
Professional Programs Advisory Committee Policy

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. Professional Programs Advisory Committees (PACs) will assist in ensuring the continuing relevancy of St. Mary's University's ("the University") professional programs and their alignment with the University's mandate, strategic goals, and academic plan. Each PAC will help to ensure the overall quality assurance, relevancy and currency of the programs offered by the University with the goal of keeping the University responsive to community needs, employment opportunities, professional bodies, as well as the needs and requirements for graduate education.
- 1.2. PACs provide external expert advice to faculty and administrators on maintaining and/or strengthening professional programming at the University. A unique PAC is required for each professional program and a single PAC may advise multiple related programs.
- 1.3. This is intended to establish consistent criteria and standards for, and guide the formation and operations of, PACs across Academic Council-approved professional program offerings, or clusters of professional programs, at the University.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1. This policy applies to the establishment of PACs for Academic Council-approved professional programs of study at the University.
- 2.2. Each PAC acts in an advisory capacity only. A PAC does not create, establish, or develop new academic courses, programs of study, or policies.
- 2.3. PACs will provide recommendations concerning entrance requirements, standards for programs or services, industry needs related to curriculum, work integrated and experiential learning, other components of the program and learning outcomes, and promote the University's programs.

3. DEFINITIONS

Program is a defined group of courses that lead to a credential approved by the University. A professional program or unit of study may also consist of:

| Approval Authority | Responsible Office | Effective Date | Date Last Revisited | Review Frequency |
|--------------------|--------------------|----------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Academic Council | Academic | Dec 2, 2024 | N/A | Every 5 years |

- a) a unit of study that results in the granting of a degree or a non-degree credential or;
- b) a unit of study that constitutes a major, minor, diploma, or certificate.

Professional Program is a program of advanced education that leads to an occupation governed by a mandatory regulatory body. Members of the profession are licensed so they can practice and must keep their credentials current through additional education mandated by the regulatory body.

4. PROCEDURES

4.1 Dean is responsible for:

- a) developing the PACs Terms of Reference when the committee is formed and in the first meeting of the committee;
- b) reviewing nominations and appointing members to the PAC;
- c) consulting with the PAC Chair on the renewal or replacement of members who resigned from the PAC or whose term has expired;
- d) providing an orientation to new PAC members;
- e) maintaining an up to date, central repository of all documentation for PACs, including membership lists, contact information, meeting agendas, minutes, correspondence, and program related documentation where applicable;
- f) providing administrative support to the PACs and Chairs of PACs, and in collaboration with the PAC Chair, scheduling meetings, preparing and distributing meeting agendas and minutes to the PAC in an accurate and timely manner;
- g) periodic review and evaluation of the performance and effectiveness of PACs.

4.2 The Chair of a PAC, in collaboration with the Dean and with support from department faculty members, is responsible for:

- a) presiding over meetings, and
- b) actioning requests and recommendations on behalf of the PAC to the Dean and keeping members of PAC informed on the status of such requests and recommendations.

4.3 The PAC is responsible for:

- a) providing advice to the program in meeting the needs of its students and of the community it serves; and

- b) advising the program in defining the objectives of a program of study and the learning outcomes needed by students to achieve the program or service objectives.

4.4 The PAC may also play a role as follows:

- a) to advise the program in the development of a curriculum to meet program or service objectives;
- b) to assist in the evaluation of a program of study, the curriculum, and national, provincial, or local requirements where applicable;
- c) to assist the program in identifying work placements and other pathways for students during the academic year and in the placement of students upon graduation;
- d) to advise the program on changes in the labor market that may affect the employability of graduates;
- e) to advise the program on requirements for new courses or new programs of study and services to meet new or emerging needs within the community; and
- f) to raise public awareness of the program in the community and relevant governing bodies, community groups, or industry.

5. MEMBERSHIP

5.1 Length of Term:

- a) The PAC Chair is normally elected for a period of 3 to 5 years and may stand for re-election once.
- b) PAC members are normally appointed for a period between 3 to five 5 years, renewable once.

