



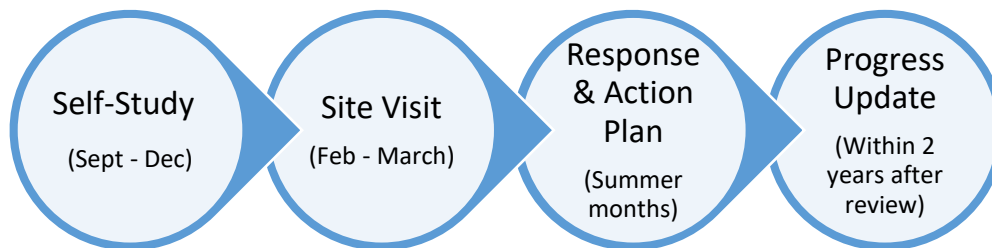
# Reviews of Academic Units

This resource package was created to assist the UBC Okanagan academic community in conducting their review of academic units (as per [Senate Policy](#) on Reviews of Administrative Units and Board of Governors [Policy 22](#) – Section 7). Reviews are normally conducted every five years and the time interval between reviews must not exceed ten years.

**Definition of academic unit:** Academic Units include, but are not limited to Faculties, Schools, Departments, Colleges, Institutes, Centres and Research Units.

**Academic Reviews' Goal:** To review the strength and balance of the unit's teaching and research activities, academic programs and service; to evaluate the unit's leadership and administration; to assess the department's standing nationally and internationally; and to advise on the future development of the department.

An Academic Review has four main components:



## 1. Self-Study

This document is at the core of this exercise. As such, the document should be reflective, well-organized, and no longer than 40 pages plus appendices. This report should achieve a balance among data, reflection, and vision. Most importantly, it should provide the reviewers with enough and relevant information to answer the questions posed to them in the Terms of Reference. For example, the reviewers will be unable to answer questions around student learning if no learning outcomes and learning assessment data have been included in the report. Similarly, if reviewers are expected to assess alumni engagement, provide opportunities for alumni to participate or share perspectives.

**Appendix A:** Example of a self-study outline and items that can be placed in the appendices section.

**Timeline:** For a February - March visit, the self-study should be formally initiated during the month of September. The report is provided to the reviewers a month ahead of their visit. When planning, consider the time needed for the Associate Dean (or whoever is relevant in your case) to review, make suggestions, or additions to the self-study before sending it to the reviewers.



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**Initiating the self-study entails:**

1. A conversation between the unit head and the Dean's Office.
2. Associate Dean's notification of the review to the Provost Office.
3. Head's notification to the unit including all faculty, students, and staff. Such notification should include details on the expectations (if any) for their participation or opportunities for input throughout the process.
4. Head's request for data from OPAIR (Okanagan Planning and Institutional Research).

**Appendix B: Suggested Terms of Reference**

**Appendix C: Summary of data available from OPAIR and examples of data visualization.**

*Suggestions:*

Organize an early leadership (unit's leadership and Associate Dean) meeting to determine:

- Terms of Reference to be shared with the review team
- Project lead(s) for self-study process and site-visit process
- Project timeline including specific dates for drafts and their circulation for feedback from the unit
- Self-study writer(s) and/or editor(s)
- Schedule periodic meetings for status updates
- Identify key stakeholders who need to be updated on progress as well. For example, faculty members, internal student committees, unit staff members, etc.

Meet with OPAIR as soon as possible to communicate:

- Review timeline
- Data needs

Before submitting self-study report, consider:

- Sharing the self-study report with Associate Dean and other relevant members of the unit/faculty for review, suggestions, edits.
- A phone meeting between the reviewers and the unit's executive team to clarify expectations and establish document-sharing protocols, if needed.

## 2. Site Visit

The site visit can take up to two days depending on the size of the unit. Securing the reviewers and dates can be challenging due to conflicting schedules. A project lead(s) (in the Dean's Office or the unit head) should be identified to take responsibility for negotiating the time of the visit, hotel and travel, rooms for the review visit, catering, processing expenses and payment of honoraria (see [UBC's reimbursement policy](#)).

**Timeline:** For a February – March visit, start identifying reviewers in July so that an invitation is sent in August. Dates for the visit should be finalized by the month of October, at the latest.



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**Identifying the reviewers and their visit entails:**

1. Generating a list of possible reviewers to discuss between unit's head and Dean's office. Take the following into account:
  - Academic leadership from peer institutions
  - Relevant administration experience
  - Understanding of the BC post-secondary education context (if not possible, plan to support them with this contextual information)
  - Conflict of interest
  - Gender balance
  - Equity considerations
  - For professional programs/faculties, consider including a member from the relevant professional community.

To produce this list, input can be obtained from unit members.

