



**External Review of Academic Unit
Administrative Reference Guide**

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1. The Purpose of the Review

The purpose of the Review is to strengthen academic units at UNBC. The process is intended to be developmental in nature, providing programs with the knowledge and insight essential to their evolution and progress toward achieving the vision of UNBC. A spirit of openness, dialogue and collegiality characterizes all aspects of this process.

2. The Review Process

Under UNBC's Senate process, the Senate Committee on Academic Policy and Planning (SCAPP) and, where appropriate, the Senate Committee on Research and Graduate Studies (SCRGS) receive all reports that result from an external review. Normally, this would include an academic unit's self-study, the external review team's report, and responses to the external report from the academic unit, the Dean(s), and the Provost.

All academic units are reviewed on a periodic basis, normally once every five to seven years.

The review process allows academic units to conduct their own assessments of their strengths and weaknesses, to identify goals and objectives, and to receive an evaluation from external experts in their field that can inform their academic plans and implementation. The process is administered by the Office of the Provost in conjunction with the appropriate Deans. The external review process is intended to ensure that:

- a) The quality of the programs is high and there are measures in place to ensure the evaluation and revision of the programs, both undergraduate and graduate.
- b) The quality of faculty research is high and faculty collaboration and interaction provides a stimulating academic environment.
- c) Faculty members participate in the administration of the program and take an active role in the dissemination of knowledge.
- d) The program environment is conducive to the attainment of the objectives of the academic unit.

3. Review Task List and Timeline

The timeline and checklist below is an overview of the Program Review process including an approximate timeframe for the review activities, areas of responsibility and brief guidelines for documentation.

Pre-Site Visit Activities

- Academic unit is scheduled for a review for the upcoming academic year.
. Action: College Dean
- A meeting, including the Provost, College Dean, where relevant, the Dean of Graduate Programs

and the academic unit's Chair, is held to check over the Program Review process.

. Action: Office of the Provost

. Reference: Program Review Guidelines, Appendix I

- The College Dean and, where relevant, the Dean of Graduate Programs, meet with the academic unit to provide an overview of the Program Review process.
 - . Action: College Dean
- Selection of potential site visit dates and nomination of five potential individuals for the external review team is forwarded to the College Dean.
 - . Action: Chair
- The Academic Unit develops their self-study report (8 weeks)
 - . Action: Academic Unit
- The College Dean, in consultation with the Provost and, if applicable, the Dean of Graduate Programs, selects potential external review team.
 - . Action: College Dean/Provost, Dean of Graduate Programs
- The College Dean contacts recommended external reviewers to confirm availability for the proposed dates of the site visit. Two external reviewers will ultimately be invited. All travel and accommodation arrangements for the reviewers are coordinated by the Office of the Dean.
 - . Action: College Dean/Office of the Dean
- Development of the site visit schedule.
 - . Action: Office of the Dean
 - . Reference: Suggested invitees and sample site visit schedules, Appendices II and III.
- The final schedule for the external review site visit is approved for distribution by the College Dean.
 - . Action: College Dean
- At least six weeks prior to the site visit, the academic unit prepares and assembles all copies of the self-study document and distributes it to the academic unit as well as forwarding five copies to the Office of the Dean.
 - . Action: Chair
 - . Reference: Sample completed self-study documents can be obtained from the College Dean if needed.
- At least four weeks prior to the site visit, copies of the Self-Study, along with the Site Visit Schedule and the Criteria, are distributed to the external review team and to the College Dean and, where relevant, the Dean of Graduate Programs.
 - . Action: Office of the Dean

Timelines

Academic units to be reviewed in the January semester should begin this process the previous spring and Academic Units to be reviewed in the September semester should begin the process the previous winter.

January Semester timeline:

May	September	January
Academic units Identified	Self-Study Completed	Program Review Conducted

September Semester timeline:

January	May	September
Academic units Identified	Self-Study Completed	Program Review Conducted

Site Visit

- The external review team undertakes a two-day site visit and submit a written report of their impressions and recommendations within three weeks of their visit. The external review team has the option to remain onsite for an additional day to produce a draft version of the initial report.

