

# Academic Unit Planning

## **PROCEDURES - Appendix E**

### **Recommended Format for the Self Study Document**

excerpt: December 2022

## INTRODUCTION

Memorial University is guided in its mission by Memorial's 2021-26 strategic plan, "Transforming Our Horizons", which identifies the main priorities and values of the institution. It is supported by faculty-level and unit-level plans that provide detail at each administrative level. There are also institution-wide frameworks that focus on social justice, infrastructure and finance. These plans and frameworks set priorities and direction so that the institution will achieve progress in fulfilling its mission. The following procedures outline the overarching philosophy and process for academic unit planning at Memorial University, informed by institution-level decanal plans and frameworks. Each unit is required to prepare a plan that supports its Faculty and Institution strategic plans. Academic Units<sup>1</sup> are primary contributors to the successful achievement of the mission. As a result, on a regular basis the Units must assess their activities and plan for the future.

Academic Unit Planning (AUP) is a Unit-level process that helps to shape education, research and community engagement at Memorial University. The AUP process brings faculty, staff, students and community representatives together to reflect on current contributions and to explore exciting ways forward.

AUP is intrinsically-forward looking. Its purposes are to:

- reflect on the value and effectiveness of current activities, curriculum offerings, practices and processes
- promote academic planning that aligns with the University's Mission and Strategic Frameworks and relevant institutional plans and initiatives
- evaluate the Unit's success in achieving its existing goals and its contribution to the University's Mission
- provide an occasion for Units to identify new opportunities and synergies, and find ways to pursue them
- consider the perspectives of colleagues outside Memorial

Certain overarching principles guide the AUP process. These are:

- Inclusiveness
- Collegiality
- Relevance
- Responsibility and Accountability
- Innovation
- Exploration and Discovery

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<sup>1</sup>For the purposes of this document, an Academic Unit is defined as a Department, a non-departmentalized Faculty, a School, a cluster of programs as defined by the Dean. A list of Academic Units by Campus is provided in Appendix A.

## **APPENDIX E: RECOMMENDED FORMAT FOR THE SELF-STUDY DOCUMENT**

*The Self-Study should achieve a proper balance between details and inclusiveness, and available resources (especially time). The Self-Study document should be NO LONGER than 30 pages. Supporting documentation can be provided in Appendices. The Self-Study should provide enough information to be useful and understandable by professionals outside of your Unit, within and outside the University. The Self-Study should be considered as the central element for the panel appraisal.*

*The following provides the topic areas that your Unit should focus on in their Self-Study report. While the diversity of disciplines in the University will mean that not all topics will apply in the same way to every Unit and program, the following areas will normally be addressed:*

### **Executive Summary**

Provide a one-page executive summary of the report for publication on the Vice-President (Academic) website.

### **1. Self-Study Process**

Briefly describe the process undertaken to develop your Self-Study document, as well as who was involved in the process, such as faculty, staff, students and external stakeholders.

### **2. Unit Background**

Provide an overview of your Unit. This may include a brief account of your Unit's history, structure and key developments that have taken place in recent years. This section may also provide an assessment of the extent that recommendations identified in the previous AUP process have been addressed.

### **3. Strategic Objectives**

Briefly describe the strategic initiatives of the Unit (if applicable, provide a strategic plan or strategic direction and objectives that guide your Unit and describe the process undertaken to develop these). Highlight any examples of achievements and the extent that the current activities of your Unit are in line with strategic objectives. Summarize perceived changes required to better meet your Unit's objectives.

Briefly summarize examples of alignment with (1) the University Teaching and Learning Framework, (2) the University Research Strategy, (3) the University Public Engagement Framework and other planning documents within the University. Describe any perceived changes required to better meet the University's mission and objectives.

### **4. Undergraduate Program**

#### **4.1 Curriculum**

Provide an overview of your Unit's undergraduate program offerings. Briefly describe the extent that the curriculum delivered is consistent with calendar descriptions, course requirements, degree requirements and standards for admission. Provide an overall assessment of your Unit's curriculum, such as the extent that:

- your Unit is effectively performing its undergraduate teaching and learning function
- class sizes are appropriate to accomplish teaching and learning goals

- student/faculty ratios are appropriate
- the curriculum is sufficiently rigorous and cohesive
- the curriculum is comprehensive and rigorous in comparison to similar programs in Canada
- Program delivery methods (for example: in-class, online, blended or partnering with other departments) are operating effectively

Comment on the extent that your Unit collaborates with other Units to deliver its curriculum and whether there are further opportunities for collaboration.

