Curriculum Renewal Handbook

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Definitions

Academic Program Review (APR):

A Senate-mandated review of an academic program to ensure quality and academic excellence. Consists of a review of a program in its entirety, including, but not limited to, a review of program structure and course offerings, appropriateness of staffing levels and other resources, make-up of students and enrolment trends, and program alignment with strategic goals.

Accreditation:

The process a program completes to obtain recognition from an outside body for achieving a set of standards.

Curriculum:

The framework laid down by faculty and accreditation bodies guiding what must be taught in a course/program that have been approved by Senate.

Curriculum map:

An examination of the alignment of the program goals and learning outcomes. This may include assessments and teaching strategies.

Curriculum renewal:

The process of re-designing an existing curriculum after a critical examination is done of the program where opportunities for significant change are identified.

Curriculum review:

An examination and opportunity to critically reflect on the curriculum.

Learning outcome:

The knowledge and skills that a student should acquire by completing a lesson, unit, course or program.

Pedagogy:

The method and practice of teaching, especially as an academic subject or theoretical concept.

Program goals:

The knowledge and skills that a graduate should acquire by the completion of the program.

Stakeholder:

Those that influence or are invested in the program and the students. This can include employers, alumni, community placements or government.

Standards:

A framework that outlines the expectations of an individual in a professional program.

Unit:

The department or academic unit delivering the program(s).

Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to explain the process of curriculum renewal supported by the Centre for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning (The Centre). The term curriculum renewal refers to the process of re-designing an existing curriculum after a critical examination is done of the program. The aim is to create significant changes for improvements and innovations.

The curriculum renewal process includes gathering data about the program, data analysis to identify areas for improvement, building the curriculum, creating a plan for implementation, and evaluation. This handbook will define the steps in the process, the expected timeline, and articulates the role of each of the stakeholders in the process.

The renewal of curriculum should not be confused with the Academic Program Review (APR) process, which is facilitated by the Office of the Vice-Provost (Academic Planning and Programs).

Reasons for a curriculum renewal

Curriculum renewal is not a mandatory process. The decision to undergo curriculum changes often stems from:

- a Senate-mandated APR

- an accreditation review

- a curriculum review

- internal initiation by the unit

In an ever-changing environment of learning and knowledge, it is important for programs to reflect and align the resources, supports, teaching and learning throughout the program. The purpose of a curriculum renewal can include:

- Reimagine a program or manage program expansion

- Identify areas of improvement in the curriculum

- Identify up to date and evidence-based goals for graduates

- Identify best practices for teaching and learning as related to the field or profession

- Update and align curriculum with required standards or competencies

- Create pedagogical consistency across a program

- Incorporate inclusive pedagogy

- Develop a process for continuous program improvements or quality assurance

Guiding Process

This is a high-level overview of the process of curriculum renewal. Additional information on each step follows in the table below.

Table 1: Curriculum renewal guiding process steps.

| Steps	Explanation of process
1. Preparation	Identify the why, what, when, and who for the renewal
2. Data Collection	• Gathering of internal data about the program e.g., curriculum mapping, program information, faculty, and student feedback • Gathering of external data about the program e.g., feedback from alumni, community, and stakeholders
3. Data Analysis	Review and analyze the data collected
4. Curriculum Design	Build and approve curriculum using educational model, theories, and framework. Align program and course objectives.
5. Implementation	Implement the plan to address areas of improvement and to maintain quality assurance
6. Evaluation	Evaluate the process and curriculum ongoing
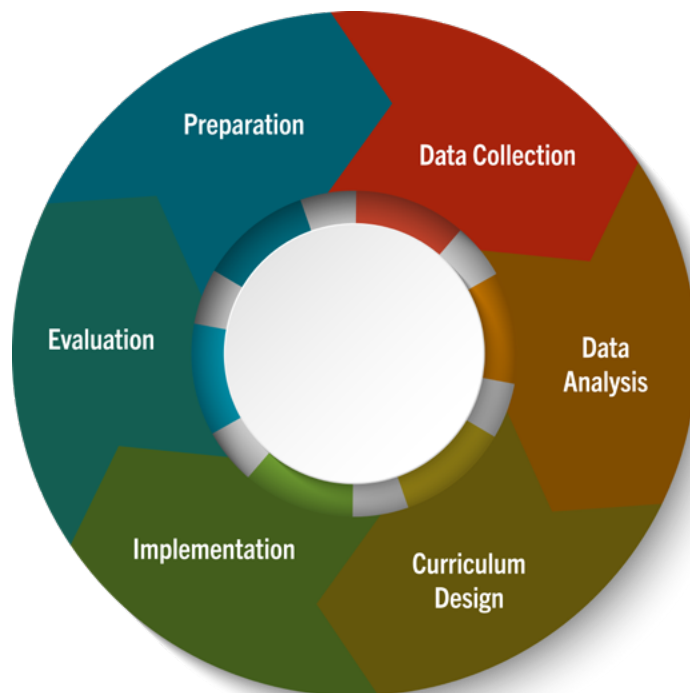
Figure 1: The curriculum renewal process cycle

