



FACULTY OF EDUCATION



Academic Unit Planning 2024/2025

Summary Report: Faculty of Education AUP 2024/25

Overview: Academic Unit Planning (AUP) at Memorial University is an iterative and collaborative process that provides academic units an opportunity to reflect and assess its continued growth, relevance, and impact. Comprised of both a self-study and an external review panel with representation from within and outside of Memorial, this summary report synthesizes key findings and action items from the Faculty of Education's most recent Self-Study Report, External Panel Report, and Action Plan.

Background: The Faculty of Education at Memorial University, as the sole Faculty of Education in Newfoundland and Labrador, plays a pivotal role in shaping education at both the K-12 and post-secondary levels, in addition to serving as the primary site of educational research in the province. While this presents unique opportunities to lead educational change, it also brings significant challenges amidst evolving educational demands and growing resource constraints.

While academic unit planning is a very valuable process, there were several extenuating circumstances that should be noted with respect to this AUP cycle for the Faculty of Education. Firstly, the self-study phase of the AUP cycle was conducted during a period of significant institutional and societal change, including the COVID-19 pandemic and significant shifts in leadership both within the Faculty and Memorial more broadly. Secondly, occurring just two months after the arrival of a new Dean of Education in December 2023, the external review panel visit was significantly hampered by inclement weather which resulted in the closure of the university. To their credit, the review panel continued their consultations virtually, holding several online sessions in the weeks following their visit. Unfortunately, this did impact the level of participation in the external review process, particularly with respect to student engagement. This also delayed the submission of their report, which was received by the Faculty of Education in late Fall, 2024.

Overview of Self-Study: The self-study process began in 2021 and involved extensive internal and external consultations, including virtual engagement with faculty, staff, students, and a host of external stakeholders. Data collection efforts included student surveys and focus groups, various reports from the Centre for Institutional Analysis and Planning (CIAP), and document analysis to assess the Faculty's programs, research, and organizational structures. Submitted in December 2023, the self-study highlighted key strengths, such as the Faculty's long-standing commitment to student success, its recent innovations in graduate programming, its continued growth in research collaborations and impact, and the high level of student satisfaction with Faculty programs and services. Challenges were also identified, including a high reliance on contractual teaching staff, balancing ongoing sector demands amidst several high-stakes government reports on education, and the need for additional revenue streams to support growing program offerings.

Overview of External Review: The external review was carried out through site visits (March 2024), virtual stakeholder meetings (March 2024), and an in-depth analysis of the self-study findings. In total, the review panel met with 76 individuals across various groups, including faculty, students, administrative staff, and external partners. The panel commended the Faculty's commitment to high-quality teacher education and noted its importance in being a leader amongst educational stakeholders. It also identified areas for improvement, including creating diverse pathways for students, improving research visibility, and addressing operational challenges.

Faculty Action Plan: The External Report provides valuable insights, and all recommendations were explored by a sub-committee of Faculty Council in developing a draft Faculty Action Plan. The draft action plan was presented to Faculty Council and feedback was provided and incorporated. The resulting Action Plan will lay the foundation for the Faculty's upcoming strategic planning process, which will begin in Fall, 2025. Themes identified within the Action Plan that will require additional attention as the unit moves into strategic planning include strengthening programs and pathways; enhancing knowledge mobilization; expanding community and sector partnerships; and addressing operational and resource-based challenges.