McGill University
Academic Program Review Process

Detailed Procedural Guidelines
TABLE OF CONTENTS

DETAILED PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION.............................................................................................................. 2
STAGE 1: Planning and Approval................................................................. 2
STAGE 2: Program Review
   A) Faculty-level preparation ................................................. 2
   B) Program review Document .............................................. 3
   C) Responses to the Program Review Document ............ 3
STAGE 3: Program Development and Reporting ...................... 4

APPENDIX I: Guidelines for the Program Review Document ............ 5
   Sections .............................................................................................................. 7
APPENDIX II: Program Review Identification Form ...................... 10
APPENDIX III: Program Review Executive Summary Form ......... 11
APPENDIX IV: Program Review Comment Sheet ......................... 12
APPENDIX V: Selection criteria for the External Expert ........... 13
APPENDIX VI: External expert information sheet ...................... 14
APPENDIX VII: Partnerships ................................................................. 15
DETAILED PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES

Introduction:

The following procedures have been developed at the University level and are intended as guidelines for faculties in setting up and carrying out their academic program reviews. Faculties are responsible for determining the most effective and efficient way to approach the reviews of academic programs in their areas, and may therefore modify the procedures to focus their reviews and better address their needs in ways that are consistent with the general principles of McGill’s Academic Program Review Process.

STAGE 1 – Planning and Approval

1) Following consultation with APPC, the Associate Provost (Academic Programs) will meet with Deans of Faculties to discuss and clarify the academic program review with regard to possible procedures to be used in their faculties. These meetings will discuss:
   - The University’s procedural guidelines for the review of programs
   - A set of University-wide questions to be used in the program review
   - A list of University generated data that will be sent to the faculties
   - A general program review approach for each Faculty

2) The Deans should begin initial planning of the composition of their faculty’s Faculty Program Review Group (FRG) so that it can be convened as soon as Senate approves the process and can begin work immediately.

3) The Associate Provost (Academic Programs) will present the procedural guidelines (including the list of questions and data sources), developed with the Deans’ input, to APPC and Senate for their review and input.

4) The “McGill University Academic Program Review Process” will be sent to Senate for approval in September / October 2004.

STAGE 2 – Program Review

A) Faculty-level preparation

5) Following Senate approval, the faculties should begin designating their Faculty Program Review Groups (FRG). The FRGs will structure an implementation plan, determine specific procedures for the faculty that meet the principles of the Academic Program Review Process and schedule their faculties’ program reviews.

6) The University will provide the Faculties with a preliminary list of their programs (e.g. B.A., B.Sc., majors, honours, M.A. thesis, M.A. non-thesis, etc.). This list will include multi-faculty programs as well as those programs offered in association with other universities. For the review of these programs, faculties will need to coordinate with each other and other university partners in setting up both the timetable and the review.
   The FRG will begin by determining the program groupings and a schedule for the faculty’s program reviews (e.g. all Ph.D. programs in a faculty; all undergraduate
studies in a small faculty; subsets of undergraduate programs in a larger faculty; all Master’s non-thesis programs in a faculty; a set of programs within one department, etc.).

7) Once the detailed Faculty program review plans have been established by the Faculty Review Groups, they are to be submitted by November 15, 2004 to the Associate Provost (Academic Programs) for final approval by APPC.

8) The FRG will designate and convene the Program Study Groups (PSG) in accordance with the final timetable. The FRGs will determine, at this point, how external experts will be used in the program review process. It will submit a rationale for any decision to not use an external expert. The FRG will, in consultation with the appropriate academic units, suggest names of people who might serve as external experts. (See Appendix V for selection criteria for the external expert).

9) The FRG will select the external experts with the approval of the Dean. The Dean will forward the name, as well other relevant information concerning the external expert to the Associate Provost (Academic Programs) using the External Expert Information Sheet found in Appendix VI. Central funds will be available to cover the cost of a review by an external expert, and costs should be indicated on the External Expert Information Sheet found in Appendix VI.

10) The designated Chair of the FRG will contact any individual who is to serve as external expert and arrange for the external review to take place.

11) If external experts will not be used in the program review, the Faculty must provide justification, in writing, for this decision and explain how the contribution of the external expert will be provided in an alternate manner. This justification is subject to approval by APPC.

B) Program Review Document

12) After addressing the university and cross-university data and receiving input from those units or groups involved in the program, the Program Study Group will prepare the Program Review Document. This document is intended to explain the objectives and trends for the program and present clear and relevant descriptive information on the structure, operation, distinctive impact and scope of the program. See Appendix I for guidelines on preparing the Program Review Document. In the case of programs offered with the collaboration of other universities, see Appendix VII: “Partnerships”.

13) The Program Review Document will be forwarded by the PSG to the FRG.