Post Site Visit Activities Checklist

- The academic unit submits to the Office of the College Dean an itemized expense claim listing all expenses incurred by the academic unit in relation to the review.
. Action: Chair
- External reviewer thank you letters, expenses, honorariums and academic unit expenses are reimbursed through the Office of the Provost.
. Action: Office of the Provost
- The final report of the external review team is received in the Provost’s Office and is distributed to the College Dean and Chair.
. Action: Office of the Provost
- Within six weeks of receiving the external review team report, the academic unit provides a written response and recommendations to the College Dean, copied to the Provost and where appropriate, the Dean of Graduate Programs.
. Action: Chair
- The College Dean, and where appropriate, the Dean of Graduate Programs, meets with the academic unit to consider the external review team report and the academic unit’s response. The academic unit will have major responsibility for proposing and initiating change to strengthen its academic programs using the knowledge and insight gained through the review. Recommendations for change will be incorporated into the strategic, curriculum and budget planning processes. The College Dean will also consult with other units named in the report (e.g.

Library) and incorporate their responses into a decanal report. The Dean's report includes a response to the academic unit's plans and incorporates responses from other units as appropriate. The decanal report is submitted to the Provost and should clearly identify what changes the Dean(s) believe should be implemented prior to the next external review. This report should be completed in approximately four weeks.

. Action: College Dean

- The Provost reviews the package of reports and responses, prepares a response, and forwards copies of all reports related to the review to SCAPP and, where appropriate, SCRGS.

. Action: Provost

- SCAPP/SCRGS reviews the reports and provides any comments, advice, or recommendations it deems appropriate to Senate. The chairs of SCAPP and SCRGS will collaborate on preparing a single report to Senate. Senate will consider the report of SCAPP/SCRGS and determine what actions it wishes to take with respect to the recommendations. Senate may endorse, revise, or add to the recommendations made by SCAPP/SCRGS. The final set of recommendations will then be forwarded, as appropriate, to the Provost, Dean(s), academic unit, and any other affected departments on campus (e.g. Library).

. Action: Senate

- Four years after the recommendations are dealt with by Senate, the Dean(s) will consult with the Provost, the academic unit, and other units as appropriate and provide a status report on the recommendations.

. Action: Dean(s)

4. Allowable Expenses for Reviews

The Office of the Provost has been provided with a budget to conduct external reviews. When conducting an external review, academic units are asked to work within the expense guidelines outlined below. Prior to assuming any expenses not listed below, academic units are required to request approval from the Office of the Dean. Any unauthorized expenses will be the responsibility of the academic unit.

Self Study Report

Costs related to the copying of the self-study report and either placing it in binders or having it bound are appropriate expenses to claim. Wherever possible, materials should be reproduced by Copy Services. Any copies produced at other locations within the University or off-campus will be reimbursed at the standard Copy Services rate or the off-campus rate, whichever is less. The self-study report would normally be limited to 20 pages, not including Appendices.

Catering and Meal Expenses

Normally, coffee and lunches are provided to the external review team during the course of the site visit. These are considered standard expenses for the conduct of the review and the academic unit will be reimbursed as necessary. Given the short timelines of the review team site visit, there are occasions when a meeting must be held during the lunch hour. Meetings of the review team with program committees, student or faculty groups should not be conducted during the lunch hour.

Reviewer Expenses

All costs related directly to the external review team, i.e. travel, accommodation, honorariums and meals outside of the review schedule are handled by the Office of the Dean.

5. Self-Study Documentation

The content of the self-study document is normally limited to 20 pages excluding appendices. The document should focus on the following areas:

- A description of the academic unit's vision, values and goals and its strategic direction for the next five years. The relationship between the academic unit's and UNBC's vision, values and goals, should be made explicit.
- Staffing model for academic unit faculty. Units that have senior laboratory instructors and technical support must include these positions.
- Undergraduate and, where relevant, graduate enrolment numbers for the past three years, both FTEs and EETs (from Institutional Research (IR)).
- The timetable for all courses offered by the academic unit and, where relevant, courses offered as part of the degree by other academic units for the past three years.
- List of undergraduate and, where relevant, graduate courses required by students who are graduating from other degree programs.
- Number of undergraduate majors and minors and, where relevant, graduate students who graduated from the program for the past three years.
- Number of regional courses offered, the number of students taught in them, and the number of regional majors/minors graduated.
- Consultation with current students/alumni in majors
- Consultation with professional and community associations in professional programs.
- Academic unit operating budget, including carry-forward accounts and any overhead or special purpose accounts related to curriculum and teaching.
- Scholarships received by graduate students and number of awards/scholarships received by undergraduates.
- Research and teaching strengths and weaknesses of the academic unit.
- Consultations with other units related to or served by the academic unit.

