



POLICY AND PROCEDURE STATEMENT

SUBJECT: Program Review	CATEGORY: Academic Programming	NO. 115-G
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PREAMBLE

The primary purpose of program review is to ensure that Saskatchewan Polytechnic programs reflect current and emerging practices in business and industry. The program review process examines the viability and sustainability of programs in fostering the skills, knowledge, and practices to meet the needs of business and industry and the provincial economy. Program review provides a consistent, comprehensive process for program enhancement and renewal across Saskatchewan Polytechnic to sustain quality education and support the ultimate success of students. Program review is an integral part of the planning and budgetary processes.

POLICY

All Saskatchewan Polytechnic programs shall seek the highest level of accreditation or program approval available. Accreditation reviews will be undertaken by all eligible programs as required by accrediting bodies.

All base programs will be subject to a two-phased assessment procedure to determine achievement of the key factors and performance indicators of a quality program¹. Annual program assessment will annually ensure accountability. Program review assessments will provide a more in-depth analysis of each program and are designed to assure curriculum quality and sustainability, a minimum of once every six years.

The results of assessments and any follow up activities will be made available to the Provost and Vice President Academic, dean, program head/chair and faculty, and will inform decisions for revisions, suspension or deletion.

PROCEDURES

1.0 Goals and Principles

The goals of program review are to strengthen the program to meet labour market requirements, provide an opportunity to examine strengths and weaknesses, and promote excellence in program fundamentals and the student learning experience. The results of program review help inform

¹ Base programs are programs managed by a program head/chair, and are generally core funded, have approved capacity with equity seat allocations and are delivered on a regular basis.

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Saskatchewan Polytechnic strategic directions and confirm the alignment of programs in advancing the institute's mission and mandate. The program review process is a continuous and iterative process that will:

- be fair, transparent and non-arbitrary
- provide evidence-based recommendations
- provide direction to serve the interests of employers and the needs of students in developing skills and knowledge
- integrate input that reflects the broad needs and interests of students and the labour market that the program serves
- complement accreditation review requirements and/or standards or other requirements of provincial or national bodies and regulatory bodies
- involve consultation with a wide variety of stakeholders including employees, students, and employers and community representatives, and
- result in the highest standards of quality assurance being reached.

2.0 Roles

Program Head/Chairs, Faculty, and Program Development Consultants

The role of program head/chairs, faculty and program development consultants is to:

- examine results from the annual program assessment reviews and participate in the program review education framework gap analysis
- examine feedback from all sources, reports and statistics, understand strengths and weaknesses and determine gaps in the program curriculum or delivery
- examine best practices in other institutions and/or as identified by faculty practitioners and/or personal contacts and/or conferences
- consider curriculum elements, course content and the relation of the program to employer needs, and
- determine the process of how to incorporate input received.

Students

The role of students is to provide feedback on student satisfaction surveys conducted annually by programs and/or by the institution. The Saskatchewan Polytechnic institutional students' satisfaction survey garners student input on program satisfaction, effectiveness of orientations, program management, learning resources, facilities and services.

Dean and Administration

The role of the dean (or designate) is to attend program advisory committee (PAC) or trade board meetings to understand the needs identified by external experts, employers and community representatives and to provide information to them on institutional priorities, budgets and resource implications related to recommendations.

As part of the annual program assessment reviews, the dean and administration are responsible to consider issues of efficiency or effectiveness of resource usage, costs, needed supports and the overall fit of the program within the institution goals, mission and mandate. Deans are integral in examining the Annual Program Assessment Accounting and Program Vitality Index Decision Making Matrix results and communicating the results with program head/chairs annually.

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External Experts, Employers and Community Representatives

Saskatchewan Polytechnic program advisory committees, professional or licensing bodies and trade boards consist of external experts, employers and community representatives. The role of the experts, employers and community representatives is to provide information and advice that will be notated as received between reviews and utilized at the time of the program review, including information and advice:

- on overall program design and delivery, including performance standards for the program to meet industry or occupational standards and advice on advancement of facilities and equipment to meet changes in the industry
- on curriculum, substantive course content, course delivery and strategies for students' success
- on the conditions of the labour market in the short- and medium-term to maintain relevance that is representative of the broader community and employers in the community the program serves.

Other Stakeholders

Faculty from other programs, staff who provide services to the programs and other stakeholders are consulted as needed in areas specific to their expertise in program reviews.

3.0 Review Process

Annual Program Assessment: Accountability

The annual program assessment review will use summary data gathered by Institutional Research and Analysis (IR&A) and IR&A will be prepared annually for base programs. IR&A will prepare a program summary review report based on the key factors and performance indicators that have readily available quantifiable data. This report will include an assessment of the program's results based on the benchmark for each performance indicator. The data are primarily a numerical consolidation of annual program metrics including:

- application trends
- enrolment trends
- graduate trends
- withdrawal trends and main reasons
- equity participation rates
- graduation and withdrawal rates by cohort.