2. Submitting the list of possible reviewers to the Provost office for information or support if needed (depending on Faculty's procedures, the Provost will need to approve the list of reviewers).
3. The Dean (or identified lead in the Dean's office) emails the chosen reviewers to confirm their willingness to participate, and secure a time for the site visit that works for all involved (usually two reviewers and the UBC Okanagan executive team: Dean, Provost, Associate Provosts, Deputy-Vice Chancellor, Vice-Presidents).
4. Once the reviewers have been secured, a follow up email with the following information is suggested:
  - Scope of the review
  - Site visit dates (detailed schedule can be distributed closer to the site visit)
  - Date by which they can expect the self-study report from the unit (one month in advance is the standard)
  - University's policies that can contribute to their work and/or they are expected to comply such as the [Discrimination, Sexual Violence Prevention](#), and the [Respectful Workplace Policy](#).
  - Compensation (\$600/day or \$1,200/total per reviewer is suggested) and other logistical support the unit is able to provide before and during the review
5. Purchasing flights and makes reservations for hotel accommodations as needed.
6. Finalizing the review schedule ensuring there is good representation of faculty, staff, and students.
7. Finding a conducive space on campus for the site visit meetings.
  - Ensure confidentiality for unit members who engage in the review process. No member of the unit's leadership team should be present during the process.
8. Placing catering orders and finalizing logistical details.
9. Communicating with all stakeholders about the schedule so they can attend at the appropriate time.
  - For students: Plan to have them attend over lunch to increase attendance.
  - For unit members: Ask them to advise should they wish to request one-on-one time with the review team, time permitting.

**Appendix D: Site visit schedule example**



## Appendix E: Site visit checklist

### *Suggestions:*

For ease during the site visit, consider:

- Choosing a unit team member to be the primary contact during the review.
- Sharing the unit head's cellphone number with the review team should they need a contact during the visit. Gather the reviewers' cellphone number as well.
- Booking flights and hotel on the reviewers' behalf instead of processing reimbursements.
- Asking the reviewers to plan to stay together for half-day after the site visit is complete for report writing.

Immediately after the visit, take some time to:

- Send thank you emails to reviewers.
- Process reimbursements and honoraria upon submission of the reviewers' report (a phone call is suggested to gather personal information needed for the transaction).
- Complete other payments as needed.

### 3. Response and Action Plan

Upon reception of the reviewers' report, the head/director writes a response outlining an action plan for the unit consolidating the strengths and weaknesses of the unit and its programs as disclosed by the review process. Such report is to be shared with the entire unit, the Dean's Office, and appended to the annual report on Faculty reviews to the Provost Office. The Provost will include a summary of the review and action plan in the annual report on Academic Reviews to Senate.

### 4. Progress Update

Within two years after review completion, the Head and Dean's Office meet to go over progress based on the previously distributed action plan.



## Appendix A

### Example: Document Outline

1. Executive Summary
2. Department Overview
  - a. Department's and/or Faculty Strategic Plan
3. Undergraduate Instruction and Learning
  - a. Undergraduate programs' learning outcomes
4. Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
5. Research, Scholarly and Professional Activity
  - a. Internal and External Funding
6. Service and Community Partnerships
7. Indigenous Engagement
8. People and Outstanding Work Environment
9. Resources, administration and governance
10. Head's Summary
  - a. SWOT analysis
  - b. Recommendations for improvement
11. Appendices
  - a. Program details (admission prerequisites and/or program requirements)
  - b. Student engagement, learning, and retention data
  - c. Course outlines
  - d. Teaching data (TEQs/SEOTs)
  - e. Peer review procedures
  - f. Scholarship data
  - g. Committees
  - h. Faculty CV's



## Appendix B

### Terms of Reference

Use the below Terms of Reference to guide the Academic Review exercise. Be sure to edit as relevant by adding areas of focus and deleting references to activities that are not relevant to the unit. For example, if your unit is grappling with a question you would like feedback on, be sure to include it. Such requests however, should also be reflected in data provided in the document.

#### Terms of Reference of External Review Team

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##### *Purpose of the Review:*

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To review the strength and balance of the Unit's teaching and research activities, academic programs, and service; to evaluate the Faculty's leadership and administration; to assess the Unit's standing nationally and internationally; and to advise on the future development of the Unit.

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##### *Background Material*

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- The Faculty's goals and objectives as outlined in its Strategic Plan (here if applicable), the Okanagan [2040 Outlook](#), and the UBC Strategic Plan ([Shaping UBC's Next Century](#)).
- The Unit Self-Study.

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##### *Terms of reference*

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The review team will consider all relevant documents and materials, and visit campus in order to interview Department faculty, staff, and students, as well as relevant administrators. The review team will submit a report within 30 days of the site visit.

