The intent of this document is to provide an overview of the key steps within the University of Saskatchewan's Academic Program Review process.

A. Review Initiation

On behalf of the Deputy Provost, the Office of the Provost and VP Academic (Office of the PVPA) will contact the Dean and Department Heads (or only Dean/Director, as applicable) informing them that a review is forthcoming, according to the cyclical 10-year schedule. Typically, undergraduate and graduate programs managed by the same academic unit will be reviewed at the same time. In situations where a unit undergoes a regular accreditation review, where possible, the university academic program and accreditation reviews should be scheduled concurrently in the same academic year (ideally with accreditation going first); this ensures that efforts to produce self-study reports can be leveraged for both types of review.

The Office of the PVPA will meet with the Dean and Department Head (or only Dean/Director, as applicable) responsible for the program(s) under review. The purpose of these meetings will be to discuss review procedures in detail including the development of the Self-Study Report, recruitment of a review team, and planning for a site visit. It will also be an opportunity to address any concerns raised by the academic unit and identify immediate next steps. These meetings should be scheduled as soon as possible following the notification of the review.

B1. Self-Study Development

The Department Head, in consultation with the Dean and program faculty (or Dean/Director only as applicable, with program faculty), selects the Self-Study Committee with the formality of this left to the discretion of the academic unit leader(s). The size of the committee can vary depending on the size of the program(s) under review. The committee should include a minimum of three members, two of which should be program faculty. Whenever possible, an administrative staff member should be included to assist the committee with data gathering, site visit scheduling and other important tasks. In some cases, it may be appropriate to include a student or a member of a professional community on the Self-Study Committee. The committee may choose to develop a terms of reference or committee charter to outline terms of membership, roles and responsibilities, goals and decision-making framework.

The Office of the PVPA will provide a comprehensive Self-Study Report template to the academic unit. The Office of the PVPA will work with Information and Communications Technology (ICT), Teaching, Learning and Student Experience (TLSE), Library, and other units to provide data on student enrolment, funding, and other aspects of the program. Institutional data definitions will be used to ensure consistency and transparency. In addition, the Office of the PVPA is able to administer student and/or alumni surveys designed to provide insight on program quality for the academic unit and for the external reviewers. At several points in the Self-Study Report template, the Self-Study Committee will be prompted to provide commentary on the results of these surveys.

The Self-Study Committee should review the report template thoroughly and begin to gather information that will be needed to complete the report. While data from central information systems will be provided in advance, there will be additional data and background information required from the academic unit. Some sections of the self-study (e.g. reporting on student knowledge translation activities) may require data that the academic unit does not regularly track. If curriculum mapping (or definition) of program and course-level learning outcomes is in need of development, staff from the TLSE team are available to support academic units.

The Self-Study Committee will finalize the Self-Study Report at least four weeks in advance of the site visit. The relevant leader(s) and program faculty will be given an opportunity to review the report before it is finalized. The Office of the PVPA will assist with the final production, organization, and distribution of the Self-Study Report document.

Copies of the Self-Study Report will be provided to the review team and to relevant stakeholders participating in the site visit. This includes the Deputy Provost and the Dean of the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS).

B2. Review Team Recruitment

The review team will typically consist of **two external** reviewers and **one internal** reviewer. The Self-Study Committee, in consultation with the Department Head and Dean (or Dean/Director only, as applicable), will identify **four to six external reviewer nominees** and **two to three internal reviewer nominees,** ranked in order of preference. The external list of nominees will be shared with college leadership (in the case of departmental review) and the Dean of the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, while the internal list of nominees will be shared with college leadership (in the case of departmentalized review) and the Deputy Provost, all for potential feedback. Additional nominees may also be provided by senior leadership and the list of nominees will then be finalized.

The internal reviewer will serve in an advisory capacity; they are not expected to contribute content to the External Review Report, but are expected to participate fully in the site visit. They play a critical role in helping the Review Team understand the academic environment at USask and can share best practices from their own experience on campus. The internal reviewer will have a solid working knowledge of the university and be a faculty member from a College/School outside of the unit leading the review. The individual should not be a current member of senior leadership (Dean, Assistant/Associate Dean, Executive Director, Associate Vice-President, etc.).

External reviewers will be well-respected scholars capable of rendering sound judgment on the merit of the academic program. They will typically come from other Canadian universities, but can be from international universities if travel costs are reasonable. Reviewer nominations should take into consideration various criteria, including the following:
- Attained the rank of Associate or Full Professor (or has a high level of seniority)
- Holds a Ph.D. (or terminal degree) in a field closely related to the program under review
- Originating from a research intensive (i.e. U15) university
- Exemplary undergraduate teaching record
- Exemplary graduate teaching and supervision record
- Is uninvolved with the academic unit, so that any perception of a conflict of interest is avoided. Potential conflicts of interest could include:
    - Personal relationship with a faculty member or student in the program under review
    - Current or recent (within five years) research collaborations with a faculty member
    - Being a recent (within five years) graduate of the program
    - Being a recent (within five years) supervisor of a student in the program
    - Being a former faculty member of the unit under review
    - Being a recent (within five years) thesis supervisor of a faculty member

The Office of the PVPA will support the Deputy Provost in reviewing and approving nominations. The Deputy Provost may request additional rationale or suggest a change in rankings. Once the list of nominees is approved by the Deputy Provost, the Office of the PVPA will assist the Deputy Provost with contacting nominees (in order of preference) to determine availability and interest in serving. The academic unit will be notified when the required number of nominees have been confirmed as participants. The Office of the PVPA will provide a summary of nominee appointments to the academic unit on behalf of the Deputy Provost.