The report will also contain results from the most recent graduate employment and student surveys, including:

- graduate employment rates
- student satisfaction
- graduate satisfaction
- market demand for graduates.

The *annual program assessment* will be provided to the Provost and Vice President Academic, deans and program head/chairs. The program head/chairs and division deans will meet to discuss program performance using the data to inform future planning. The discussion will also include any feedback from program advisory committee meetings.

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Annual Program Assessment Support: Program Vitality Index Decision Making Matrix

The annual program assessment will be complemented by an examination of critical criteria from the institutional *Program Vitality Index Decision Making Matrix/Rubric*. The program vitality index provides information that facilitates determining the viability of program offerings and in developing program performance measures. IR&A will prepare an annual report which scores each program on four (4) critical criteria that focus on the demonstration of a critical mass of students, appropriate graduation rates and evidence of sufficient employment opportunities:

- number of qualified applicants to capacity
- number of enrolments to capacity
- graduate employment rate in training-related occupation (within 6 months of graduation)
- graduates (per cohort).

Programs are expected to score 60% or greater to be deemed viable and not require further examination. Programs scoring less than 60% will undergo further examination using established secondary criteria. The *Program Vitality Index Decision Making Matrix/Rubric* report for each program will be provided annually to the Provost and Vice President Academic and division deans who will provide results and discuss the outcomes and future program direction with their program head/chairs.

Program Review Sustainability

The program review will occur for all base programs and will consist of the Saskatchewan Polytechnic education framework analysis, including a gap analysis. The Saskatchewan Polytechnic education framework analysis will examine the following key areas:

- program design
- student evaluation
- program delivery
- student intakes
- student progression
- learning activities and resources
- student support.

Participation in the education framework gap analysis will include the school’s program development consultant, program head/chair and the dean or associate dean as well as program faculty as needed. The review will identify strengths and opportunities for improvement in each of the key areas and will outline a plan to meet any deficiencies. Following each education framework review, results will be discussed with the program advisory committee or trade board. Results of the program review will be communicated as follows:

- If identified changes constitute a major revision, a major revision proposal will be developed and presented to the program council for endorsement and Deans’ Council for approval.
- If changes do not constitute a major revision, a summary of results will be submitted to Deans’ Council for information and to provide a written record. A minor revision proposal will be developed for Deans’ Council or the Registrar as appropriate if required.
- If identified changes recommend program suspension or discontinuation, the dean will consult with the Provost and Vice President, Academic. A suspension or deletion will be detailed in Saskatchewan Polytechnic’s operating and capital plan multi-year business plan

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and submitted for approval through Deans' Council and the President and CEO, as required, per the Academic Authorities' Grid.

4.0 Program Review Frequency

Annual program assessment reviews will be conducted annually for all base programs. Program reviews will be conducted a minimum of once every six (6) years. Deans will be responsible for setting program review cycles within their schools. The review cycles and records of major and minor revisions will be documented and communicated to deans through the Provost and Vice President, Academic's office annually.

5.0 External Accreditation and Program Approval

Many programs are accredited by an external agency or approved by a professional association. Accreditation and professional association approval usually provides a comprehensive examination of curriculum and other key program components and elements based on approved up-to-date fixed standards. Preparation for accreditation or approval is the responsibility of the program and will be conducted per accrediting body timelines.

Accredited and approved programs may also choose to have optional research done. This will supplement the accreditation or approval findings by providing information in any areas that the accreditation or approval process did not cover.

6.0 Optional Research Activities Based on Need

If the dean or Provost and Vice President, Academic determines the need for more information from the annual program assessment or program reviews, the Saskatchewan Polytechnic Self-Assessment Tool² will be used as a mechanism for further examining key factors and performance indicators. (The Saskatchewan Polytechnic Self-Assessment Tool is also available for use by all programs as desired.)

Additional optional research activities identified through the self-assessment will be available based on request and divisional priorities. Funding for evaluation activities approved by the dean may be available through the integrated development fund. A school's program development consultant may conduct needs assessments, focus groups, or other related activities as deemed required by the dean. The following Institutional Research and Analysis services may be requested by the dean in consultation with the Provost and Vice President, Academic:

- graduate and employer follow up studies
- labour market analysis
- other related activities based on need.

RELATED POLICIES/DOCUMENTS

External Program Review for Degree Programs – #107

Institutional Review for Degree Programs and Services – #509

² Note: The Saskatchewan Polytechnic Self-Assessment Tool and Education Framework are located in the Program Operating Procedures (POP) manual.

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AMENDMENT HISTORY

- 1. Original issue date: June 23, 1995
- 2. Revision dates: October 29, 2010; July 4, 2016
- 3. Scheduled review date: July 2019

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