

Guidelines on Divisional Academic Planning

The University of Toronto engages in careful planning in order to maintain its status as an internationally significant research university, with undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs of excellent quality. The University engages in periodic institutional-level long-range planning. Such plans set out the long-term and overarching goals for the University; while providing for robust local academic planning as the primary mechanism for ensuring that the University continues to improve. Faculties and divisions determine their vision, priorities and implementation plans, consistent with the University's aims. These divisional plans address the full scope of divisional activity, encompassing teaching, undergraduate and graduate enrolment, research, government advocacy, financial resource development and capital plans.

In June 2010, the Governing Council of the University of Toronto approved revisions to the *Policy for Approval and Review of Academic Programs and Units*, and received the accompanying *University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process (UTQAP)*. Under the Policy and UTQAP, all degree programs and academic structures are reviewed on a cycle that is no greater than eight years.

The components of the UTQAP provide a resource for academic planning for the next planning period. Academic planning is now seen less as a periodic university-wide exercise and more as an on-going matter, to be systematically thought through when there is a change in leadership. Thus, the length of the planning period will vary across divisions, generally ranging from five to eight years.

A divisional academic plan should be developed using these guidelines. The contents fall into two inter-related categories:

- 1) Principles of academic planning
- 2) Processes for academic planning and guiding themes regarding the content of academic plans

PRINCIPLES OF ACADEMIC PLANNING

A) ACADEMIC PLANS SHOULD EXPLICITLY STATE THE VALUES OF THE DIVISION

Divisional values should reflect the overall values and mission of the University of Toronto as stated in the *Statement of Institutional Purpose*.

B) DIVISIONAL PLANS SHOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH THE INSTITUTION'S OVERARCHING LONG-RANGE PLAN

In order for the University to attain its vision and goals, divisional academic plans in a tri-campus context must align with the directions set out in the current overarching Institutional Plan.

For example, at the time of these guidelines' development, the University's current long-range plan is *Towards 2030: A Third Century of Excellence at the University of Toronto*. Objectives set out in that plan include:

- Maintaining our research-intensive culture, the academic rigour of our educational offerings at all levels, and the excellence of faculty, staff and students across all three campuses and partner institutions
- Enhancing our global reputation for the generation of new ideas and transformative discoveries
- Engaging all categories of faculty with our teaching mission, and maintaining an emphasis on nurturing inquiring minds and building the creative and analytical capacity of our students at all levels
- Reinforcing our strengths in research and scholarship through our enrolment and recruitment strategies, and maintaining our leadership position in graduate and secondary professional education
- Focusing on providing an excellent experience for students, inside and outside our classrooms
- Contributing substantially to the prosperity of the Toronto region, Ontario and Canada

C) ACADEMIC PLANS ARE OVERARCHING STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS

Academic plans should address the overall vision and directions of a division, set priorities for future decision making and identify broad strategies for achieving priorities including short, medium and long-term goals. The plan should also articulate next steps in pursuing these goals. Detailed recommendations for implementation should not be included in the plan but should be released as a separate implementation document that is circulated for further consultation and refinement.

D) THE DEVELOPMENT OF ACADEMIC PLANS SHOULD BE AN ITERATIVE PROCESS

Academic planning must involve broad consultative processes. Consultations should include:

- faculty, students, librarians and staff from all departments in multi-departmental faculties.
- faculty, staff, librarians and students in other cognate units/divisions (where appropriate)
- student support services
- research services
- libraries
- human resources
- affiliated hospitals (for the Health Sciences and Medicine)
- other allied institutions

E) ACADEMIC PLANNING MUST BE A TRANSPARENT AND ACCOUNTABLE PROCESS

Members of the division should be provided with adequate information regarding the context and parameters of the academic planning exercise. The process of planning must be clearly identified and should include regular opportunities for consideration and feedback from various members of the university community. All information should be provided in a timely manner.

F) ACADEMIC PLANNING MUST BE EMBEDDED IN FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY AND ADDRESS REQUIRED RESOURCES TO ACHIEVE GOALS

Academic plans must be fiscally responsible, thus ensuring the ongoing sustainability of the Division and its educational mission. Implications for fund-raising, budgeting and advancement should be articulated in the plan.

