



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
FACULTY OF GRADUATE
STUDIES & RESEARCH

Review of Graduate Programs: Master's and Doctoral

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Canadian Context

- Federal Ministerial Statement for Degree Outcomes
 - *“Holders of the doctoral degree must have demonstrated a high degree of intellectual autonomy, an ability to conceptualize, design, and implement projects for the generation of significant new knowledge and/or understanding, and an ability to create and interpret knowledge that extends the forefront of a discipline, usually through original research or creative activity.”*
- Provincial Oversight of Program Quality
- CAQC = Campus Alberta Quality Council



University of Alberta Context

- 29,000 undergraduate students, 7500 grads
- 17 academic Faculties
- Nearly 500 graduate programs offered in 73 departments
- Distinct Master's programs (both thesis-based and course-based); a few applied doctoral degrees (D.Mus, D.Ed); PhDs



Dirty Laundry Context

- Lots of turnover at senior admin level
- “Things got lost”
- We had to reinvent our review processes



QA Suite Planning Principles

- Transparency and accountability on program quality
- Regular follow-up on strategic goals
- Efficient use of unit, faculty and central resources
- Clear delineation of the scope for each review
- Predictable review cycle and manageable number of reviews each year
- Timely provision of data report and support for analysis
- Unit focus on information and narrative unique to their activities and performance



Curriculum Management & Quality Assurance Suite of Activities

Unit Reviews

Provost and VP(A); CAQC

Part 1 of Formal Review;
5-7 year cycle

Purpose: to ensure Unit level quality of programs and outcomes – undergrad and grad– report to CAQC

Graduate Program Reviews

FGSR; Provost; CAQC

Part 2 of Formal Review;
5-7 year cycle

Purpose: to assess quality of and demand for graduate programs (and research)

President's Visiting Committee

President & VP(A)

Part 3 of Formal Review;
5-7 year cycle

Purpose: to evaluate and guide research programs (and grad), outputs, translation, strategic plans, and future impact

Tour of Deans (Costs/Drivers/Budget)

Provost and VP(A)

Annual (Fall)

Purpose: to ensure efficient and cost effective delivery of planned academic programs; review progress on goals; address recommendations from reviews



Site Visit Committee Composition

Unit Review Committee

- Chair: External to U of A
- U of A faculty member external to Faculty
- Additional external members as needed by specialization

(usually n=3)

Grad Program Review Committee

- Chair: External to U of A
- U of A faculty member external to Faculty
- FGSR rep
- Additional external members as needed by specialization

(usually n=4)

President's Visiting Committee

- Chair: External to U of A
- Dean/Vice Dean
- VPR rep
- U of A faculty member external to Faculty
- National rep(s)
- International rep(s)



Quality Assurance Reporting

Component	Focus	Coordination/Reporting
Unit Review	Quality of approved programs	Provost/CAQC
Graduate Program Review	Quality of approved graduate programs	FGSR/CAQC
President's Visiting Committee	Research excellence, innovation, and planning	President/Board of Governors
Provost's Team Review of Faculties (the "Tour of Deans")	Progress towards goals, fiscal and curriculum management	Provost



Review Responsibilities

Department/Faculty	Central Units
Self-study report (including data analysis and benchmarking)	Standardized data
Propose committee members	Committee formation and travel arrangements
Receive reports and compose response	Receive and review reports and response
Governance	Governance and public reporting
Follow-through on outcomes	Follow-up on outcomes



Grad Program Reviews: Self-Study

- *Preamble:* “The aim of the Graduate Program Review is to ensure programs have the necessary expertise, systems and resources to: (1) support effective and timely program delivery; (2) deliver content of appropriate breadth and rigour; and (3) engage, support and assess learning through a clearly defined set of learning outcomes. In addition to ensuring maintenance of expected standards, the review will consider responses to recommendations of previous reviews.”



Self-Study: Table of Contents

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Self-Study: Program Structure

Append: 1. Program Guidelines and additional policies if relevant. 2. Program Learning Outcomes table

- Describe structures for governance, academic oversight and administration of the program (may append organizational chart) including student involvement in governance and appeals processes.
- Provide a general overview of the admission requirements and process, and where applicable how certificates ladder into the program.
- Describe for all streams or second level specializations the course requirements, examinations and other training components such as practicums or clinical experience.
- Relate program requirements to desired learning outcomes¹ and developing of disciplinary depth and breath.
- Provide a comparative analysis of the programs under review (curriculum, structure, admission requirements, learning outcomes, etc.) with 3 similar programs offered elsewhere (choose at least one national and one international comparator if possible).
- Indicate changes made in the last five years or since last review.
- Explain interaction with professional bodies, accreditation bodies and external stakeholders where applicable.
- Where learning outcomes for the program have not been articulated to date, outline the process to be undertaken to develop program learning outcomes and their assessment.