#### **4.2 Student enrolment and retention**

Provide an overview of enrolment (e.g. the number of undergraduate students, majors, non-traditional students, etc.) as well as a comparison to the previous five years. If possible, comment on the following:

- level of success of your Unit's undergraduate program in attracting qualified students
- extent that student admissions criteria is attracting suitable numbers of qualified applicants
- extent that recruitment activities are suitable for attracting appropriate numbers of qualified applicants
- extent that student demand for the program is sufficient
- alignment with the University Enrolment Plan
- reasons for gaps or barriers to reaching enrolment targets

Provide an assessment of student retention. If possible, comment on the following:

- the extent that retention rates are satisfactory
- reasons for positive or negative retention trends
- if retention is a concern, strategies that could be introduced to address the issue

#### **4.3 Program outcomes**

Comment on the primary areas of employment for your Unit's graduates as well as the proportion of graduates successfully pursuing professional employment opportunities and/or gaining admission to a graduate program or post-secondary program.

Assess whether program offerings are current, relevant and meet employer demands.

#### **4.4 Satisfaction with the Undergraduate Program**

Describe the process undertaken to assess student and graduate satisfaction. Provide an assessment of student or graduate satisfaction and any actions undertaken to address concerns.

### **5. Graduate Program**

#### **5.1 Curriculum**

Provide an overview of your Unit's graduate program offerings. Briefly describe the extent that admission requirements and program and assessment standards of students are rigorous and consistent with those used in other graduate programs in Canada. Provide an overall assessment of your Unit's curriculum, such as the extent that:

- your Unit is effectively performing its graduate teaching, learning and supervision responsibilities
- the curriculum is sufficiently rigorous and cohesive

- the curriculum is comprehensive and rigorous in comparison to similar programs in Canada and elsewhere
- student demand for the program is sufficient
- online courses are offered and their impacts on student learning

Comment on any challenges faced with delivering the graduate program. Identify any opportunities for new program offerings.

## **5.2 Student enrolment and retention**

Provide an overview of enrolment (e.g. number of students in Masters, Doctoral or other graduate programs) as well as a comparison to the previous five years. If possible, comment on the following:

- level of success of your Unit's graduate program in attracting qualified students
- extent that student admissions criteria is attracting suitable numbers of qualified applicants
- extent that recruitment activities are suitable for attracting appropriate numbers of qualified applicants
- alignment with the University Enrolment Plan
- reasons for gaps or barriers to reaching enrolment targets

Provide an assessment of student retention. If possible, comment on the following:

- attrition and graduation rates over the past five years
- reasons for significant positive or negative trends
- the average time for completion of the program and extent that it is appropriate
- the extent that student financial support is at a level appropriate for the scope of graduate education activities desired within your Unit
- if retention/low graduation is a concern, strategies that could be introduced to address the issues

## **5.3 Program outcomes**

Comment on the primary areas of employment for your Unit's graduates and provide examples of graduates successfully pursuing professional employment or post-doctoral opportunities. Assess whether program offerings are current, relevant and meeting employer demands.

## **5.4 Satisfaction with the Graduate Program**

Describe the process undertaken to assess student and graduate satisfaction. Provide an assessment of student or graduate satisfaction and any actions undertaken to address concerns.

## **6. Faculty Research and Scholarship**

Describe your Unit's research sources and overall funding, including level of productivity of researchers (provide CVs with evidence of funding and publications, dissemination of research). Provide a comparison to similar institutions regarding research productivity and quality, where possible. Comment on overall research activity, including:

- potential barriers to research success within your Unit
- opportunities that may contribute to future research success

Assess the extent that your Unit is generating external funding to their full potential, including a comparison to similar institutions regarding external funding obtained. Comment on research funding challenges and opportunities for growth.

Provide an assessment of the perceived balance of teaching, research, creative work and service in the workloads of faculty and professional staff. If relevant, provide examples of research impacting teaching and service.