The Office of the PVPA will communicate with the review team by email to explain details of the Academic Review Process, specifically what the expectations are for the members. Closer to the date of the site visit, an orientation meeting is carried out virtually to review all aspects and answer any questions the review team may have about the process.

B3. Site Visit Plan

Site visits will typically be in-person visits, but may be virtual in some situations. The Office of the PVPA will work with the external reviewers and the academic unit to confirm appropriate dates for the site visit, typically two days for in-person visits. The choice of dates will be driven largely by external reviewer availability. Site visits would commonly take place in the Fall or Winter Terms, but preferably not scheduled during Reading Week (or exam times) to ensure that students and other key stakeholders will be able to participate fully. Preferred time periods are often in November or in March.

Once site visit dates are confirmed, the Office of the PVPA will initiate the organization of the site visit agenda. The academic unit will support this effort by identifying, inviting and confirming the participation of key stakeholder personnel.

In some situations, the site visit can be carried out in a virtual manner. Under these circumstances, the stakeholder meetings will typically be carried out over a three-week period.

The Office of the PVPA will provide dedicated support for both the academic unit and the review team. All details and meeting attendees will be finalized at least one week in advance of the site visit. Stakeholders will receive information about the review team and purpose of their meetings, in advance. Site visit activities will typically include:
- Opening meeting with the Program Leader(s)
- Opening meeting with the Dean of the College (if departmentalized college)
- Meeting with Dean of CGPS
- Meeting with the Deputy Provost
- Tour of relevant facilities
- Meeting(s) with faculty members
- Meeting(s) with students
- Meeting with support staff (if necessary)
- Writing session for external reviewers (if possible)
- Exit meeting(s) with the Program Leader(s) and Dean of College (if departmentalized college)

C. Site Visit

The Office of the PVPA will support the coordination of travel arrangements for the external reviewers. External reviewers will typically arrive the evening before the two-day site visit and depart on the evening of the second day (or the subsequent morning). Generally, it is efficient to have most of the stakeholder meetings in one location chosen by the academic unit, allowing the review team to be focused on gathering information and requiring the stakeholders to come to them. The chairing of stakeholder meetings is typically arranged between the external reviewers. Food scheduling during the visit and other logistics are typically facilitated by the Office of the PVPA in collaboration with the academic unit.

In the situation where the site visit is carried out virtually, the Office of the PVPA will assist with determining the most efficient technology to utilize amongst the review team and the stakeholders.

D. External Review Report

A template for the External Reviewer Report will be provided to the review team as a preferred format. The external members of the review team will complete the External Review Report typically within 30 days of the site visit. The report will provide an assessment of program quality and recommendations for program enhancement. The Office of the PVPA will provide a copy of the report to the Dean/Director and/or Department Head responsible for the program, the Dean of CGPS, the Deputy Provost, the Interim Associate Provost of Teaching Innovation & Strategic Initiatives, and the Academic Programs Committee of University Council.

E. Academic Unit Response

Within 30 days of receiving the External Review Report, the Self-Study Committee will provide a written response addressing each recommendation for improvement. This response will form the basis for the action plan approved by the Dean of the program (for departmentalized units). The response will be distributed to the same stakeholders receiving the External Review Report.

The Dean/Director responsible for the program provides a response to the Self-Study Report, External Review Report, and departmental/unit response (in situations where program is at department level). Some commentary may be offered, but the primary purpose of this document is to provide a comprehensive action plan (with specific timelines) in response to the review. Development of the Dean/Director's Response requires close consultation with the Self-Study Committee, Department Head (as applicable), program chairs, and the Dean of CGPS. The Dean/Director will present the action plan to the Deputy Provost.

Note that TLSE, including the Gwenna Moss Center for Teaching and Learning (GMCTL), will support the Dean/Director and the program in making enhancements related to teaching and learning (e.g. curriculum development, assessment, professional development). Financial support for program enhancement activities are available from Teaching and Learning Enhancement Strategic Funds managed by the GMCTL (e.g. curriculum innovation fund, experiential learning fund, indigenous educational initiatives fund).

F. Review Summary

A Review Summary, which provides a summary of the review details and highlights the outcomes of the review and its findings, will be drafted by the Office of the PVPA on behalf of the Deputy Provost and delivered to the

Academic Programs Committee. After which, Academic Programs Committee sends the Review Summary to University Council for information, and it will be published online on the Office of the PVPA's website.

G. Implementation and Follow-up

The Dean and Department Head (or Dean/Director only, as applicable) are responsible for implementing the action plan. An update on implementation progress will be provided to the Deputy Provost and shared with Academic Programs Committee, typically within two years of a review. Depending on review outcomes, the Deputy Provost may request that the first update be provided within a shorter time frame.