5.2 Election of Chair

- a) The PAC Chair is elected by voting members of PAC. The term of a PAC Chair may be extended by a majority vote of the PAC, but not exceeding 10 consecutive years.

5.3 Nomination and Appointment of Members

- a) PACs draw their membership from stakeholders including industry, labor organizations, not-for-profit organizations and professional associations.
- b) All PAC members are nominated by the respective program areas, and appointments to PAC will be approved by the Dean.

5.4 Composition

St. Mary's University: External Advisory Committee Policy

- a) Membership of each PAC should be balanced, diverse and inclusive, reflecting the diversity of our community and incorporate the broadest range of qualifications, skills, experiences, and perspectives.
- b) Each PAC normally consists of a cross-section of 6 to 12 voting and non-voting members who have direct interest in, and diverse experience and expertise related to, the profession or discipline addressed by the program.
- c) Voting members include PAC members who are external to the program and the University. Voting members may include alumni but these will not hold the majority seats of the PAC.
- d) Non-voting members may include StMU students and employees (e.g., faculty, staff, administrators), as well as alumni who will serve as resource people. The Dean will approve membership.
- e) One or more student representatives will be invited to attend meetings, but they are non-voting members of the PAC. Normally, a student representative is selected from each year of the program.

6. MEETINGS**6.1 Frequency**

- a) The frequency of meetings will depend on the needs of the program area and are established by the Chair in collaboration with the Dean. However, PACs should strive to meet at least twice per academic year and a minimum of once per academic year.

6.2 Attendance Requirement

- a) The Program's Chair should attend all meetings as a resource person.
- b) PAC members should attend all meetings. If a PAC member misses two consecutive meetings, their membership will be re-evaluated by the PAC Chair, in consultation with the Dean (or designate).

6.3 Conduct of Meeting

- a) The PAC Chair will preside over all meetings; in their absence, an acting Chair will be identified by PAC members.
- b) Notice of meetings, agendas and draft minutes from the previous meeting will be distributed at least two weeks before the meeting to all members of the PAC.

- c) The draft minutes are prepared within 30 days of the meeting taking place and will be reviewed by the Dean (or designate) and the PAC Chair.
- d) The draft minutes are reviewed and approved at the following PAC meeting.
- e) Recommendations from PACs require a motion and a simple majority vote, which consists of more than one half the votes cast by voting members.
- f) The Dean or designate will provide administrative support for all PACs.
- g) The conduct of StMU students and employees in PAC meetings will adhere to all relevant University policies.
- h) Parking and other related hosting costs associated with PAC meetings will be reimbursed by the Office of the Dean of the program area.

6.4 Conflict of Interest

- a) PAC members will not represent their own organization and will not be compensated for their participation.
- b) If a PAC member perceives their personal interests may have an impact on an issue under discussion or consideration at a PAC meeting, they are obligated to recuse themselves from the discussion and recuse themselves from voting on the matter.
- c) PAC members' declaration of conflict of interest will be recorded in the meeting minutes.
- d) If a PAC member has been an StMU employee within the 12 months preceding a PAC meeting, it is deemed a conflict of interest.

6.5 Annual Report to the Dean

- a) The PAC Chair, with support from the Dean's Office, will submit an annual report to the PAC members and the Dean for approval at the end of each academic year. The PAC annual report may include, but is not limited to:
 - i. Number of meetings held;
 - ii. Total number of attendees;
 - iii. Major topics discussed;
 - iv. Motions approved;
 - v. Major activities undertaken;
 - vi. Key recommendations made;

vii. Self-Assessment Summary.

6.6 Self-Assessment

The PAC will assess its own performance and effectiveness through self-assessment activities once every year.

7. DESIGNATED OFFICER

7.1 The Vice President Academic is the Policy Owner responsible for the oversight of this Policy. The Administration of this Policy and the development, subsequent revisions to, and operationalization of any associated procedures is the responsibility of the Office of the Vice President Academic.