Without limiting its overall mandate, the Review Panel should consider the following:

1. **Undergraduate Education and Student Learning:** To review and evaluate the quality, extent, format, organization, and enrolment of the Faculty's academic programs and teaching strength, and to compare its performance in these areas to that of its national and international peers.



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***Examples of additions:***

- a. The reviewers should consider the unit's existing methods for evaluating the quality and strength of its teaching and learning programs, and, where possible, offer recommendations on innovation in quality assurance, including quantitative processes and benchmarks, for future teaching evaluation purposes. The reviewers should also consider the unit's provision of instruction to students enrolled in other UBC Faculties and evaluate the extent and quality of such service to the University.
  - b. The reviewers are asked to give attention to the Unit's development of curriculum in the face of changing societal expectations, its support of experiential learning opportunities, its use of learning technology, the effectiveness of the Unit's methods for the evaluation of teaching and learning, and its implementation of quality assurance. The reviewers should also give some consideration to the success of the Unit's students after completion.
2. ***Student Academic Experience and Support:*** To assess the quality of the student undergraduate academic experience from first contact upon admission through to alumni status. Are students well advised and well supported? Consider student morale, strength of student retention, co-curricular opportunities, and career preparation. The reviewers are asked to consider the Unit's responses to the increasingly diverse nature of student populations.
3. ***Graduate Education (and Post-Doctoral Training):*** To review and evaluate the quality, extent, format, organization, and enrolment of the Unit's graduate programs, and compare its performance to that of its national and international peers.

***Examples of additions:***

- a. The reviewers should also examine the range and quality of the Unit's post-doctoral program.
  - b. Consider the quality of advising, graduate student support, career preparation, employment opportunities, time-to-completion, placement, and other indices of graduate success. Is there a reasonable balance of research doctoral programs, research Master's programs and professional programs?
4. ***Research, Scholarly, Creative and Professional Activity:*** To review and evaluate the quality, extent, range, and balance of the scholarly activities of the Unit with particular attention to the achievement and status of scholars, artists and practitioners within the Faculty, their leadership within their communities-of-praxis, their granting/funding success, and the quality and quantity of their performance in relation to the achievements of their counterparts in comparable Units nationally and internationally.

***(other wording)*** To review and evaluate the quality, extent, range, and balance of the scholarly activities of the Unit with particular attention to the achievement and reputation of scholars within the Unit, including interdisciplinary contributions and the translation of scientific and other relevant findings to the broader community.



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5. **Leadership and administration:** To assess the effectiveness of leadership and administration in the Unit, including its governance structures.

*(other wording)* To review and evaluate the governance, organizational structure, leadership, planning, and administration of the Unit, including opportunities for diversity in leadership and shared governance, the nimbleness and inclusiveness of planning, as well as the relevant support systems both within the Unit and available to the Unit. The reviewers should consider the degrees to which governance is transparent, flexible, and accessible to all members of the Unit.

6. **People, environment and culture:** To consider and assess the working and educational environment, morale, and institutional culture of the Unit, as reflected in the experiences and perceptions of faculty members (including adjunct professors, lecturers, and sessional instructors), staff, and students. The review should take into account support for career advancement, professional development, advising, and balanced workloads and give special attention to the Unit's performance relative to the Faculty's employment and education equity policies.

7. **Community Engagement:** To assess the nature, scope, and effectiveness of the Unit's outreach activities through its educational and research programs and its interactions with other units within the Faculty and from other Faculties, and with its external community including schools, Aboriginal groups, community or professional organizations, UBC alumni, government agencies, and other post-secondary institutions.

8. **Support for the University's and campus Strategic Plans:** To determine the extent to which the Unit reinforces through its programs and activities the key commitments of the **Faculty's Strategic Plan** and Outlook 2040, notably UBC's commitments to People and Places, Research Excellence, Transformative Learning, and Local and Global Engagement.

9. **Physical Infrastructure:** To assess the range and quality of the teaching and research facilities at the Unit's disposal, and to determine whether the Unit is appropriately housed and equipped to meet its teaching and research goals.

10. **Infrastructure and Resources:** To review and evaluate the physical and financial resources of the Unit, including its financial base (i.e., levels of university funding, funding by external agencies, tuition revenue, and donor support), its capacity for enrolment management, its plans for revenue diversification, its facilities for teaching and research, and its equipment and space.

11. **Future development:** To identify the challenges and opportunities facing the Unit, and to make recommendations about possible directions for its future growth and development.