14) Normally, where there is to be a review by external experts, the Program Review Document and any additional data will be given to those experts in order to serve as a basis for the external expert’s report. In cases where the external consultation will have been conducted before the program review process, the experts’ reports will be appended to the Program Review Document.
15) The Faculty Review Group will receive the Program Review Documents from each of the PSGs that have been set up in the Faculty to study a specific program or group of programs.

C) Responses to the Program Review Document

16) The FRG, with input from the Dean, will review the Program Review Documents, will add its comments on the comment sheet appended to the Program Review (found in Appendix IV), and forward these to the Dean and to the Associate Provost (Academic Programs). The Associate Provost and the Dean, or a designate, will present the documents to APPC for the committee’s input.

17) Comments from APPC will be added to the Program Review Comment Sheet and this will be sent back to the Dean concerned. The Dean and FRG will have an opportunity to respond to APPC’s comments, and this response will be appended to the Program Review Document.

18) Finally, the PSG will be given an opportunity to respond to all comments and revise the document, if necessary. The Comment Sheet and all responses will be returned to the FRG.

STAGE 3 – Program Development and Reporting

19) The Final Program Review Document for a program, or a group of programs, will comprise:
   - the Program Review Document
   - the external expert’s report
   - the Comment Sheet with comments from the FRG, the Dean and from APPC
   - the PSG’s responses to comments

20) The FRG will compile the Final Program Review Document (as set out in #18), will produce the final synthesis and analysis and, in consultation with the Dean, will complete a Final Program Review Summary Sheet for each review. This sheet contains a final set of recommendations and action plans for addressing the evolution of the program or set of programs.

21) Once these final recommendations and action plans are approved by the Faculty, the Dean will submit the Final Faculty Program Review Document and Summary Sheet to the Provost. It is expected that these documents and their action plans, will set directions for future stages of the ongoing University planning process, and will be an integral part of the planning dialogue between the Provost and the Deans.

22) The final Program Review Summary sheet for each program, or set of programs, will be prepared by the FRG and submitted to APPC and Senate and will be reported publicly.

23) Steps 8 through 19 will repeat for each program or groups of programs to be reviewed until all programs in a faculty have been reviewed. The cycle of the Academic Program Review is expected to be completed by December 2006. At the end of the cycle of program reviews, the FRG will produce a Faculty Strategy Sheet summarizing action plans and outlining Faculty-wide changes.
APPENDIX I: Guidelines for the Program Review Document

The final specifications for the Program Review Document are to be determined by faculties. What follows is intended to serve as a general guide in writing the Program Review Document. The questions have been established at the University level. However, the final questions are to be determined by the faculties. The FRG can delete or add any questions in ways that are consistent with the general principles of the Academic Program Review Process.

The Program Review Document is to be prepared by the Program Study Group. The document, by using centrally provided, university and cross-university data and by answering the questions, should explain the objectives and trends for the program and present clear and relevant descriptive information on the structure, operation, distinctive impact and scope of the program.

In completing the document, the Program Study Group may also want to include information obtained from groups involved in the program to determine their views on different aspects of the program.

Once the Program Review Document is complete, the PSG should complete the Program Review Executive Summary Form (found in Appendix III). These documents will be presented to APPC.

The Program Review Document and the Executive Summary Form will be sent to the Faculty Review Group (FRG) who will coordinate the review by any external expert, if necessary. Once this is complete, the FRG, together with the Dean, will present action plans that grow out of the analysis.

Guidelines for completing the Program Review Document:

The Program Review Document should be divided into the following sections (not all of which may apply to the program being reviewed), and should be approximately 6 to 10 pages in length:

1) Program Identification (Program Review Identification Form-APPENDIX II)
2) Program / Curriculum Content
3) Program Admissions, Enrolment and Retention
4) Teaching Methods and Personnel
5) Issues Specific to Undergraduate Programs
6) Issues Specific to Graduate Programs
7) Outcomes of Graduates
8) Recommendations

The following data¹ will be provided and can be used in answering various questions:

For undergraduate programs:
   - Admissions (applied/accepted/registered)
   - CREPUQ data on Cote “R” for students applying/accepted/registering

¹ Note: the data will be longitudinal and benchmarked against other research-intensive peer universities, wherever possible and appropriate.
- Selectivity and yield rates
- Completion rates
- Enrolment
- Retention
- Student body make-up (geographical origin, gender breakdown)
- FTEs by program
- Registration in required and, where possible, in complementary courses of a program
- Matrix of “service teaching” to students
- Evolution of teaching and support personnel (number, age, gender, etc.)
- Courses taught by tenure-track / non tenure-track staff
- Degrees granted

For Graduate programs:

- Admissions (applied/accepted/registered)
- Selectivity and yield rates
- Completion rates
- Enrolment
- Retention
- Student body make-up (geographical origin, gender breakdown)
- FTEs by program
- Departmental Graduate Student Support Evaluations
- Cumulative GPA for students applying/accepted/registering
- Time to completion – G10 study
- Time to leaving – G10 study
- Graduation percentage – G10 study
- Graduate financial support information
- Evolution of teaching and support personnel,
- Courses taught by tenure-track / non tenure-track staff
- Degrees granted

Graduate data to be collected at the unit level:

- Frequency distribution of graduate students supervised by staff
- TA assignments
PROGRAM REVIEW DOCUMENT SECTIONS:

1) Program Identification:

Please identify the program(s) being reviewed by filling out the form found in Appendix II.