Appendices

Appendices should include:

- Curriculum vitae (CVs) for all tenure/tenure-track; continuing appointment; and regular, visiting, and full-time Instructor members of the academic unit.
- Table of awards and research grants for all academic unit members as described above.
- An undergraduate and, where relevant, graduate calendar.
- Any curriculum revisions currently under consideration by the academic unit or approved by Senate after the deadline for inclusion in the current calendar.
- Reports or materials for any events, conferences, etc. that the academic unit has organized and/or hosted (e.g., public readings, regional conferences, student workshops).

Most self-studies are fairly extensive documents. It is suggested, therefore, that the information be placed within a binder or bound document with appropriate tabs and page numbering to provide easy reference to the materials. The academic unit is responsible for the duplication of the self-study materials. Approximately six weeks before the site visit, five copies of the completed self-study are to be provided to the Office of the Dean to be distributed to the Provost, external review team and the Dean of Graduate Programs.

6. Additional Materials Provided to the Review Team

Academic units may require some additional information for producing the self-study report. Academic units will have available to them standard reporting information from the Institutional Research (IR) (e.g., FTEs, EETs etc.). Contact IR as soon as possible to obtain the information required; the Deans should inform IR of all the academic units involved within a given review cycle at the same time. The academic unit is responsible for assembling any additional information (e.g. professional accreditation reports) it wishes to provide for the reviewers.

7. Selection of the Review Team and Site Visit Dates

The academic unit provides the College Dean with a ranked order list of five faculty members from other universities to potentially serve as external reviewers including contact information and a brief synopsis of why they are being suggested as reviewers and where possible, nominees should be senior level faculty with broad knowledge of the discipline and some university administrative experience. The academic unit should also provide a list of proposed site visit dates. Once the reviewers have agreed to conduct the review, they will provide CVs to the Dean.

8. Site Visit Schedule

Site visits are generally two days in length, although a third day may be added to give the review team time to draft their report. The Office of the Dean begins the development of the site visit schedule by setting the opening and closing meetings as well as individual appointments for the College Dean and Dean of Graduate Programs. The remainder of the site visit schedule is completed in consultation with the academic unit. Any necessary catering and room booking arrangements are completed by the academic unit's administrative assistant. A suggested list of invitees for the schedule is contained in Appendix II and a sample site visit schedule is included in Appendix III.

9. Criteria for Review Teams

These criteria are intended to define the scope of the external review and to guide the review team through the documentation and during their site visit. The criteria consist of a standard template and a series of specific focus questions. The criteria are used for every external review and are not to be altered. However, the focus questions are tailored for each occurrence. Specifically, the academic unit provides their suggested focus questions to the Provost. The suggested focus questions are then reviewed and finalized by the Provost in consultation with the College Dean and the Dean of Graduate Programs. The criteria are provided in Appendix IV.

10. The Relationship between External Reviews and Accreditation Reviews

Academic units that are required to complete a Professional Accreditation Review will still be required to complete an Academic Review as the focus of each is different. However, every effort will be made to prevent needless duplication through consultation with the Dean and the timing of each will be done to reduce the administrative burden on the academic unit.

APPENDIX I: Guidelines for Program Reviews

All academic programs will be reviewed on a periodic basis, normally once every five to seven years. Such reviews enable academic units to conduct their own assessments of their strengths and weaknesses, and to obtain the views of external experts in the field to support academic planning. The review process is intended to ensure that:

- a) The quality of the programs is high and there are measures in place to ensure the evaluation and revision of the teaching programs.
- b) The quality of faculty research is high and faculty collaboration and interaction provides a stimulating academic environment.
- c) Faculty members participate in the administration of the program and take an active role in the dissemination of knowledge.
- d) The program environment is conducive to the attainment of the objectives of the academic unit.