Steps to the process

1. Preparation

The first step is identifying the need for change and the degree to which the change affects the program. If there are numerous changes or significant updates that are required, then a curriculum renewal may be warranted.

A. Questions to consider in preparation

Why

Why is the renewal taking place? Is it in response to a program accreditation or curriculum review? Is it in response to new industry competencies or requirements? Is it to update an aging curriculum?

What

The scope of the curriculum renewal may change or expand during the process, but it is important to have a starting point. Will the renewal include all courses and aspects of the curriculum? Will the renewal focus on a specialty or segment of courses?

When

What is the time frame for the curriculum renewal? Since processes – including proposal development, consultation, approvals, and implementation processes - can be lengthy for course or program changes, the renewal process needs to take place well in advance of the implementation goal or deadline. The size of the program, the scope of curriculum renewal, and the significance of the proposed revisions may determine the number of years required for the renewal process prior to the approval process.

Who

Prepare for the curriculum renewal by identifying the key individuals required to participate. This may include a curriculum committee, leaders in the faculty - those with vision, strong educational expertise and understanding of pedagogy. The role of the team is to gather and analyze data and facilitate the change in the curriculum.

B. Building a Team

This is an important first step is building a strong curriculum renewal team. The team should not only include members with buy-in and vision for developing a strong revised curriculum, but also reflect a diversity of voices. These members may include:

- Teaching faculty

- Researchers

- Course directors

- Opinion leaders

- Curriculum leaders

- Students

- Indigenous voices

- Other stakeholders engaged in teaching and learning.

The core team (as decided by the program) should have a good understanding of curriculum and pedagogy as well as industry standards or competencies. The core team may consult with other smaller groups on specific areas of the curriculum. It is important to have representatives from the different areas to provide input for an integrated curriculum. Example areas to include in the process are:

- Experiential learning

- Simulation

- Labs

- Research

- Other key program representatives

Stakeholders or active members in practice can have an important role in providing current field perspective. This can be done through consultation or active engagement in the team depending on their experience and flexibility.

Roles and responsibilities of team members

Dean or Director

The Dean or Director initiates and process and provides the details of the why, when, what, and who of the curriculum renewal to the program lead, faculty, and the Centre.

Unit Head

The unit head is the person designed to lead and coordinate the curriculum renewal. This may be the Dean, Director, Department Head, or an alternately designed individual. Some programs have curriculum committees that will be involved in the renewal process to support the program lead. The unit head is the lead in communicating with the unit and the Centre and coordinating the steps in the curriculum renewal process.

The Centre:

A team at the Centre with expertise in curriculum, pedagogy, and evaluation can support the curriculum renewal team throughout the process. For example, resources and support for curriculum mapping, alignment, and evaluation frameworks.