G) ACADEMIC PLANS MUST BE CONSISTENT WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS (UTQAP) AND WITH RELEVANT ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENTS OF PROFESSIONAL DISCIPLINES

All academic programs must ensure that students receive a high quality education that meets UTQAP standards as well as the external standards required by relevant / appropriate professional accreditation bodies.

H) ACADEMIC PLANS ARE LIVING DOCUMENTS

Academic plans should be regularly consulted to frame initiatives and goals and communicated to new faculty, librarians and staff. Plans should guide decision making and resources allocation. Plans should be flexible enough to seize opportunities that may arise and address unforeseen challenges. Academic plans should identify ways in which progress towards planned goals can be judged.

ACADEMIC PLANNING PROCESS AND GUIDING THEMES FOR CONTENT

There are three components to academic planning and academic plans:

1. Assessment of the current state of the division
2. Preparing to initiate the planning process
3. Contents of the academic plan

The unique nature of the University of Toronto requires flexibility in how these components are implemented in the academic planning process.

PART ONE: ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT STATE OF THE DIVISION

SELF STUDY

A *self-study* is a broad-based, reflective report that includes critical analysis. It is an assessment of the appropriateness and strength of the areas of activity in the unit /division. The process of preparing a self-study should involve faculty, students and staff. The self-study should include:

- *measures of quality* (faculty research citations and numbers of articles/books published, student teaching evaluation scores, numbers of teaching awards received, dissertation awards received, graduate student placement results; evaluation of programs as per their degree level expectations; etc.)
- *measures of quantity* (how much teaching the division does and in which programs, enrolment numbers, advancement performance; alumni engagement, etc.)
- *relations with the rest of the University and the broader community* (the significant connections the division has and/or important connections that it may have developed)
- *the significance of the activities* (the extent to which the division has responded to some of the larger intellectual questions of our time, how successfully the division engages with matters of public, social, cultural interest; levels of commercialization and knowledge transfer; the impact of research and teaching, etc.)
- resource requirements and revenue sources

Elements of the self-study content are articulated in the Quality Assurance Framework and repeated in the UTQAP; however, divisions can add elements that reflect their unique context.

Key components include:

- The self-study must engage students, staff, faculty, librarians and other stakeholders.
- It must be a critical analysis of the strengths and challenges of the division.
- It must assess current performance using benchmarking data (see Appendix A).

The self-study is a document provided to external reviewers. The findings and recommendations of that external review should be taken into account and addressed when writing the academic plan.

EXTERNAL REVIEW

As part of the UTQAP, a review of the division and its programs is conducted by external experts from peer institutions. External reviewers are provided with: the self-study, previous reviews of the division, and any other relevant material. During the campus visit, external reviewers are given the opportunity to meet with students, staff, faculty and alumni.

PART TWO: PREPARING TO INITIATE THE ACADEMIC PLANNING PROCESS

ESTABLISH A CORE ACADEMIC PLANNING TEAM

The academic planning team should be guided and coordinated by the Dean and senior leadership of the division. Activities of the team will vary and may include:

- ensuring broad consultation
- participating in meetings and retreats
- communicating with students, faculty, staff and others as appropriate
- drafting the academic planning document

The process for selecting the team and the membership should be broadly communicated. The membership should ensure representation from a range of stakeholders that may include faculty, staff, librarians, students, alumni and external consultants.

DEFINE DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES INCLUDING TIMELINES AND MILESTONES

It is important to communicate with stakeholders at the outset about how the planning process will proceed. Some questions to consider are:

- What will be the level of detail of decisions?
- What is the timeline of the planning process?
- How will department plans be integrated into faculty-level plans?
- What are the parameters of the planning process? Is restructuring of a unit a possible outcome?

Keeping with the principle that academic planning is an iterative process, there must be some flexibility to change timelines based on what may arise during the consultative process and to ensure transparency and accountability.

