



Policy 31.15
Review and Assessment and Review of
Instructional Programs and Departments/Units

Type:	A - Educational (Board)	Last Approved: Mar., 27, 2009
Executive Responsibility:	Vice-President Academic <u>and</u> <u>Provost</u>	Next Review: <u>Sept., 2012</u>
Administrative Responsibility:	Director, Educational Planning	Procedure: 31.15.001 31.15.002 <u>31.15.003 (NEW)</u> <u>31.15.004 (NEW)</u>

STATEMENT:

Objectives

Vancouver Island University is committed to offering programs of high quality and standards, to the continuous improvement of its programs, and to transparency and accountability in these activities.

As a means of achieving this commitment, Vancouver Island University requires the careful review of all new program proposals prior to their approval and implementation (Procedure 31.15.001), and the regular and systematic review of all existing instructional programs (Procedure 31.15.001).[‡] ~~Criteria to ensure the highest standards have been developed: program context, relevance, quality, financial performance, access, and strategic priorities. Procedures for the development, review, and assessment of programs respond in varying degrees to these criteria.~~ Review of existing instructional programs will consist of evidence-based periodic program reviews (Procedure 31.15.002) and summative assessment (Procedure 31.15.003).

Review procedures, ~~formative and summative~~, for ~~both~~ new programs, ~~and~~ as well as the review and assessment of existing programs, ensure that instructional programs and instructional units departments are aligned with the values, goals, and objectives of the institution and of their respective disciplines.

The formal review process is only one expression of Vancouver Island University's commitment to maintaining quality. Faculty and staff involved in the development and delivery of instructional programs are expected to maintain a professional commitment to program quality and student success, regularly evaluate courses and programs through various means, and act to improve quality whether or not a formal review has been conducted.

[‡] ~~Non-credit certificate programs may be delivered once prior to formal approval.~~

The following definitions are used throughout Policy 31.15 and its accompanying procedures.

Definitions

- a. An instructional-program is defined as an institutionally-approved matrix of courses leading to a provincially-recognized credential issued by Vancouver Island University. The term applies to approved certificates, diplomas, bachelor's degrees (majors and minors), and master's degrees. Program requirements are summarized in the institutional Calendar.
- b. An undergraduate degree program leads to a credential at the baccalaureate level.
- c. A non-degree program leads to a credential at the level of certificate or diploma, including advanced certificates or diplomas and post-degree diplomas.
- d. A major or minor refers to the set of courses or other units of study required to complete a specialization within an undergraduate degree program.
- e. A graduate degree program leads to a credential at the master's degree level. (Vancouver Island University does not have a legislated mandate to offer credentials at the doctoral level.)
- f. An instructional unit is a department, faculty, school, institute, college, or other administrative unit recognized by Senate and the Board of Vancouver Island University.
- g. An academic year is defined as the period from September 1 to August 31.
- h. Learning objectives are determined by instructors and express the intended learning outcomes or achievements students should accomplish by the end of the program or course.
- i. Learning outcomes are the actual learning outcomes or achievements students have accomplished by the end of the program or course.
- j. Discontinuance occurs when an intake of new students into a program is interrupted. Further discussion will take place to determine if this will be temporary (suspension) or permanent (cancellation).
- k. Suspension refers to a scenario where the intake of new students is discontinued temporarily stopped in an ongoing program.
- ~~k.l.~~ Cancellation refers to a scenario where the intake of new students is discontinued permanently stopped in an ongoing program.
- ~~l.~~ Discontinuance occurs when an intake of new students into a program is halted. Further discussion will take place to determine if this will be temporary (suspension) or permnnt (cancellation).

- m. Program Review is a self-reflective, in-depth formative assessment of a single program, with input from external reviewers, for the purpose of informing improvement to and change in that program.
- n. Summative Assessment refers to the assessment of instructional programs (leading to an officially recognized VIU credential) and compares them on a limited number of key indicators in relation to their contribution to VIU's overall mission.
- o. A Department refers to an administrative unit within a Faculty that is responsible for delivering one or more specified disciplines.

Authority and Responsibility

The Vice-President Academic ~~and Provost~~ holds operational authority for policies and procedures relating to the ~~formative and summative assessment and~~ review of new ~~programs as well as the review and assessment of~~ and existing programs. ~~As part of its responsibility under the University Act 35.2 (6) (b) and (f), Senate must advise the board and the Board must seek advice from Senate on the development of educational policy for the establishment, revision, or discontinuance of courses and programs, as well as the evaluation-assessment of programs. The Planning and Priorities Standing Committee has a mandate to advise Senate on these same matters. Policies, procedures and criteria for these matters must therefore be approved by the Board with advice from Senate and its Planning and Priorities Committee, or other bodies as designated by Senate. The BC University Act, amended by the University Amendment Act 2008 confers statutory authority on the University Board and Senate for developing policy around the assessment and review of new and existing programs.~~ Key responsibilities of these and other individuals and committees in carrying out review processes at Vancouver Island University are specified under the accompanying Procedures.