C. Goal setting

In the beginning phases, the following questions will be revisited by the curriculum renewal team and provide a foundation for the renewal process:

1. What are the program goals or expected outcomes of graduates of the program?

2. Is there alignment between the program goals and learning outcomes?

3. What are the program strengths, limitations, and opportunities?

4. What areas of innovation are important to consider so the program is up to date?

5. Is the program current and meeting the needs of stakeholders or employers?

6. Are there sufficient supports, faculty, and resources to make students successful?

7. What (if any) program quality assurance measures are in place?

8. What is the progression of students through the program?

9. Are students graduating with the skills, knowledge, and experience that they need?

Define the goal of the curriculum renewal process. Goals can include:

- Aligning program with industry standards.
- Update the curriculum using technology.
- Expand program to accommodate for growth and significant student increases.
- Bridge from certificate, diploma programs to degree programs; or degree programs to masters and PhD.
- Deliver the curriculum in an up-to-date format or delivery method.
- Revise curriculum to teaching and learning methods to decrease content saturation or information overload; or revise pedagogy.
- Incorporate Indigenous and EDI perspectives into the pedagogy.

2. Data Collection

There are different sources of data to collect about a program that will be helpful for a curriculum renewal process. The type of data to be collected will be dependent on what launched the renewal e.g., a Senate-mandated APR, an accreditation review, acurriculum review, or one initiated internally by a unit.

A. Internal Data

Programs that completed the Senate-mandated APR will have data from the self-evaluation report completed during the process, which may include program outcomes, administrative structures, resources, and support. The relevance of the data for curriculum renewal will depend on the date the report was completed as certain data may be out of date and no longer relevant at the time of renewal. In addition, you will have received data from the Office of Institutional Analysis (OIA) regarding course offerings, enrollments, etc. All this information can be used for the curriculum renewal.

Programs that have completed an accreditation review can utilize the documents submitted to the accreditation body for the curriculum renewal.

Programs that have completed a previous curriculum review or renewal will likely have gathered information such as course outlines or syllabus, assessments, and often a curriculum map. A curriculum map includes the program goals mapped with

the learning outcomes, assessments, and teaching strategies. The mapping can also include competencies or standards set out by industry or professional body. Ideally a curriculum map will highlight strengths, gaps, and content saturation of the curriculum. If your program does not have a curriculum map, The Centre can support the mapping process by identifying important data to include and the structure of the map.

Programs that have not undergone a Senate-mandated APR, accreditation or curriculum review will need to gather internal data to inform the renewal process. Refer to the program action sheet at the end of the handbook for further guidance on types of data and helpful data collection strategies.

Internal data can be gathered in several ways depending on faculty engagement and availability. Course information and content can be gathered in a database where the faculty input their information. Alternatively, or in addition to a database, meetings can be held where faculty share course summaries. The sharing of this information is important in helping faculty understand what is happening across a program. Depending on the program size, this can occur as an entire group or as a curriculum committee. A retreat can be organized by the unit and facilitated by The Centre to gather information for faculty on the courses and program.

B. External Data

External data can be gathered from various sources. Gathering feedback from graduates provides valuable information to inform the strengths and weaknesses of a curriculum. This can be done through surveys or focus groups depending on the program size. Where available, employer feedback can inform the readiness of the graduates from the program.

External stakeholders such as associations, government, and community can provide valuable data on the landscape and emerging trends.

An environmental scan of similar programs, in particular the design of the curriculum, is an important source of external data. If there is a lack of evidence in the same field, there is value in looking at the curriculum design of programs in similar fields.

Refer to the program action sheet at the end of the handbook for further guidance on external data collection.

3. Data Analysis

The internal and external data is then collated and reviewed for themes of gaps and overlap. Strengths are identified with the goal of maintaining these strengths through the curriculum renewal process. The identified gaps provide opportunities to be addressed and resolved in the new curriculum.

4. Curriculum Design

Once the data is collected, analyzed, and the purpose of the renewal is clearly defined, the team can begin to renew and align the curriculum. To build the curriculum, you will want to consider sequencing the core content, educational theories, and curriculum models. There are many curriculum models that provide different approaches to teaching and learning. Examples of common models include problem-based curricula, experiential learning curricula, concept-based, and outcomes or competency-based curricula. A retreat or a series of meetings can be facilitated by The Centre to support the curriculum design process.