Key milestones in the process should also be clearly outlined including the following:

- deadline for receipt of unit submissions
- scheduled dates for academic planning team meetings and retreats
- deadline for distribution of draft recommendations
- scheduled written submissions by the heads of units/programs (including student associations) in response to the draft recommendations concerning their units/programs
- timeframe for counterproposals in case the closing of a unit is recommended
- schedule for administrative response to responses and counterproposals
- deadline for the finalization of recommendations
- targeted publication date of the academic plan

DETERMINE RESOURCES FOR THE ACADEMIC PLANNING PROCESS

The academic planning process is an intensive undertaking. It is recommended that the planning team consider at the outset the resources required to create the academic plan. These include:

- funds allocated in the budget
- technological/IT support
- working time for faculty and staff (e.g. communications and administrative staff, data collection etc.)

A division might consider hiring an external consultant to manage the planning process.

IDENTIFY THE CONSULTATIVE PROCESS(ES)

The academic planning team must consider how members of the university community will be engaged in the process. Normally the following expectations inform the academic planning process:

- a) It is important to inform the various constituencies that input at various stages of the planning process is welcomed.
- b) In multi-departmental divisions, the process for incorporating departmental and unit plans into the divisional plan should be clearly articulated.
- c) As part of the iterative process, it should clear, at various stages what feedback has been considered and whether or not this feedback will be incorporated into the final plan.
- d) Following written submissions by heads of units/programs in response to draft recommendations, choices made regarding what is included in the final document should be contextualized for stakeholders, including written responses to feedback concerning draft recommendations.

DEFINE THE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The promotion of open and frequent communication among all stakeholders should be a key principle of the communication strategy beginning with broad publication that the planning process is being initiated. The communication strategy must include an implementation plan and dissemination of the academic plan. Dedicated resources must be provided for the communications that occur both externally and internally. Communication media can include a dedicated website, newsletters, focus groups, town halls, and interim reports and updates.

PART THREE: CONTENTS OF THE ACADEMIC PLAN

DETERMINATION OF VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

Divisions must determine and articulate the shared values that provide the foundation for the academic plan. The vision, mission and values statements will form the foundation of the academic planning framework.

DEVELOP A FRAMEWORK FOR THE PLAN AND THE UNIT SUBMISSIONS THAT WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE PLAN

A framework is helpful for guiding submissions and provides consistency in the types of information provided by units. It also facilitates cross-division discussions in the academic planning process and helps ensure that units' parallel planning processes follow a similar methodology. It is recommended that a draft framework be distributed widely for consideration and discussion before requesting unit submissions.

It is recommended that divisions ask for submissions based on a number of widely communicated themes (e.g. In what ways does your unit reflect, contribute to and promote our culture of excellence? What are your department's strengths in research and teaching? Etc.)

DEFINING GOALS

An academic division should succinctly articulate what it wants to have achieved at the end of the planning period and how these achievements will enable it to exercise leadership in the field. The goals should reflect the vision, mission and values of the division and the strategic priorities outlined in Towards 2030.

DEFINING STRATEGIES RELATED TO EACH OF THE GOALS

Goals set out what a division plans to do. Strategies set out how the division will work to realize these goals. In describing strategies, an academic plan should indicate:

- a) the time-frame within which they can be initiated
- b) what resources will be required for their implementation
- c) where these resources will be found (including, where appropriate, the redistribution of resources).

Core issues to address include:

- faculty complement plan
- enrolment plan
- staff plan
- budget plan (including revenue strategy, plans to improve efficiency)

- program offerings and delivery
- research foci and programs
- space utilization (current and anticipated) and strategies to optimize current space
- IT strategy (both academic and administrative) including renewal and support
- administrative costs
- community engagement/service
- alumni outreach and other external relations
- key performance metrics to measure the success of the plan

Appendix A : Potential benchmarks for Academic Plans of Units, Programs and Divisions

In order to prepare self-studies and academic plans and in order to assess the extent to which they are achieving their goals, academic units will want to choose metrics that are comparative and appropriate to their programs of teaching and research. These will vary among faculties and divisions.