## **7. Public Engagement and University Collaboration**

### **7.1 Community Partnerships**

Summarize your Unit's relationships with community partners for program delivery. Identify strengths and challenges of partnerships. Provide an analysis of whether some partnerships are more effective than others and why. Comment on further collaboration opportunities that may exist.

### **7.2 Public Engagement**

Provide an overview of your Unit's participation in public engagement. Describe how:

- your Unit is fulfilling opportunities to engage with and support the community
- faculty and staff are active and recognized participants in regional, national, and international professional organizations
- faculty and staff are effectively engaged in relationships with business, government, cultural, or other relevant communities
- your Unit, where appropriate, effectively introduces and engages students with professional public engagement opportunities

### **7.3 Collaboration with other University Units or programs**

Summarize how your Unit encourages and contributes to interdisciplinary activities and to other Units in the University. This may include roles of faculty in the University's research centers and interdisciplinary research groups or in collaborative teaching initiatives. Provide an assessment of whether your Unit should apply its efforts and resources in new or different ways in order to enhance its role within the University and community.

## **8. Organizational Structure and Unit Resources**

### **8.1 Governance and organizational processes**

Describe your Unit's governance structure, policies and procedures and the extent that these support the achievement of your Unit's objectives. If available, provide further information such as an organizational chart, committee structure and governance documents (e.g., constitution/by-laws) or any other relevant policies or procedures.

### **8.2 Financial resources**

Provide an overview of your Unit's financial resources (including an operational budget for the previous five years). Provide an overall assessment of your Unit's resources, such as:

- level of success in obtaining new funding requests (internal)
- funding generated from external sources (including an appropriate share of indirect cost recovery)
- the extent that your Unit deploys its resources effectively
- an assessment of ways to improve efficiency and optimize use of resources

### **8.3 Human Resources**

Provide an overview of your Unit's human resources (e.g. FTE faculty, professionals and staff rank, and function). Provide an assessment of whether your Unit's structure leads to efficient and effective achievement of objectives, including the extent that:

- your Unit is properly staffed to support its teaching, research and engagement responsibilities
- administrative structures are effective and efficient to support the successful operation of your Unit
- the reporting structure ensures managerial efficiency and administrative effectiveness
- faculty and staff resources are used effectively

### **8.4 Facilities**

Provide an overview of your Unit's facilities (e.g. space, equipment, computing, laboratory and library resources, etc.) including:

- the extent that facilities are adequate to deliver programs
- the extent that your Unit has access to the resources necessary to support programs
- the management and utilization of facilities

Describe any initiatives taken to address Unit needs.

## **9. Overall Unit Assessment**

### **9.1 Unit successes**

Describe your Unit's strengths (and internal or external factors that have contributed to successful outcomes for your Unit). Provide examples of your Unit's successes over the last five years.

Identify future opportunities for your Unit or initiatives that may allow your Unit to better meet objectives and strategic goals.

### **9.2 Unit challenges**

Describe your Unit's challenges (and internal or external factors that have impeded success among your Unit). Provide examples of challenges faced over the last five years. Provide an assessment of whether your Unit is trying to do too much with the resources available.

Identify challenges or barriers that your Unit may anticipate over the next five years and provide proposed strategies to address these.

### **9.3 Areas for development and enhancement**

Summarize proposed changes or enhancements that could be implemented by your Unit, faculty, staff and administrators to better meet objectives.

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*Your Unit is encouraged to reference existing documentation to answer questions from the above and provide as Appendices if it is deemed relevant to the current report. This may include:*

- *Accreditation Reports and/or accreditation letters from the past reviews;*
- *Calendar description of undergraduate curricula and programs;*
- *Statistical data on course enrolments, class size, and number of majors and number of minors, etc.;*
- *Assessment surveys of students and alumni; and*
- *Reports from previous reviews and pertinent information from the Strategic Plan or any similar exercise.*
- *Do NOT include CEQ results.*

The following templates and resources are available in the AUP Procedures master document, available via:

<https://www.mun.ca/senate/standing-committees-of-senate/academic-unit-planning-committee/planning-process/academic-unit-planning-procedures/>

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