5. Approval and Implementation

Course and curriculum changes at the University of Manitoba require Senate approval, and in some cases, approval by the Board of Governors and the Province. The unit is responsible for developing a proposal package, including the completion of any course change and program modification forms, and for consulting internally as appropriate. Proposed changes will move forward through the appropriate governance committees, starting with those at the unit-level. The Office of the University Secretary and the Office of the Vice-Provost (Academic Planning and Programs) can advise on the path of approval depending on the type of change or program.

An important step for the unit to plan for is the implementation of the renewed curriculum. This will include phasing out of the old curriculum and course. For additional information, please visit the links below:

- https://umanitoba.ca/about-um/provost-vice-president-academic/vice-provost-planning-programs/academic-planning
- https://umanitoba.ca/governance/forms

6. Evaluation

Developing a program evaluation framework supports the ongoing quality assurance process. The Centre can assist in identifying the right framework for the academic program. Examples of program evaluation frameworks are: CIPP (Context, Inputs, Process, Product) and Principles Focused Evaluation. Once the framework is established, the process aids in preparing for ongoing evaluation. The Centre can assist in determining the best evaluation framework for your program.

Reports

The Centre will provide a report outlining the process and summary of the curriculum renewal process. It is recommended that the curriculum renewal process be documented, the unit will generate a report including the data, implementation plan, and evaluation framework resulting from the renewal for reference purposes.

Curriculum renewal timeframe

The timeframe for a renewal is approximately one year and the implementation process is subsequent to this. Table 2 shows a suggested timeline in terms of months in a 12-month process. This process may take longer depending on the availability of personnel and the current data from the program. This timeframe does not include the approval process or implementation timelines for changes.

Table 2: Suggested timeline for a 12-month curriculum renewal process

	Tasks	Responsibility	Timeline
Preparation	Initiate consultation	Dean or Director	Time initiated by program
	Identify the why, what, when, and who in preparation of the curriculum renewal	Dean or Director	1st month
	Identification of team: Unit Lead, The Centre, administrative support	Dean or Director	1st month
	Identification of contributing parties: academic (faculty, sessional, teaching assistants etc), student groups, alumni, community stakeholders/partners, employers, program supports and resources (student advisors, librarians)	Unit Head	1st month
	Role clarification & delegation	Unit Head with The Centre	1st month
	Meeting schedule and communication structure	Unit Head	1st month
	Goal setting	The Unit with The Centre	1st month

Data Collection	Gathering of course and program data for curriculum mapping	The Unit in consultation with the Centre as needed	2-4 months
	Meetings with faculty for data and feedback gathering	The Unit in consultation with the Centre as needed	2-4 months
	Meetings with students for data and feedback gathering	The Unit in consultation with the Centre as needed	2-4 months
	Meetings with alumni for data and feedback gathering	The Unit in consultation with the Centre as needed	2-4 months
	Meetings with community stakeholders for data and feedback gathering	The Unit in consultation with the Centre as needed	2-4 months
	Curriculum mapping	The Unit in consultation with the Centre as needed	2-5 months
Data Analysis	Data and feedback summary/analysis	The Unit in consultation with the Centre as needed	5-6 months
	Curriculum mapping analysis	The Unit in consultation with the Centre as needed	5-6 months
Curriculum Design	Course, session/class, assessment objectives	The Unit	7-12 months
	Curriculum alignment review	The Unit	7-12 months
Implementation	Submission for approval of new courses	The Unit	12+ months
	Removal of old courses	The Unit	Depends on the program and when the courses are no longer required
Evaluation	Unit reports	The Unit	12+ months
	The Centre reports	The Centre	12+ months

Program action sheet for data collection

Data collection in a curriculum renewal is both an iterative and a continuous process. Data collection supports improvement of current processes, helps refine program vision and may help address issues that arise as the curriculum renewal process continues. The data collection strategies to be used is typically dependent on disciplinary research strengths and what programs deem fit. For data that is readily available (e.g., from the OIA), additional data collection may not be needed. Practical limits or constraints such as time and resources may influence other forms and types of data collection. Tables 3 and 4 guides for internal and external data collection of the curriculum renewal process is not inclusive, the scope of the curriculum renewal will determine the quantity of data to be collected. Some additional data may be required for graduate programs.