## Appendix C

### Summary of data available from OPAIR

#### **Enrolment and Completion Statistics**

- Undergraduate and Graduate student enrolments by degree program, year level, gender, citizenship, specialization
- International vs. Domestic enrolment
- Self-identified Aboriginal student enrolment
- Degree conferrals by degree program, specialization, international/domestic, self-identified Aboriginal students
- Retention rates by degree program
- Time-to-completion and/or graduation rates by degree program

#### **Course Enrolment and Results**

- Course enrolments and/or Course FTE by year level, subject, course
- Grade distributions and/or average (mean) grades by course year level, subject

#### **Faculty Research Funding**

- Award amounts and project counts by award category: Tri-Council, Research Infrastructure, Other External, UBC Internal Funding

#### **Faculty and Staff**

- Staff headcounts by job title and employee group (M&P, CUPE); can include count of student staff
- Faculty headcounts by tenure/non-tenure stream and rank
- New hires by tenure/non-tenure stream, rank, and gender
- Tenure and promotion cases by gender

#### **Graduate Student Funding**

- Number of students receiving internal and external awards, as well as Teaching and Research Assistantships, including total funding amounts and amount received per student.

#### **Student Evaluations of Teaching (SEoT)**

- SEoT norms by Term

#### **Survey Data**

- Undergraduate Student Experience (UES) survey results
- National Survey on Student Engagement (NSSE) results
- Baccalaureate Graduate Survey (BGS) results



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Appendix D

Site Visit Schedule Example

**DAY 1**

		In Attendance	Location
8:15	Pick up from hotel		
8:45 - 10:15	Meeting with Dept Head / Tour of facilities		
10:15 - 10:30	B R E A K		
10:30 - 11:00	Meeting with the Dean / Assoc. Dean TLC		
11:00 - 12:00	Reviewers meeting		
12:00 - 13:30	Lunch	Undergraduate students	
13:30 - 15:30	Meeting with faculty		
15:30 - 15:45	B R E A K		
15:45 - 16:45	One-on-one meetings*		

**DAY 2**

8:00	Pick up from hotel		
8:30 - 9:15	Meeting with staff		
9:15 - 10:15	Meeting with faculty		
10:15 - 10:30	B R E A K		
10:30 - 11:30	Reviewers meeting		
11:30 - 12:00	Meeting with Dean of Graduate Studies		
12:00 - 13:00	Lunch	Graduate students	
13:00 - 14:00	Meeting with staff/faculty		
14:00 - 14:30	Meeting with Provost/Associate Provost Enrolment and Academic Programs		
14:30 - 14:45	B R E A K		
14:45 - 16:00	Reviewers meeting		
16:00 - 16:30	Meeting with the Dean		

\* This time serves to accommodate unit members who wish to meet separately with the review team.

**DAY 3:** If possible, plan half day for reviewers to work together on report writing before leaving Kelowna.



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Appendix E

Site visit checklist

Status	Lead	Prior to site visit
		Identify dates that work for all reviewers and executive team (Dean, Associate Dean(s), Head/Director, Provost/Associate Provost)
		Secure meeting times for the review team and executive team
		Choose a main contact person for the review team when on site. This person should be available and on campus during the site visit and willing to provide their cellphone number to reviewers should they need to talk to somebody during the day.
		Book flights and hotel accommodations for review team. Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unit member who is picking up and dropping off reviewers every day: Choose hotel location accordingly (e.g. Four Points by the airport vs. hotel downtown)</li> <li>- Payment methods: Booking flights and hotel for the reviewers may save time from processing reimbursements</li> </ul>
		Book rooms on campus that are comfortable and conducive for dialogue. Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Natural lighting</li> <li>- Sitting arrangement</li> <li>- Clock in the room</li> <li>- Space for catering</li> <li>- Room privacy</li> </ul>
		Finalize site visit schedule ensuring time is set aside for all stakeholders. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Engagement of students can be difficult to achieve. Thus, scheduling their meeting time over lunch can help. Be sure to let them know food will be served and gather their RSVP for catering plans and to send them reminders the day before.</li> <li>- To ensure integrity of the process, schedule an introductory and concluding meeting/dinner with the unit's executive team. It is strongly advised not to schedule dinners or other meetings with the unit's executive throughout the site visit.</li> </ul>
		Share the finalized schedule with all relevant partners and stakeholders including the Office of the Provost.
		Make the necessary arrangements for catering on campus and dinner reservations off campus as needed
<b>During the site visit</b>		
		Gather at least one of the reviewer's cellphone number as point of contact during the two days
		Agree on a pick-up/drop off time and location for the two days
		Remind reviewers to keep all receipts for reimbursement
		Give the reviewers a hard copy of the schedule and help them stay on track by giving them 5 minute warnings
		Plan to walk with them when location changes are scheduled to ensure they are in the right place at the right time
		Collect all receipts from reviewers after the visit to process reimbursements as appropriate
		Ensure complete privacy for reviewers and unit members throughout the visit (i.e., nobody from the leadership team of the unit under review should be present during the scheduled conversations with members)
<b>After the site visit</b>		
		Email reviewers to thank them
		Process any receipts collected from the site visit
		Upon reception of the reviewers' report, process honorarium. Call them directly to gather their personal information as required by the finance department