

## **Guidelines for Advisory Teams**

**Prepared by the Senate Academic Review and Planning Committee as required by Senate policy on Quality Management for Academic Units**

15 February 2011

The University Senate's policy on Quality Management for Academic Units provides for the striking of three- to four-person advisory teams to contribute to the periodic review of the programs and activities of Schools, Faculties, Departments, and interdisciplinary programs. Each advisory team comprises one faculty member from a cognate unit at UPEI and two or more scholars from outside the University.

Normally, members of advisory teams will receive by no later than the 15th of December of the academic year in which the review is taking place a copy of the academic unit's self-assessment document, which will provide background and planning information about the unit and its programs. The timelines described below may be revised by mutual consent of the Dean, Vice President Academic and the members of the external advisory team.

After a reasonable time to read the self-assessment, advisors will conduct on-site visits that will last, normally, one to three days. In advance of these visits it is expected that the advisors will have developed a plan and process for carrying out the review and submitting their report. During these visits, advisors will meet, individually or as a team, with faculty, staff, and students in the unit, the Dean responsible for the unit, representatives of relevant support units as deemed appropriate (e.g., library, Information Technology services), the President and/or Vice President Academic, Vice President Research & Development, the Assistant Vice President Graduate Studies (where applicable), external community and/or professional stakeholders and any others that the advisors think relevant.

The advisors will be asked to provide a draft written report to the Dean responsible for the unit being reviewed and the Vice President Academic prior to leaving and to submit their final report to these same individuals no later than one month after the site visit. When requested, and at a mutually agreeable time, at least one of the external advisors will be available to speak to the report by phone when it is presented at a meeting of the Academic Review and Planning Committee or the Senior Management Group..

The University of Prince Edward Island and, where applicable the Atlantic Veterinary College, will cover travel expenses for advisors. Such expenses will include travel, accommodation, and food in accordance with UPEI policy on travel expenses. In addition, the University will provide an honorarium of \$1,000 to each external advisor upon receipt of the final report.

The advisory team will produce a report that will cover, at least, the following points:

1. **Aims and Objectives:** Does the unit have a clear and reasonable strategic direction? Are

the aims and objectives of the unit's programs clearly articulated? Are they realistic and achievable? Do they serve the mission of the University and/or the Faculty/School/College?

2. **Curriculum and teaching:**

- a. Are the unit's strategic directions and plans appropriate and realistic?
- b. Is the curriculum coherent and up-to-date?
- c. Does the curriculum contain the necessary basic courses? Is the level of the basic courses satisfactory?
- d. Does the academic unit make the most effective use of appropriate and available distance learning modalities?
- e. Are degree requirements appropriate?
- f. Is the supply of elective courses satisfactory?
- g. Are admission requirements appropriate? Are there appropriate procedures and mechanisms for assessing applicants?
- h. Does the unit provide appropriate academic advisement to students?
- i. Are the core required learning outcomes (e.g., communication, including literacy and numeracy, the ability to carry out research, problem solving, critical thinking, self-directedness and experiential learning) across the curriculum clearly laid out for students and linked to required courses?
- i. Are the methods of evaluating student academic achievement appropriate and are various methods of evaluating student achievement mixed in appropriate proportions?
- j. Are the experiential education components (if any) of the curriculum appropriately designed? Is there an appropriate procedure in place to administer and evaluate the experiential education components?
- k. Is the student work load appropriate?

3. **Research:**

- a. Is the pattern of scholarly research and/or creative activity within the Department, School, or Faculty appropriate?
- b. Does the Department, School, or Faculty show potential for continued scholarly research and creative activity?

4. **Service:**

- a. Are the goals and objectives of the unit with respect to professional and/or community service clearly laid out?
- b. Is the level and quality of service being provided to the University, the profession and the community appropriate?

5. **Balance:**

- a. Is there an appropriate balance in the Department, Faculty or School among scholarly research, teaching and professional or community service that would allow the Department to fulfill its mission?

6. **Facilities and Resources:** Does the University have a sufficient supply of the following facilities and resources?
  - a. office, teaching, research, and study areas;
  - b. equipment of various sorts, including audio-visual, computer, and multi-media;
  - c. library resources.
  
7. **Faculty:**
  - a. Does the Department, School, or Faculty have enough members with the appropriate areas of specialization?
  - b. Does the Department, School, or Faculty make adequate provision for faculty members to be able to pursue research programs as well as teaching and administrative activities? Is the balance among teaching, research, and service appropriately struck?
  - c. Is the student/faculty ratio appropriate?
  
8. **Quality Assurance:** Does the Department, School, or Faculty adequately measure the effectiveness of their activities?
  
9. **Graduate Programs (if applicable):**
  - a. Is the level of scholarship within the Department, School, or Faculty (as shown by scientific, scholarly, and professional publications or by appropriate creative activity) satisfactory for a graduate program?
  - b. Does the program satisfy the normal expectations of a graduate program?
  
10. **Advice:** Taking into account fiscal constraints, what are the two or three most important things that the academic unit could do to improve the quality of its programs?

As noted in the "Guidelines for Academic Units", academic units have been advised that recommendations should be undertaken with due regard for fiscal and resource possibilities and constraints. It is taken as given that every unit at UPEI would offer students more choices and do more research and service with additional faculty members. Recommendations for new resources should be accompanied by strong evidence that the new resources are needed to deliver the current program. Where arguments for expansion of current programs are made, they should be supported by a strong argument connecting the strategic goals of the unit to the successful fulfilment of the University's mission and/or evidence of enrolment pressures.