



# Academic Unit Planning

## **GUIDELINES FOR USE OF ACCREDITATION IN AUP**

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## Purpose of Guidelines

This document has been prepared to provide guidance regarding the use of accreditation documentation in Academic Unit Planning (AUP), and the potential alignment of accreditation and AUP processes. The main audience for this document includes academic units that undergo external accreditation, Deans of Record, the Academic Unit Planning Committee, and AUP coordinators.

## Background

A number of Memorial University programs are subject to external accreditation review, and units are encouraged to consider how information gathered for one process can be used to support the other. Academic units participating in accreditation processes may choose to adapt appropriate accreditation documentation for the purposes of the academic unit planning to avoid duplication and are encouraged to align review cycles if that best meets the needs of the unit.

Some aspects of external review are similar to AUP; however, these are distinct processes undertaken for different purposes. While accreditation ensures that established standards are maintained, academic unit planning takes a more holistic approach to analysis that includes graduate and undergraduate programs, research and public engagement, as well as unit administration, space, and infrastructure. AUP produces an action plan that lays out the unit's future direction, taking into account the mission, vision, values and strategic direction of the University. Recognizing that overlap does exist between accreditation and AUP, it is the intent of these guidelines to provide units the flexibility to manage these processes efficiently.

## Alignment with Accreditation Process

Academic units engage in AUP every seven years at the St. John's Campus and Grenfell Campus, and every five years at the Marine Institute. However, upon recommendation of a Dean of Record or Vice-President (Academic), the process may be initiated at a different time by the Academic Unit Planning Committee (AUPC) to align the process with an external accreditation cycle.

Units considering altering their AUP timelines to align with accreditation should discuss this option with their Dean of Record and notify the Academic Unit Planning Committee of this consideration. Changes to AUP timelines must be approved by the Dean of Record, and the AUP Coordinator must be notified of any changes to timelines.

## Use of Accreditation Documentation

In alignment with the [AUP Procedures](#), academic units are encouraged to reference existing documentation to inform their Self-Study Report, and should provide such documentation as appendices if it is deemed relevant to the report. This may include: accreditation reports; accreditation letters; assessment surveys of students, faculty, staff, and alumni; and other related reports or documentation. While requirements for accreditation reporting will differ between disciplines, information from accreditation that may be repurposed for AUP Self-Study reports include:

- Unit Description and Background
- Strategic Objectives
- Overview and data related to undergraduate and graduate programs

- Information related to public engagement and research
- Information related to organizational structure and unit resources
- Unit successes and challenges

## Considerations

Units should consider the following when deciding whether and how to align accreditation and academic unit planning:

1. Conducting an AUP process prior to accreditation may affect preparation for accreditation. Alternatively, conducting the AUP process may identify issues which can be addressed prior to the accreditation self-study being undertaken which may be advantageous.
2. Documentation prepared for accreditation may be referenced for AUP. This may include accreditation reports and/or accreditation letters from the past reviews. This information need not be repeated within the body of the AUP report.
3. AUP has the potential to support recommendations made during an accreditation process.