2) Program / Curriculum Content:

Outline the purpose of the program and the planning for the achievement of short-term and long-term goals. Please address the following questions:

2.1 What are the program’s objectives (e.g. to teach up-to-date concepts in the discipline)? How well is the program’s curriculum meeting its objectives?

2.2 Comment on how the program’s curriculum is similar / different from what is offered at other comparable institutions. What distinguishes a graduate of this program from graduates of programs in peer institutions?

2.3 What abilities does the program aim to develop in the student (e.g. an ability to read scientific/scholarly articles and analyze the content)? How do you assess these?

2.4 Do the various forms of student evaluation test a variety of skills (e.g. oral communication, presentation, speed, analytical thinking, etc.)?

2.5 How do you justify the number of credits as well as the number and types of core courses (required and complementary)?

2.6 As the field evolves, how will the program adapt to maintain excellence?

2.7 If no additional, or fewer, resources were available, what changes would be made to continue improving the program?

2.8 Comment on any international perspectives of the program. (e.g. visiting professors, exchanges/semesters abroad, off-shore programs, international students, etc.)

2.9 Does the program encourage multidisciplinary links? If yes, what are they?

3) Program Admissions, Enrolment and Retention:

Using the data provided, explain the admissions and enrolment patterns and trends for the program. Please address the following questions:

3.1 State the program’s enrolment objectives. Comment on trends over time.

3.2 Comment on the program’s admissions statistics and trends and, if applicable, explain how they can be improved.

3.3 Describe the considerations used to arrive at the optimal number of students in the program? Should the enrolment in this program change? If yes, how and why? If not, why not?
3.4 Are there any limitations / influences (external and internal) to reaching the enrolment objectives? (e.g. Are there any required courses exclusive to the program which limit your enrollment? Are there any constraints on training facilities/personnel?)

3.5 Is it possible to complete the program part-time? If yes, how? If not, why not?

4) Teaching Methods and Personnel:

Explain how teaching is structured in the program. Please address the following questions:

4.1 What improvements to teaching methodologies have been introduced to courses in this program in the past five years? Describe any improvements which are presently being developed. What other pedagogical improvements need to be made?

4.2 How satisfactory is students’ access to the professors who teach courses in this program? If not satisfactory, how could this be improved, given existing resources?

4.3 Based on 2004-2005 course assignments, what percentage of required and complementary courses are taught by tenure-track professors? Is the percentage appropriate? If not, why not?

4.4 What is the role of tenure-track staff and of non-tenure track staff with regard to teaching? How are these roles reflected in the assignment of courses?

4.5 Comment on the size of classes for required and, where appropriate, for complementary courses, addressing issues such as: whether there is an appropriate mix of class sizes, and whether the size of the classes is appropriate to the subject being taught. If not, how might the situation be improved?

4.6 Comment on the teaching format used in required / complementary courses as part of the program (e.g. seminars, lectures, laboratories, studio, etc.)?

4.7 How are T.A.s in the courses in this program prepared for their duties? Comment on their preparation and describe any possible improvements.

5) Issues Specific to Undergraduate Programs:

Please address these questions if the program being reviewed is at the undergraduate level.

5.1 How is research integrated into teaching at the undergraduate level?

5.2 How is undergraduate academic advising structured for this program? (e.g. How is the advising designed? Who does the advising? Is there a dedicated academic advisor? What training do the advisors receive? Are advising at the department and the faculty level coordinated? etc.)

5.3 How might students’ advising needs be better served?
6) Issues Specific to Graduate Programs:

Please address these questions if the program being reviewed is at the graduate level.

6.1 Comment on the selectivity and yield rates, the students’ GPA and geographic origin, the time to completion and the retention rates for the program. Do these need to be changed? If yes, how? If not, why not?

6.2 Comment on how graduate student supervision is structured (e.g. How are graduate students assigned to supervisors? How often do students typically meet with supervisors? What is the frequency distribution of students/supervisors? etc.).

6.3 How do you structure the involvement of graduate students in their program of study to maximize their scholarly/scientific involvement with other students or professors?

