.

early in the Fall Term: The department will complete its internal self-assessment document and compile other relevant documentation to be forwarded to the external assessor and members of SUPR.

Late in the Fall or early in the Winter Term: The external assessor will visit the Trent campus and meet with the Vice President (Academic), the Dean, the Chair, members, students, and staff of the department, other members of SUPR, and others deemed appropriate to the process.

The external assessor will present a written report to the Vice President (Academic). The Vice President (Academic) will distribute a copy to the department.

The department will provide its written response to SUPR.

Year 2:

early in the Fall Term: SUPR will discuss the departmental self-appraisal, the external assessor's report, and the departmental response to these documents. It will prepare its report and present it to APC.

by November: The Vice President (Academic) will present to Senate for discussion and adoption a summary of SUPR's report, focusing on the strengths and weaknesses of the programs and including the main recommendations of the external assessor and SUPR.

by March 1: The department will submit a follow-up plan to SUPR

Year 3:

by March 1: The department will submit a report on its follow-up plan to SUPR.

by April 1: SUPR will review the recommendations included in APC's summary reports to Senate and evaluate the extent to which the recommendations have been followed up. SUPR will provide a report to APC. APC's annual year-end report to Senate will include a final summary report on the program reviews initiated three years previous.

Appendix I: Undergraduate Program Review: History and Context

BACKGROUND

In the early 1980s, Dean Gallop presented to Senate a plan for external review of undergraduate programs. The plan was fairly general in that, other than requiring external assessment of a department as part of the review, the expectations of the review or criteria of assessment were not spelled out. The procedure adopted was simple. Working directly with the program under review, an external reviewer prepared a report and submitted it to the Dean. The Dean would then follow up on the report's recommendations with the department or program. Senate and the wider university community had no direct involvement in this process.

External reviews were carried out as follows:

1982-83 – Chemistry
1983-84 – Classical Studies, Psychology, Sociology
1985-86 – Biology, Economics, English, French, Philosophy
1986-87 – Canadian Studies, Environmental Studies
1987-88 – Administrative Studies, Comparative Development Studies, History, German
1988-89 – Anthropology, Mathematics, Physics
1989-90 – Computer Studies, Geography
1991-92 – Native Studies
1992-93 – Chemistry
1993-94 – Classical Studies
(Women's Studies has not had a review)

It seemed appropriate to pause after this first cycle of external reviews in view of the increasing demands of the provincial government for university accountability. The government indicated that it wanted to initiate a process whereby there would be direct external review of undergraduate programs. In Memorandum 93-VI, the Ontario Council of University Affairs proposed a province-wide review process to be carried out by an independent Academic Quality Audit Committee.

The Ontario Academic Vice-Presidents argued that the proposed initiative was (a) far too intrusive into universities' internal affairs and (b) likely to increase costs and bureaucracy substantially. Over the next three years, there were discussions among the Vice-Presidents Academic, the Council of Ontario Universities (COU) and the government about how to construct a system-wide review process that synthesized (a) the government's goal of accountability with b) the universities' insistence on maintaining autonomy.

In December 1996, COU accepted an initiative proposed by the Vice-Presidents Academic group. A sub-committee of the group, now formalized as the Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents (OCAV), will oversee a regular 'audit' of the procedures used by universities in reviewing their undergraduate programs. This process will be applied both to existing programs, as well as to the introduction of new programs. A schedule has been established and Trent's review procedures and practices were audited in 2000-01.

Appendix II: Revised Roster of Undergraduate Program Reviews

UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM REVIEW ROSTER

	DEPT/PROG	YEAR OF LAST REVIEW	DEGREE PROGRAMS
1998-99	WMST BIOL ERST	N/A 1985-86 1986-87	BA Women's Studies BSc. Biology BA Environmental and Resource Studies BSc Environmental and Resource Science
1999-2000	SOCI PSYC	1983-84 1983-84	BA Sociology BA, BSc. Psychology
2000-01	ENGL ECON CAST	1985-86 1985-86 1986-87	BA English Literature BA, BSc. Economics BA Canadian Studies
2001-02	PHIL HIST CDST	1985-86 1987-88 1987-88	BA Philosophy BA History BA Comparative Development Studies
2002-03	ADMN PHYS CHEM (accreditation process)	1987-88 1988-89 1992-93	BBA Business Administration BSc Physics BSc Chemical Physics BSC Chemistry
2003-04	ANTH MATH CUST	1988-89 1988-89 1989-90	BA, BSc Anthropology BSc Mathematics BA Cultural Studies
2004-05	MODL COST	1989-90 1990-91	BA French Studies BA German Studies BA Hispanic Studies BA, BSc Computer Studies BSc Computer Science BSc Computing and Physics
2005-06	GEOG NAST POST	1990-91 1991-92 1989-90	BA, BSc. Geography BA Native Studies BA, BSc Indigenous Environmental Studies BA Political Studies
2006-07	AHCL	1993-94	BA Ancient Greek and Roman Studies BA Greek and Latin Language & Literature
2007-08	BIOL ERST FRSC	1998-99 1998-99 Not applicable	BSc. Biology BSc Biochemistry and Molecular Biology BA Environmental and Resource Studies BSc Environmental and Resource Science BSc Environmental Chemistry BSc Forensic Science
2008-09	WMST SOCI PSYC	1998-99 1999-2000 1999-2000	BA Women's Studies BA Sociology BA, BSc. Psychology
2009-10	ENGL ECON CAST PHIL	2000-01 2000-01 2000-01 2001-02	BA English Literature BA, BSc. Economics BA Canadian Studies BA Philosophy

2010-11	HIST IDST	2001-02 2001-02	BA History BA International Development Studies BA International Studies BA Globalization: Communities & Identities BA International Political Economy
	NURS EDUC	N/A N/A	BSc Nursing BEd Education
2011-12	ADMN PHYS	2002-03 2002-03	BBA Business Administration BSc Physics BSc Chemical Physics
	CHEM	2002-03	BSc Chemistry BSc Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
	ANTH	2003-04	BA, BSc Anthropology
2012-13	MATH CUST MODL	2003-04 2003-04 2004-05	BSc Mathematics BA Cultural Studies BA French Studies BA German Studies BA Hispanic Studies
	COIS	2004-05	BA, BSc Computing & Information Systems BSc Computing Systems & Physics
	POST GEOG INDG	2005-06 2005-06 2005-06	BA Political Studies BA, BSc. Geography BA Indigenous Studies BA, BSc Indigenous Environmental Studies
2014-15	AHCL	2006-07	BA Ancient Greek and Roman Studies BA Greek and Latin Language & Literature
	BIOL ERST	2007-08 2007-08	BSc Biology BA Environmental and Resource Studies BSc Environmental and Resource Science BSc Environmental Chemistry
2015-16	FRSC WMST PSYC	2007-08 2008-09 2008-09	BSc Forensic Science BA Women's Studies BA, BSc Psychology
	SOCI ENGL ECON	2008-09 2009-10 2009-10	BA Sociology BA English Literature BA, BSc Economics
	CAST PHIL HIST	2009-10 2009-10 2010-11	BA Canadian Studies BA Philosophy BA History
2018-19	IDST	2010-11	BA International Development Studies BA International Studies BA Globalization: Communities & Identities BA International Political Economy
	NURS EDUC	2010-11 2010-11	BSc Nursing BEd Education
2019-20	ADMN PHYS CHEM	2011-12 2011-12 2011-12	BBA Business Administration BSc Physics BSc Chemical Physics BSc Chemistry BSc Biochemistry and Molecular Biology

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