Self-Study: Learning Environment

- Describe courses taught through program and reliance on courses from other units as well as enrollment trends in courses.
- Describe discipline-specific aspects of the learning environment highlighting relationship to internal and external partner institutes, centres or networks that contribute to the learning environment.
- Describe opportunities to gain experience presenting and feedback on research or creative works (e.g., presentations; attend symposia; interact with external visitors;
- Describe opportunities network and collaborate (eg. connect to peers; work in teams; mentor others; mobility to other institutions or outside organizations)
- Described opportunities to participate in multi-, inter-, and trans-disciplinary training and research opportunities; participate in outreach, service, experiential learning and community engagement.
- For clinical or work experience, describe administration of the placements including institutional and student role and how quality and satisfaction are measured from both the student and employer perspective.
- Where blended or distance learning is involved in delivery of the program discuss: how students are informed of the competencies, self-discipline and equipment they require, how students and faculty are supported with evolving technology, how risks inherent to online delivery are mitigated and how a team/collaborative/networked learning environment is achieved. Explain how distance students obtain mentoring from faculty and peer interactions.
- Explain how diverse learners are accommodated by the program.



Self-Study: Student Demographics

Appended Tables - Standard base tables will be provided through Strategic Analysis and Data Warehousing (SADW) – Application/Admission, Enrolment with demographics, Time to Completion, Retention/Attrition/Degrees Granted. If you track, please include average admission GPA for your program. Please provide tables of Scholarships, Awards and Publications. For thesis-based programs append listing of scholarly products by students enrolled during the review period as appropriate for discipline or instructed by Dean of Faculty (e.g. Books, Journal Publications, Conference Presentations, Policy Recommendations, Creative Works). Current students maybe surveyed to assess the degree of satisfaction with the program; otherwise, data to be gleaned from CGPSS.

Comment on the following items:

- trends in applicant qualifications, admission GPA, recruitment strategies
- diversity of student body (female/male, international, Canadian non-UofA, FNMI, LGBTQ)
- internal funding policies for students; rates and type of external funding for students
- time to completion and attrition rates; extensions to program requirements
- extent and impact of publications and other scholarly products (req'd for PhD programs)
- student satisfaction with program (courses, supervision, general learning environment)
- barriers to student success from faculty and student perspective



Self-Study: Professional Development and Career Training

- Comment on rates of employment at 1 and 5 years post-graduation relative to peer programs where possible
- Describe student career pathways in terms of type of employment, further education or the impact of credential on career progression and leadership.
- Describe how traditional and non-traditional career development activities are incorporated into the program such as mentoring for scholarship applications, teaching opportunities, training in education, and outside-networking, and support for creating individual development plan.
- Describe how students fulfill PD requirement (new for cohorts starting 2016) including activities accessed outside UofA.



Self-Study: Faculty and Supervision

- **Append: Table of Faculty Composition and CVs.** Electronic CVs are required for all faculty members with supervisory privileges for the program. Format = determined by disciplinary Faculty. The minimal requirement from FGSR is to include all graduate students supervised, teaching and service activity and the previous five years of funding and publications.
- Assess relationship of faculty composition to program in terms of: rank; retirement/renewal; recruitment opportunities; specializations; areas of research focus and supervisory capacity.
- Indicate distribution of teaching in graduate courses.
- Highlight significant teaching and mentoring awards
- Comment on Faculty Profile by discussing areas of excellence and impact of research in relation to training in the field using discipline appropriate metrics of impact to support claims (public profile, awards, H-index, patents, spin-off companies, editorial roles, expertise sought by industry/public sector/press etc.).
- Supervision – describe oversight of supervision, distribution of students supervised by faculty, tools and training to support best practices in supervision (*include advisors for course-based Master's capstone exercises*).
- Indicate how issues with supervisors and students are resolved and mechanisms for communication of issues with Chair to whom the supervisor reports.



Self-Study: Resources

- Explain what resources are available, how they are allocated and how they are applied to the educational mandate. Resources include but are not limited to: a) funding for student support (TA/RA, scholarships, grants); b) laboratory equipment, computers, collections, databases etc; c) library resources; d) space: offices for students, teaching space, social space, rehearsal space, study space, etc; e) facilities and equipment shared with other units, departments, faculties and universities;; f) technical and other staff support; g) large infrastructure grants.
- Identify any challenges in relation to resources.
- Comment on recent or anticipated changes to resources.



Self-Study: Disciplinary Components

Report on any additional areas relevant to the discipline and defined by the program as essential for the quality of the education experience. Wherever possible use concrete examples and criteria for excellence. Specific elements may be required here by the disciplinary Faculty.



Self-Study: Synthesis and Future Considerations

- Highlight strengths as well as areas for improvement and gaps identified through the self-study.
- Outline goals and plans for program improvement for the next five years placed in the context of the external environment.
- Indicate how success will be measured.
- As appropriate, explain alignment of goals with strategic plans of department, faculty and university.



Lessons Learned

- Identify early what YOU want to learn
- Think long-term
- Use standardized data