It is not expected that a faculty or division use more than a judiciously chosen selection of metrics as relevant. In many instances, the metrics might most usefully be applied as a five-year rolling average. Data requested from University offices may take time to prepare, so a month's lead time, at least, is required before delivery of the data can be expected.

1. Academic Programs – Undergraduate first- and second-entry

- Frequency distribution of entering OAC averages (Undergraduate first entry programs)
- Applications/Offers/Yield rates
- Full-time fall intake: arts and science and second entry programs
- Full-time year 1 enrolment
- Total enrolment, fall headcount and FTE
- Year to year retention rates (Note: not cohort retention)
- Graduation rates
- International: country of citizenship; Domestic: geographic origin (GTA, other Ontario, other Canada)
- Student engagement/satisfaction National Student Engagement Survey (NSSE) data
- Number of undergraduate research experience credits offered
- Placement of graduates by employment sector
- Measures of inter-disciplinarity: involvement of faculty in programs offered by other units in the current year; percentage of courses cross-listed, etc.
- Distribution of class size and number of large courses with sections, tutorials or laboratories
- Level of financial support available per FTE student
- Student support by type and by source of funds for the current academic year
- Availability and utilization of financial counseling
- Amount of teaching done by faculty members
- Proportion of courses/students taught in the unit by contract faculty
- Has there been a recent curriculum review and revision? How extensive was it? What changes resulted?
- How is the process of linking program learning objectives to the degree level expectations proceeding?
- What steps has the unit taken to introduce in a meaningful way into its curriculum the use of information technology, undergraduate research experiences, writing requirements, student internships or co-op experiences, or international experience? How has it measured the success of these efforts and how successful have they been?
- How have accreditation and external reviews evaluated the undergraduate programs? What changes have resulted from these reviews?
- Outcome data such as employment; employer satisfaction
- Alumni engagement

2. Academic Programs – Graduate

- Domestic and international total enrolment
- Geographic profile of students International: country of citizenship; Domestic: geographic origin (GTA, other Ontario, other Canada)
- BIU-eligible vs. ineligible domestic enrolment
- Domestic and international intake
- Time to completion
- Graduation Rates and median time to doctoral degree
- Proportion of students outside of the funded cohort
- PhDs granted, with comparison to Canadian and AAU peer programs (Canadian System data for comparison (2000)
- Placement of graduates by employment sector
- Percentage of doctoral students with NSERC, CIHR, SSHRC or international fellowships
- Student satisfaction Graduate and Professional Student Survey (GPSS) data
- Professional masters: full time 3-term intake
- Level of financial support available per FTE student
- Student support by type and by source of funds for the current academic year
- Availability and utilization of financial counseling
- Amount of teaching or supervision done by faculty
- How have external reviews and/or accreditation evaluated the graduate programs? What changes have resulted from these reviews?
- Discursive comments on GPSS survey of graduate student satisfaction
- Of students who accepted our offer of admission, where else did they apply, broken down by sub-areas of the discipline, and what is the standing of the schools they applied to compared to the University of Toronto department
- Outcome data such as employment; Employer satisfaction
- Alumni engagement

3. Faculty and other teaching staff

- Total number of faculty FTE
- Number of faculty FTE broken down by sub-discipline
- Number of jointly appointed faculty
- Number of contract teaching staff
- Demographics of faculty by age and rank (including senior lecturers and part-time faculty)
- Data from the University of Toronto Faculty and Staff Experience Survey (UTFSES)
- Ratios: staff to faculty FTE
- Student FTE to faculty FTE
- Student credit hours to faculty FTE; senior lecturer FTE to tenure-stream faculty FTE
- Percentage of faculty who are under-represented in the discipline; percentage of new tenure stream and teaching stream appointments who belong to these groups and trends in this data
- Use of IT in program deployment
- Inter-disciplinarity: Cross-appointments of faculty, faculty who do inter-disciplinary work
- Acceptance rate on offers for faculty positions
- Number of named Chairs and Professorships, Canada Research Chairs
- Percentage faculty (normalized to those eligible) who are fellows of the Royal Society of Canada, the Royal Society of London, and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American