Program data	Data	Evidence	Sources
	Overview of Program	Program outcomes, objectives, and goals	Program mission and vision; strategic plan
	Human Resources	Academic Staff	• Includes names, expertise, and teaching area. • Faculty details including research, publications, and presentations
		List of support staff and roles	Job descriptions or role descriptions/scope
		Committees with terms of reference	Appropriations committee; Quality Assurance committee; Curriculum committee; Nominations committee
		Expected changes in staffing	Program Data
	Admission requirements, policies, and process	Academic and non-academic requirements, process for application and seat selection, recruitment process	Admission demographics (OIA)
	Program policy and procedures	Complaints or grievances; appeals, remediation, or probation;	Program data
	Financial Support	Budget for the program to meet goals e.g, guest lecturers/speakers	Program data

	Support services/ available resources	List support services and description of roles/ purpose and evidence sufficient to support the program/students	Learning support services, counseling, student health, student accommodations, financial aid
		Student accessibility	Student accessibility services
		Library services and library holdings	Library report
	Identify community partners and stakeholders	List and include role in or with the program- program specific	Co-op, practicum, and internship
	Physical Resources	Outline the physical space utilized by the program	Program data
		Computer resources	Physical computer access and university accounts access (e.g., Email, UM Learn etc.)
		Computer resources	Physical computer access and university accounts access (eg. Email, UM Learn etc)
		Equipment and specialized resources (technology)	• Teaching and research equipment • Identify the electronic technologies utilized and role including supports
	Indigenous Achievement	Program's efforts in contributing toward the University's identified priority of Creating Pathways to Indigenous achievement	Program data
	Program data	Efforts towards equity, diversity, and inclusion in both hiring and student selection	Program data
	Academic Integrity	Efforts to promote academic integrity	Student learning activities (e.g., workshops, seminars), and/or unit-specific training/professional development activities

	Professional accreditation bodies	Accreditation requirements and processes	Academic planning and programs
	Program Structure	Course sequencing or progress of program	The sequencing of courses support progression in student learning. Outline pre-requisite courses.
	Curriculum data	Courses with objectives	Syllabus
		Course objectives align with program objectives	Curriculum mapping
		Identify key topics or skills taught in the program required for graduation and entry to profession	Outline courses that teach key topics or skills in the program and how assessed
		(Some programs will have standards or competencies)	Curriculum mapping of pedagogy and assessments
		Curriculum is up to date	Identify how curriculum and course materials are kept current
		Courses (objectives and content) are leveled across the program	Curriculum mapping to demonstrate leveling of student learning outcomes from beginning to graduation
	Opportunities for Interprofessional, Interdisciplinarity, Internationalization, and Experiential Learning	Student opportunities	Co-op programs, research, labs, classroom
	Collaboration, Cooperation, and Community	Student opportunities	Co-op programs, research, labs, classroom

Program feedback	Faculty feedback	Surveys, interviews, focus groups	Supports for teaching and learning, research, and scholarly activities
	Student feedback	Surveys, interviews, focus groups	Supports and resources; program/course satisfaction
	Student progression in the program	Attrition rates: points in the program where students struggle or drop out. Graduation rates (OIA)	Identify challenges students face in progression
	Student admission data	Enrolment trends of 5 years; part time vs full time, gender balance, domestic and international, indigenous students	Office of institutional analysis
	Graduation trends	Trends over past 5 years	Actions taken to address any concerns identified
	Student awards, honors, and publications	Over the past 5 years	Proportion of students on the Dean's Honors list
	Student success (to measure alignment with program goals)	Academic advising, Indigenous Students, international students, learning community	Data for graduate programs and students

Table 4: Sources of external data

Data	Evidence	Sources
Alumni feedback	Surveys, interviews, focus groups	Preparation for profession or graduation outcomes; employability, supports during the program
Community, stakeholders, employers, and industry partners	Surveys, interviews, focus groups	Reputation and perception of the program
Disciplinary faculty peers (other institutions)	Surveys, interviews, focus groups	External peer reviews
Employment and Post-Graduate Opportunities	Employment outcomes and post-graduate opportunities	Stakeholders
Previous review feedback	Recommendations or feedback from previous reviews if applicable	Review report

References/Resources:

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