FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES (FGS)
REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATE ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEWS

A. Purpose

All graduate programs at Dalhousie University are subject to periodic academic review on a 5 to 7 year cycle as part of Quality Assurance activities within FGS. Graduate program reviews are a joint responsibility of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and the Faculty responsible for delivery of the program under review, and are subject to specific review requirements which may differ from program or unit review policies within individual faculties.

This guideline provides clarification of the specific program review elements required as part of Graduate program reviews, in the context of the Senate Policy for Faculty Reviews of Academic Programs.

B. Definitions

The following definitions are adopted from the Senate Policy for Faculty Reviews of Academic programs, and are used within these guidelines for consistency.

1. "Program Director" means the academic leader of the program under review.
2. "Dean" means the Dean of the Faculty which delivers the program under review, unless otherwise specified.

C. Scheduling of Program Reviews

All graduate programs are subject to periodic academic review. Reviews are carried out normally on a five- to seven-year cycle, although newly-established programs are to be reviewed within 2 years after the first cohort graduates.

The Dean is responsible for maintaining a multi-year schedule of graduate program reviews, established in conjunction with FGS. This schedule is to be updated annually and communicated to FGS for review and concensus prior to finalization. Note that FGS typically applies the following expectations for review scheduling:

- Program reviews of accredited graduate programs should be scheduled the year following the accreditation. Program reviews will attempt to leverage accreditation activities as much as possible (external site visit, accreditation report, etc.), identifying any gaps in content coverage to establish a condensed

review process. The Senate Policy for Faculty Reviews of Academic Programs includes an appendices questionnaire intended to help identify potential overlap, and is intended to be completed prior to the accreditation to ensure that the Program Director, Dean and FGS are aware of any additional review requirements.

- Graduate program reviews can be jointly scheduled with department/unit reviews (undergrad/grad) or for multiple programs at one time when appropriate provided the graduate programs are addressed individual and explicitly. Note that unsatisfactory arrangements for combined/joint reviews may result in a separate graduate program review.
- Graduate program reviews may not be combined with Senate reviews of Faculties. The focus of academic program reviews is different than that of faculty-level reviews and is to be managed separately.

D. Internal and External Reviewer/Review Committee Selection

The internal review committee for stand-alone or combined reviews involving graduate programs must have one member selected by FGS. The Program Director or Dean (or a designate) will be asked to provide a prospective list of Internal Review Committee Members for FGS for review, with the member normally selected from this list. FGS reserves the right to nominate a committee member who is not on the list of prospective reviewers provided.

The Dean will provide the internal review committee with a list of potential external reviewers. Prior to finalizing the selection of two external reviewers, the committee must consult the program director and FGS to confirm that MPHEC guidelines have been applied, specifically with regard to arms-length criteria and prior experience requirements.

Note that it is the responsibility of the Dean to ensure administrative support and the required budget is in place for the program review activity, including the transportation cost and honorarium for external reviewers.

E. Self-Study Requirements

The Senate Policy for Faculty Reviews of Academic Programs provides an extensive overview of the self-study requirements. As part of an evidence-based approach and recognizing that significant diversity exists between programs within the university, programs are strongly encouraged to engage in self-reflection on their program goals and strategic plan early in the self-study process. This will enable several of the self-study components to be framed in the context of these goals and program-level objectives.

Evidence-based responses are expected to include, as appropriate, recruitment/enrollment/retention data, measurements of student success factors (e.g. scholarship funding, publications/external conference participation, time to completion,

marketability, post-program placement, etc.), student feedback (e.g. exit survey results, results of engagement with current students), curriculum information (e.g. mobility/collaboration agreements, curriculum changes since last review, records of on-going curriculum renewal), and resource reviews (e.g. faculty, facilities and services, administrative support, etc.). Additional data should be included as needed to support self-reflection, with the intention of identifying a program's major achievements and strengths, opportunities and areas for improvement.

Programs must include the following as an electronic appendix:
- A copy of the current version of the departmental graduate handbook/guidelines together with a description of the graduate administration within the unit and the graduate student appeals protocols (if not included in the handbook)
- A copy of the departmental policy on FGS membership for regular and adjunct faculty.
- A copy of the current strategic plan
- Statistics on applications, acceptances and registrations.
- A summary of key information from the CV's is encouraged (student supervision statistics, funding, teaching commitments, etc.).
- Information on completion rates: for each graduated student the number of months in programs from initial registration to graduation.
- The number of scholarships held by graduate students, differentiating between internal and external, and the proportion of funded to unfunded students. This information is best conveyed by a list of students.

Programs are also encouraged to include the following, as appropriate to their program goals and success metrics:
- List of graduates and their placements following graduation.
- A list of the supervisors and committees for each student writing a thesis or project.
- C.V.s of all faculty members involved in the graduate program including those of adjunct members, post-doctoral fellows, etc.
- List of student internship/work placements.

F. **Presentation at Faculty Council**

The Final report, response and implementation plan will be added to the agenda at Faculty Council on the earliest date following receipt by FGS. The chair of the internal review committee, and the chair/head/director of the program under review are typically invited to provide a summary of key recommendations and to respond to questions.

Four outcomes are possible from the review, consideration of the report and the unit's response. The program can be rated as:

1. satisfactory with no changes required and the potential to expand the program;
2. satisfactory but with recommendations and request for follow-up within a specific time frame;

3. unsatisfactory with required changes, to be implemented within a specific time frame;
4. unsatisfactory with a recommendation to Senate for suspension or closure.

The Dean and FGS Faculty Council will monitor implementation of the recommendations under outcomes 2 and 3 and establish appropriate sanctions for units that fail to comply. Appropriate recommendations in case of non-compliance are: maintain, restructure (or amalgamate), reduce or discontinue the program.

Process – FGS Contact Points

- Completed self-study submitted to FGS by the Dean
- Internal Reviewers Committee meets with FGS at start of review
- Internal Reviewers confirm recommended external reviewers with FGS & Program Director
- External Reviewers meet with FGS during site visit
- Internal Review Committee submits Draft Report to Dean and FGS for fact-check
- Internal Review Committee submits Final Report to Dean and FGS
- Program Director submits draft Response and Implementation Plan to Dean and FGS
- Dean submits Final report, Response and Implementation Plan following faculty discussion to FGS for review at FGS Faculty Council
- FGS Faculty Council Notifies Program Director & Dean of Final Decision