



## University of Toronto Governing Council

### Policy for Assessment and Review of Academic Programs and Units

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Effective for proposals submitted as of September, 2005  
and for reviews that will be conducted after September, 2005

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# Policy for Assessment and Review of Academic Programs and Units

## 1. Preamble

1. This policy formalizes university-wide principles for the assessment and review of academic programs and units within a standard framework.
2. The purpose of the policy is to establish consistency at the University so that:
  - New program and unit proposals undergo internal assessment before submission to governance for approval in order to ensure their academic quality and merit are fully developed and documented.
  - Existing programs and units are reviewed on a regular basis in order to ensure their academic quality and merit.
  - Whether for proposed or existing programs and units, internal assessments and reviews ensure that the programs and units are aligned with the objectives of the University as specified within the *Statement of Institutional Purpose* and thereby advance the mission of the University.
  - Through the processes of internal assessment and review, a sound basis of information is provided in order for approval decisions or recommendations for improvement to be made. Both processes must address the questions of what is being done well, what is not being done well, and how the program or unit will compare or compares to the best in its field among international peer institutions. For the University of Toronto as a whole, those peer institutions comprise the first rank of public research universities in the world. For any given program or unit, the relevant peers may be drawn from a top tier that includes private as well as public institutions.
  - The assessment or review of an academic program and/or unit entails a review of the academic unit(s), and *vice versa*. The quality of the scholarship of the professoriate and students, and the degree to which that scholarship is brought to bear in teaching, are the foundations of academic excellence. More generally, all of the factors that contribute to collegial and scholarly life--academic and administrative complement, research and scholarly activity, infrastructure, governance, etc.--bear on the quality of academic programs and units and the broad educational experience of students. Reviews are intended to help ensure and improve quality in all of these aspects.
3. This policy incorporates (within Appendix A) and replaces the existing University Policy *Accountability Framework for Reviews of Academic Programs and Units*.

## 2. Scope

1. This Policy applies to submissions of internal assessments of proposed new academic programs and units and reviews of existing programs and units.
2. For the purpose of this Policy, a "program" is defined as an identified set and sequence of courses within an area of study, which is completed in full or partial fulfillment of the requirements for the granting of an undergraduate, second-entry or graduate degree. This Policy applies to all such programs to which resources are dedicated.
3. For the purposes of this Policy, academic unit is defined by Section 1(l)(a) of the University of Toronto Act 1971, amended in 1978: an "academic unit" means University College and a college, faculty, school, institute, department or other academic division of the University so designated by the Governing Council.

4. This Policy applies to reviews of existing programs and units commissioned by academic administrators at the University of Toronto to aid them in discharging their responsibilities of academic leadership.

Reviews of academic programs by external bodies form part of collegial self-regulatory systems to ensure that mutually agreed-upon threshold standards of quality are maintained in new and existing programs. Such reviews may serve different purposes than those commissioned by the University. In conducting a review of a program or unit, external reviewers should be presented, where appropriate, with any non-University commissioned reviews (for example, professional accreditation or Ontario Council on Graduate Studies) completed since the last review of the program or unit.

Where possible, the University process should aim to streamline the review process by assessing the alignment of mandates of externally and internally commissioned reviews and supplementing documentation as necessary.

### 3. Procedures

1. Administrative procedures for the application and process of the internal assessment of proposed new academic programs and units will be set by the Office of the Provost, within the document *Guidelines for Assessment of Divisional Submissions*, and reported for information to Governing Council. The Provostial Guidelines incorporate and replace Section III of the *Guidelines for Divisional Submissions* (approved by the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs on October 23, 2002).
2. Administrative procedures for the application and process of reviews of existing academic programs and units will be set by the Office of the Provost, within the document *Guidelines for Review of Academic Programs and Units*, and reported for information to Governing Council. The *Guidelines for Review* will include procedures for the application of the reviews, the process by which reviews will be conducted, the content of the reviews and administrative response, as well as the circulation of any reports and submission to governance.
3. Authority for periodically revising and ensuring implementation of both the procedural Guidelines is delegated to the Office of the Provost. Any changes to the Guidelines will be presented to Governing Council for information.

### 4. Accountability

#### 1. **New Programs**

Internal assessment of proposed new programs and units is part of the procedure of submission to governance. Proposal assessment is a critical process that ensures the quality and merit of the proposal is fully developed before entering governance so that appropriate decisions can be made by Governing Council as to whether the program or unit should be established.

#### 2. **Existing Programs and Units**

Reviews are important mechanisms of accountability. Academic administrators are accountable for the discharge of their responsibilities through a line of accountability that reaches from chairs and directors to deans and principals to the Provost to the President and ultimately to University governance. As part of this structure of accountability, governors have a responsibility to ensure that appropriate mechanisms for reviewing academic programs and units with a view to ensuring and improving their quality are in place. The *Accountability Framework for Review of Academic Programs and Units* was approved by the Executive Committee of the Governing Council in 1999 and is incorporated into the current document as Appendix A.

## Appendix A

### Accountability Framework for Reviews of Academic Programs and Units

<b>Responsible Agent</b>	<b>Responsible for</b>	<b>Mechanism</b>
Governing Council:	Ensuring that University administration is monitoring the quality of academic programs and units and is taking the necessary steps to address problems and achieve improvements	Receive annual program review report (including summaries of all reviews) and record of AP&P and Executive Committee discussion
a) Executive Committee	Monitoring overall review audit process; identification of any changes required in process; discussion of any major unresolved issues with President and Provost	Receive annual program review report (including summaries of all reviews) and record of AP&P discussion
b) Agenda Committee of Academic Board	Identifying any general academic issues raised by the overview of reviews that warrant discussion by the Academic Board	Receive annual program review report (including summaries of all reviews) and record of AP&P discussion
c) Committee on Academic Policy and Programs	Undertaking a comprehensive overview of review results and administrative responses	Receive annual program review report including summaries of all reviews, identifying key issues and administrative responses. Discuss annual report at dedicated program review meeting with relevant academic leadership; forward to Executive Committee
Provost	Monitoring quality of all academic programs and units in the University and taking necessary steps to address problems and achieve improvements	Commission and respond to reviews of faculties and colleges  Prepare summaries of reviews of faculties and colleges, including administrative response  Receive reviews of units within multi-departmental faculties  Prepare overall summary of all reviews, for forwarding to Governing Council
Dean/Principal of multi-departmental faculty	Monitoring quality of all academic programs and units in the Faculty and taking necessary steps to address problems and achieve improvements	Commission and respond to reviews of academic programs and units within the Faculty  Prepare summaries of all reviews within the Faculty  Forward reviews and summaries, including administrative responses, to Provost