6.4 Describe a progression (e.g. timelines for courses, seminars, comprehensive, thesis, research etc.) that is appropriate for the program. (N.B. A Master’s course of study should normally be two years in length, and a Ph.D. four to five years in length. If these are not normal for the program, please justify any additional time necessary for completion in the particular field of study.)

6.5 Are students “fast-tracked” from a Master’s program into doctoral programs? If yes, how does the program do this? If not, why not? Comment on entry into doctoral programs directly from a Bachelor’s degree.

6.6 In the case of comprehensive examinations, how is the comprehensive structured? What are the objectives? How does it meet its objectives? Does it need to be changed? If yes, how?

6.7 Comment on the funding levels of students in the program and on how these levels can be improved.

7) Outcomes of Graduates:

7.1 Do you monitor where the program’s graduates go following completion of their degree? If yes, please provide this information.

8) Recommendations:

8.1 Please give a brief, general overview of any recommendations for changes / improvements that should be considered in the future.
APPENDIX II: Program Review Identification Form

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<th>Program(s) being reviewed:</th>
<th>Total credits:</th>
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Faculty: ________________________________________________________________

Program Study Group members: (Please indicate title, position. Identify student members):

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APPENDIX III: Program Review Executive Summary Form

Program: ____________________________________________
Faculty: ____________________________________________

Give a summary of the content and objectives of the program.

Explain the most significant trends for the program:

Describe the short and long term goals for improvement:

Describe action plans:
APPENDIX IV: Program Review Comment Sheet
In making all comments, please continue on a separate sheet, if necessary.

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<th>Program:</th>
<th>Faculty:</th>
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FRG Comments:

| APPC Comments: |

| PSG Response to comments |
APPENDIX V: Selection criteria for the external expert (from the CREPUQ Policy application guide):

An evaluation by outside experts is an assurance of the legitimacy and the credibility of the process of periodic evaluation; this assurance is based on their recognized competence in the field of study or discipline of the program, and on the independence of their judgment.

The external expert should:

- be a member of a peer institution
- have recognized competence in the field of study or the discipline of the program
- NOT be a former member of the department
- NOT be a graduate of the program
- have no professional links with those in charge of the program being evaluated
- have no professional links with professors associated to the program

The mandate of the external experts should enable them to formulate their own opinion on the program, based in part on the program review report, and to make recommendations for improving the quality and relevance of the program. The experts should accordingly receive sufficient information on which to base their judgment and situate the program in the contexts of Quebec, Canada and the international community.

It is also essential that the external experts make a visit to the institution to obtain all the information they need from the full-time and part-time academic staff, students in the program, administrators and anyone else whom they wish to meet in order to develop their report.

**Note:** Central funds will be available to cover the cost of a review by an external expert, and costs should be indicated on the External Expert Information Sheet found in Appendix VI.
**APPENDIX VI: EXTERNAL EXPERT INFORMATION SHEET**

Note: This form must be submitted to the Associate Provost (Academic Programs).

This Review ____ will use an external expert (Please fill in sections B through D)
This Review ____ will NOT use an external expert (Please fill in section A)

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<tr>
<th>Section A: Rationale for not using an external expert for this review (explain how the contribution of the external expert will be provided in other ways).</th>
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<th>Section C: Rationale for choice:</th>
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<tr>
<th>Section D: List approximate costs: (note: economy fares, McGill affiliated hotels, honoraria of $1000 are to be used)</th>
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14
APPENDIX VII: Partnerships

CREPUQ’s Policy includes the periodic evaluation of programs offered in partnership among institutions. Program offered in collaboration among two or more institutions have become more common in recent years and are likely to increase in the future. (5)

There are three types of partnerships according to the way academic responsibilities are shared:

- Programs offered **jointly**, where the responsibilities are shared among the participating institutions;
- Programs offered **in association**, where one of the partners exercises major responsibility;
- Programs offered **by extension**, where the initiating institution preserves complete academic responsibility.

All these arrangements are established in virtue of a protocol of agreement, which should also provide for the process of the periodic evaluation of the program, in conformity with the **Policy** of CREPUQ.

The Commission wishes to stress certain general principles concerning the periodic evaluation of such programs:

- In each case, there is only one program involved, which means a single integrated self-study, one team of external experts, and the preparation of a single synthesis of the various elements of the evaluation file;
- For joint programs, there needs to be coordination among the academic authorities of the institutions in partnership, so that the differences among their institutional policies can be reconciled, so that they can together define the set of procedures to be adopted, and so that they can choose the persons asked to contribute to each of the stages of the evaluation;
- For programs offered in association, the policy of the leading institution applies, but the choice of persons to contribute to the implementation of different stages must involve consultation among institutions;
- For programs offered by extension, the initiating institution assumes the responsibility for the process.

Within an institution there may also exist partnerships which involve the participation of different units to offer multidisciplinary programs. It is the responsibility of the institution to adopt, where necessary, a procedure to take these special situations into account.