Program Review Process

- 1) The process will be initiated by the Provost, after consultation with the Dean and academic unit involved. The Dean of Graduate Programs will be involved in external reviews in relation to graduate programs.
- 2) The academic unit will engage in a period of self-study of all aspects of the activities included in its academic plan and prepare a report.
- 3) The self-study report prepared by an academic unit shall be made available to all members of the academic unit (faculty, and staff) prior to being forwarded to the external review team. academic units are encouraged to also share drafts of the report with students enrolled in the majors. The academic unit's most recent academic plan will also be forwarded to the external review team.
- 4) The external review team will be from outside to the university and will be senior members of the discipline, some of whom have had administrative experience. The academic unit will be asked to provide their College Dean with a list of at least five external review team who represent a broad cross section of the discipline and who are considered to be outstanding and objective scholars.
- 5) The Dean will arrange the dates of the visit of the external review team and the detailed schedule in consultation with the Chair.
- 6) The external review team will meet with the Provost and the Dean(s) at the start and end of the site visit to discuss terms of reference for the review and the preparation of the report. The external review team will also meet with the academic unit's faculty and staff members and graduate and undergraduate students as well as with others with responsibilities affecting the unit.
- 7) Any individuals named in any materials concerning confidential matters will be apprised of the information and provided with an opportunity to comment. To the degree possible, external reviewers are asked to avoid using names of individuals in their report.
- 8) The external reviewers will submit their report to submit to the Provost within three weeks. The External Review Report will be submitted to the Provost and circulated to the: a) academic

unit involved (including faculty, staff and students) b) President c) College Dean d) Dean of Graduate Programs, where appropriate

- 9) Within six weeks of receiving the External review Report, the academic unit provides a written response and recommendations to the Dean, copied to the Provost and where appropriate, the Dean of Graduate Programs.
- 10) The Dean, and where appropriate the Dean of Graduate Programs, meets with the academic unit to consider the External review Report and the academic unit response. The academic unit will have major responsibility for proposing and initiating change to strengthen its academic units using the knowledge and insight gained through the review process. Recommendations for change will be incorporated into the strategic, curriculum and budget planning processes. The Dean will also consult with other academic units named in the report (e.g., Library) and incorporate their responses into a decanal report. The Dean's report will include a response to the academic unit's plans and will incorporate responses from other informants as appropriate. The decanal report that is submitted to the Provost should clearly identify what changes the Dean(s) believes should be implemented prior to the next review. This report should be completed in approximately four weeks.
- 11) The Provost receives and considers the academic unit, external, program response, and decanal response reports, prepares a response, and forwards copies of all reports related to the review to SCAPP and where appropriate, SCRGS.
- 12) SCAPP/SCRGS reviews the reports and provides any comments, advice, or recommendations it deems appropriate to Senate. The chairs of SCAPP and SCRGS will collaborate on preparing a single report to Senate. Senate will consider the report of SCAPP/SCRGS and determine what actions it wishes to take with respect to the recommendations. Senate may endorse, revise, or add to the recommendations made by SCAPP/SCRGS. The final set of recommendations will then be forwarded, as appropriate, to the Provost, Dean(s), academic unit and any other affected academic units on campus (e.g., Library).
- 13) Four years after the recommendations are dealt with by Senate, the Dean(s) will consult with the Provost, the academic unit, and others units as appropriate and provide a status report on the recommendations to Senate.

APPENDIX II : Site Visit Meeting Participants

This list is not exhaustive as there are different needs and situations for every academic unit. However, it does provide an outline of the standard meetings that generally need to be included in the site visit schedule.

- Opening Meeting – President, Provost, Vice-President (Research), College Dean
- Academic Unit Chair – these can be opening and a closing meeting with the review team and/or daily wrap-up meetings
- Vice-President (Research)
- Dean of Graduate Programs
- College Dean
- Academic Unit Faculty Members
- Academic Unit Administrative Staff
- Program Undergraduate Students
- Program Graduate Students (if relevant)
- Librarian(s)
- Closing Meeting – President, Provost, Vice-President (Research), College Dean, Dean of Graduate Programs

These meetings are normally scheduled by the Office of the Dean in consultation with the Office of the Provost, the College Dean and the Chair.