The Minister ~~of Advanced Education~~ holds statutory authority for the approval of all new degree programs in BC and administers that authority through the guidelines of the Degree Quality Assessment Board (DQAB). The Vancouver Island University Board and Senate hold statutory authority for the approval of non-degree programs. It is incumbent upon the University to ensure that its standards and procedures for ~~formative and summative program~~ the review of new degree programs ~~review and assessment~~ are imbedded in policy. The standards outlined in this policy and procedures are fully consistent with, and largely derived from, DQAB guidelines.

Ethical Considerations

~~Vancouver Island University is committed to conducting program review and assessment in an ethical manner and with due regard for the welfare of those involved in the process, as well as those affected by its results. Specific terms are outlined below.~~

- a. ~~Conflict of interest~~

~~All members of external reviewers panels will conduct themselves in a way so as to preserve the confidence of all stakeholders in their review panel's ability to discharge its~~

~~their responsibility properly, accomplish its their purpose, and carry out its their functions in a fair, objective and transparent manner.~~

~~Review panel members External reviewers will perform their duties conscientiously, not put themselves in a position in which their private interests and those of the institution might be perceived to be in conflict, and ensure that any relationship or involvement with the unit or program being reviewed is fully disclosed before participating in any program evaluation.~~

~~There is an apparent conflict of interest when a reasonably well-informed person could perceive that the review panel member's an external reviewer's ability to perform a duty or function of the position would be biased or otherwise affected by his or her private interests. A private interest means a pecuniary or economic interest or advantage that could provide a real or tangible benefit to the review ers panel member or members of their immediate family.~~

~~Integrity, honesty and trust are essential elements of the review process. Any person who is aware of a possible conflict has a duty to report it. It is also expected that anyone chosen as a review panel member an external reviewer who is in a conflict of interest will make an initial declaration and withdraw from participating in the panel.~~

~~If a potential conflict of interest is disclosed, the Vice President Academic and Provost will be informed and will establish a process for determining whether a real conflict exists. The Vice President Academic and Provost will prepare a written statement regarding the potential conflict of interest, to become part of the file on the review process, indicating either that no conflict was discovered or that there was a conflict and it was resolved.~~

b. ~~No compensation for reviewers~~

~~No financial payment or other material compensation will be provided to members of external review panel external reviewers in return for their services as reviewers. However, the University may pay reasonable travel, hospitality, and other out-of-pocket expenses related to the conduct of a review and a site visit. All such expenses must be authorized in advance by the Vice President Academic and Provost.~~

c. ~~Disposition of reports~~

~~Final new program proposals, program review reports, summative assessment reports, and any attached materials become the property of Vancouver Island University. Reviewers will hold their deliberations and preliminary reports in confidence. Final review reports may be made public by the University.~~

d. ~~Confidentiality~~

~~If during the conduct of a review external reviewers panel members receive damaging or prejudicial information or allegations regarding specific individuals, this information will not be included in the review report but will be transmitted to the appropriate persons within the University and handled in accordance with existing institutional policies and~~

~~procedures. In any case, the names of individuals, as well as identifying statements, will be removed from final review reports prior to publication, but will be subject to the terms of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.~~

Periodic policy renewal

This policy and accompanying procedures for the ~~formative and summative review and assessment and review~~ of instructional programs and ~~units departments~~ will be reviewed on a periodic basis, ~~and~~ at least every three years. It is the responsibility of the Vice-President Academic ~~and Provost~~ to initiate such reviews and to ensure that policies are updated as required.

Participation in External Reviews

~~Vancouver Island University supports the concept of the external review of instructional programs at post-secondary institutions. Vancouver Island University faculty and staff are encouraged to serve as external experts when invited to participate in program reviews by other institutions. This is seen to be a benefit to Vancouver Island University as well as to the other institutions involved.~~

Definitions

- a. ~~A program is defined as an institutionally approved matrix of courses leading to a provincially recognized credential issued by Vancouver Island University. The term refers to approved certificates, diplomas, bachelor's degrees (majors and minors), and master's degrees. A program is considered to be a sequence of courses or other units of study prescribed by the institution for the fulfilment of the requirements of a particular credential or specialization. Program requirements are summarized in the institutional Calendar.~~
- b. ~~A non-degree program leads to a credential at the level of certificate or diploma, including advanced certificates or diplomas and post-degree diplomas.~~
- c. ~~An undergraduate degree program leads to a credential at the baccalaureate level.~~
- d. ~~A major or minor refers to the set of courses or other units of study required to complete a specialization within an undergraduate degree program.~~
- e. ~~A graduate degree program leads to a credential at the master's degree level (Vancouver Island University does not have a legislated mandate to offer credentials at the doctoral level).~~
- f. ~~An instructional unit is a department, faculty, school, institute, college, or other administrative unit recognized by Senate and the Board.~~

~~Instructional units are the administrative groupings of faculty and staff that deliver programs, including Faculties, departments, and schools.~~

Learning objectives are the expression of what the instructor intends the student to have learned or achieved by the end of the program or course.

Learning outcomes are the actual learning achievements of students as assessed after learning activity has taken place.

An academic year is defined as the period from September 1 to August 31.

Suspension: where the intake of new students into an ongoing program is discontinued temporarily.

- g. Cancellation: where the intake of new students into an ongoing program is discontinued permanently. When a program has been suspended for three consecutive academic years it will be considered cancelled.

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