Association for the Advancement of Science, and equivalent honorific societies, and/or who are on the list of *ISI Highly Cited Researchers*

- Number of faculty invited to sit on committees of the federal granting councils
- Percentage of total graduate funding guarantee that is supported by faculty research grants
- Number of faculty in the unit who have received University teaching awards (i.e. awards open to faculty from all departments and programs in the university, 3M Teaching awards or other external teaching awards)
- External review assessments of faculty expertise in relation to the discipline
- Discursive comments on student surveys such as the GPSS about the quality of faculty
- Extent and efficacy of programs to mentor new faculty
- Number of faculty invited to give keynote talks at national and international conferences and symposia
- Percentage/numbers of faculty who hold executive positions in professional societies
- Percentage/numbers of faculty seconded to government task forces, commissions etc.

4. Research

In this area in particular, there will be variation across academic units as to the appropriate measures. Each unit should comment upon the level of activity in research and scholarship.

- Total external grant funding, including contract research, hospital-funded research, and research funded by international foundations and councils, expressed as levels and trends
- Research yield: the ratio of the unit's share of SSHRC, NSERC and/or MRC funding (# of awards and overall \$ amount) to the unit's national share of eligible faculty
- Ratio of research funding to graduate students and to postdoctoral fellows
- Percentage of tenure-stream faculty who are externally funded
- Publication in lead journals and by major university presses as appropriate to the discipline
- Citation counts
- Average size of lab groups in the unit (and as compared to peer departments)
- Number of invention disclosures held by the unit
- Number of active spin-off companies begun in the unit or by faculty members in the unit
- Number of faculty contributing to participatory action research with community foundations, agencies, governments
- Number of faculty commissioned to write major government reports
- Assessment of quality of research in unit by external reviewers
- Special notice by outstanding review publications
- Importance of venues in which faculty are invited to give keynote talks, undertake major reviews etc.

5. Staff

- Number of staff per tenured and per total instructional FTE
- Ratios of staff to undergraduate and graduate FTE
- Data from the University of Toronto Faculty and Staff Experience Survey (UTFSES)
- Number and percentage of staff who are aboriginal, visible minority, disabled, men and women
- Numbers of technical research staff per research faculty
- Ratio of grant funding to numbers of FTE-equivalent staff engaged in research support
- Average number of training hours per year per staff member and trends
- Rate of staff turnover
- Numbers of staff receiving Faculty or University awards for service
- Exit interviews with departing staff

6. Governance and organization

- Publication of clear governance by-laws for the unit; regular publication of minutes of meetings
- Participation of junior faculty, staff, and students in governance processes
- Administrative and governance structure for effective functioning.

7. Financial resources and development

- Divisional budget information as contained in the annual academic review package
- Inventions and innovations revenue
- Continuing education and other programmatic income
- Average annual alumni giving to the unit
- Annual expendable donations raised
- Trends in annual giving
- Size of endowment, expressed as a number and as a trend
- Appropriateness of the level and distribution of financial resources in support of the quality of academic programs and research activities, and the capacity for flexibility and re-allocation within existing resources.

8. Infrastructure

The adequacy of the infrastructure available to support its activities, including the capacity for reallocation of space and other resources.

- Actual vs. COU Recommended Space, by category: faculty offices, graduate student space, administrative offices, teaching laboratories where relevant
- Access to IT support services at levels appropriate to numbers of faculty, research personnel, desktop users, etc.
- Access to instructional technology and equipment
- Research equipment

9. Outreach

- Number of community participatory action research projects in which the unit is engaged
- Number of outreach educational activities in which the unit is engaged
- Extent of continuing education programs, expressed in student hours
- Student evaluations of continuing education programs
- Number of students placed in internships and work co-op positions
- Number of non-academic registrants from the community, business or government at symposia, workshops and conferences sponsored by the unit
- Number of collaborative research projects with industry and government agencies
- Percentage of research funding for partnerships with research and industry as a proportion of the envelope awarded by relevant granting councils and government departments
- Response of business, industry, government, community organizations to activities undertaken collaboratively with the university
- Reviews of work co-op and internship programs