APPENDIX III : Sample Site Visit Schedule

SAMPLE PROGRAM EXTERNAL REVIEW NOVEMBER 17 – 18

Wednesday, November 17

Start Time	End Time	Detail	Participant(s)	Meeting Room
5:00 p.m.	7:20 p.m.	Travel to Prince George	External review team	
8:00 a.m.	8:45 a.m.	Introduction meeting	External review team, Provost	2nd Floor Administration Building
8:45 a.m.	9:30 a.m.	Chair Meeting	External review team, Academic Unit Chair	1st Floor Administration Building
9:30 a.m.	10:30 a.m.	Individual Faculty Meetings	External review team, Program Faculty Members	1st Floor Administration Building
10:30 a.m.	11:00 a.m.	Break	External reviews	
11:00 a.m.	12:00 noon	College Dean Meeting – to be joined at 11:30 by Dean of Graduate Programs	External review team, Dean of CASHS joined by Dean of Graduate Programs	1st Floor Administration Building
12:00 noon	1:00 p.m.	Luncheon	External review team, Chair and Program Faculty	1st Floor Administration Building
1:00 p.m.	1:30 p.m.	Undergraduate Student Meeting	External review team, Program Undergraduate Students	2nd Floor Conference Center
1:30 p.m.	2:00 p.m.	Graduate Student Meeting	External review team, Program Graduate Students	2nd Floor Conference Center
2:10 p.m.	2:40 p.m.	Individual Faculty Meeting	External reviewer and one Program Faculty Member	1st Floor Administration Building
2:40 p.m.	3:00 p.m.	Break	External review team	
3:00 p.m.	4:30 p.m.	Individual Faculty Meetings	External review team, Program Faculty and Support Staff Members	1st Floor Administration Building

Thursday, November 18

Start Time	End Time	Detail	Participant(s)	Location
9:00 a.m.	9:30 a.m.	University Tour and Library Visit	External review team, Chair	Geoffrey Weller Library
9:30 a.m.	10:00 a.m.	University Library Meeting	External review team, University Librarian	Library meeting room
10:00 a.m.	10:55 a.m.	Individual Faculty Meeting	External review team, Program Faculty Member	1st Floor Administration Building
11:00 a.m.	11:30 a.m.	Exit Meeting	President, Provost, Dean of CASHS, Dean of Graduate Programs	1st Floor Administration Building
11:30 a.m.	Departure	Report Preparation Discussion	External review team	1st Floor Administration Building

Please note: This is only provided as a sample. Whenever possible, reviewers may consider spending a third day in Prince George to work on their draft report.

APPENDIX IV : Recommendations and Guiding Criteria for Review Team

In conducting their review and preparing their report and recommendations, the reviewers should apply the following criteria:

- Centrality to the mission and mandate of UNBC, including regional mandate.
- Strength – relating to quality, faculty and available support services.
- Comprehensiveness – relating to breadth of offerings and opportunities for the recruitment and retention of students.
- Demand – including both enrolment and societal demand.
- Effectiveness – relating to measures such as student performance and satisfaction.
- Cost effectiveness – relating to the appropriate use of resources to meet academic unit objectives
- Uniqueness – relating to whether the academic unit satisfies a niche in the province system of higher education.
- Scholarship – relating to the academic unit’s ability to attract external funding, and success at dissemination of research or other scholarly activities.
- Collegiality – relating to evidence of a collegial environment within the academic unit.
- Partnership – relating to opportunities and success in teaming with public and private organizations and communities.
- Regionality – relating to the academic unit’s capacity to be delivered beyond Prince George.

In applying the above criteria and developing the external report, the reviewers may wish to use the following framework for organizing their assessment and recommendations:

1. Programs

- structure, breadth, orientation and integration of the undergraduate degree programs including the cooperative education program.
- structure, breadth, depth and course offering schedule of the graduate degree programs.
- graduate student progress and completion, and support for graduate students.
- enrolment management issues at the undergraduate and graduate levels including, for the former, majors and service teaching.

2. Faculty

- size and quality of the faculty complement in relation to the academic unit’s responsibilities and academic plans.
- teaching, research and service contributions of faculty members, including the level of external research support.

3. Administration

- size of the administrative and support staff complement, and the effectiveness of the administration of the academic unit.
- adequacy of resources and facilities provided to support teaching and research, including library, laboratory, equipment, databases, computing, and office space.

4. Connection of the Faculty Within and Outside the University

- the academic unit's concept and plan for teaching and research and relationship with the other units within the University.
- relationship between the academic unit and the community.
- relationship with students and alumni.