

# SYSTEMATIC PROGRAM REVIEW POLICY - SEMINARY

<i>Responsibility of</i>	Seminary Team
<i>Approved by</i>	Faculty Senate
<i>Revision History</i>	May 4, 2023
<i>Next Review</i>	2027

## POLICY OVERVIEW

Systematic Program Review (SPR) is a process the Seminary has been working with since 2021 in an effort to enhance our learning community. As a community committed to the scholarship of teaching, the scholarship of integration and discovery, and the scholarship of service, this process reflects our commitment to be accountable for the programs developed and stewarded by the College and Seminary.

## PRINCIPLES

The principles of clarity and transparency undergird this policy.

## SCOPE

The policy applies to all graduate program reviews.

## POLICY STATEMENT

At Briercrest College and Seminary (BCS), Systematic Program Review (SPR) implies a careful examination of:

- program objectives and outcomes;
- program curriculum and design; and
- program faculty and resources.

The viewpoints of evaluation should be multiple. Review should:

- allow our disciplinary peers to speak to the program content and emphases;
- amplify the students' voice on matters of teaching and outcome; and
- articulate the perspective of our constituency in terms of outcomes and service, including employers where relevant with professional programs.

SPR will benefit our learning community by:

- ensuring that program review occurs in a predictable, coordinated manner;
- encouraging listening to the church, our peers, students, and community about our work;
- requiring the development of skill and practice in forms of evaluation and review; and
- demonstrating with evidence the quality of our programs, the stewardship of our resources, and the outcomes of student and constituency investment.

### *Purpose of Systematic Program Review*

The primary purpose of the Seminary SPR is to evaluate our graduate programs by assessing their alignment with Briercrest's mission and values, by appraising the quality of intellectual, human, spiritual, and vocational dimensions of student learning and formation,<sup>1</sup> and by comparing them with similar programs at other institutions. SPR will encourage departments to improve and incorporate innovations into programs. It will also be used to inform decisions on program revisions, program deletions, and resource allocations by the administration. The review process will provide accountability with respect to our graduate programs.

## **PROCEDURES**

### *Process for Systematic Program Review*

The Seminary Team approves the programs for review and selects the SPR committee. The committee puts together and presents a self-study and analysis to external reviewers. Following the receipt of the external review panel's report, the committee then proposes recommendations and assigns a categorization of the program and reports to the Seminary Team. Upon approval by the Seminary Team the report is presented to the Faculty Senate for approval and the Senate reports to the Board for awareness. The Faculty Senate assumes the lead role in establishing the policies and process for SPR, in monitoring the progress of SPR, and in approving the recommendations for change that issue from SPR. **Therefore, the Seminary Team will keep the Faculty Senate informed and updated throughout the process.**

Programs are typically reviewed every 7-8 years. In January, the Seminary Team will establish a schedule identifying programs that will be reviewed in the next two years. Program coordinators are responsible for their program's SPR process; the program coordinator, or his or her designate, will serve as the chair of the SPR committee. The Dean of the Seminary, in consultation with a program coordinator, may call a review earlier if it is deemed necessary.

The review will be completed by a committee made up of the department chair or program coordinator (chair), and two non-departmental members of the Seminary Faculty. When necessary,

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<sup>1</sup> Association of Theological Schools, Standards of Accreditation, Standard 3.  
<https://www.ats.edu/files/galleries/standards-of-accreditation.pdf>

the Dean of the Seminary and department chair or program coordinator may name an alternate to serve as chair. The non-departmental members should be selected based on familiarity with the discipline, credentials, and the extent to which she or he complements other members of the committee. Ideally, at least one member of the committee will have experience in program review at Briercrest. Other faculty members or administrators who have affinity with the program being reviewed may be considered. Faculty assignments to the various review committees will be provided in a timely manner to the Nominating Committee to avoid overloading any one faculty member when committee assignments are determined.

The Office of the Dean of the Seminary (ODS) will provide personnel support and pertinent information and data to the review committee as needed. In addition to providing information and administrative support, the ODS may be used as a resource for review committee meetings and during the external review site visit.

### *Phase I: Program Self-study*

The program self-study (see [Appendix A – Self-Study Template](#)) will begin immediately after a program review has been approved by the Seminary Team and should be completed by the program coordinator or department chair with as much input as possible from program faculty. The data collection phase of the self-study is due on **September 15**. The self-study will include, but may not be limited to, the following:

- Briercrest Seminary SPR policy and Saskatchewan Quality Assurance Review Standards and Criteria;
- results from student surveys from current students and graduates from the past 7 years;
- information about the program history, key and unique features of the program, and program objectives;
- previous program reviews;
- Compilation of portfolio interview recommendations for the program from the previous 5 years;
- any relevant institutional and departmental documents that will assist in the review; and
- a comparison with similar programs in Saskatchewan, western Canada, and any deemed relevant data from programs in North America.

An analysis of the self-study data (no more than 5,000 words), written by the SPR chair, will accompany the materials of the self-study. When writing the analysis, the format should follow the questions from Appendix A (see below). The committee will then meet to review the self-study and analysis before providing the materials to the External Review Panel (Due date: At least 3 weeks before the site visit by the External Review Panel).

## *Phase II: SPR Committee, External Review and Site Visit*

The SPR committee will meet in August to determine a list of suitable candidates to perform the external review with the goal of finding three reviewers who are qualified, available, and willing to complete the review. Most commonly, these reviewers will be academics within the discipline, but when deemed appropriate could include potential employers and practitioners in the field. The committee should contact and confirm the external reviewers before **September 15**. See “External Review Panel Policy” for more guidelines on selecting an appropriate panel.

Materials should be sent to the External Review Panel at least three weeks prior to the site visit. The materials for the external review panel will include the self-study; an analysis of the self-study data (see [Appendix A](#)) coordinated by the SPR chair; and any other material deemed relevant by the SPR committee.

It is expected that each external reviewer be part of a site visit that will include a tour of the facility, classrooms, and library. Organized interviews will be planned with multiple students within the program, faculty members inside and outside the discipline, and relevant administrators and staff. The spirit of the site visit is to allow the reviewers broad access to the resources and people necessary to complete the review and report. The External Reviewers will be asked to submit their final report within three weeks of their site visit. The report should address the questions (Appendix B) in the SPR policy and make recommendations for improvements or changes to the overall program and curriculum. (Program Review Site Visit Schedule Template – contact the ODS)

**\*Note: at the discretion of the Dean of the Seminary, a desktop review by the External Review Panel may replace an on-site visit.**

\*\*Authorized degrees should have external reviewers follow the “Quality Assurance Review Standards and Criteria” and use the “Institutional Self-Evaluation Program Review Template” (contact the ODS) when completing their evaluations.

## *Phase III: SPR Recommendations and Categorization*

When the External Review Panel has submitted its report, the following steps will be taken:

1. The SPR committee will review the External Panel report, give any final recommendations, and assign a categorization to the program under review (see Appendix C – [“Review Outcomes”](#) below). This should be submitted in writing to the Seminary Team.
2. The chair of the SPR committee and the department chair/program coordinator (if not the chair) will then bring the analysis of the self-study data, the external review report, and the final recommendations and categorization to the Seminary Team. The Seminary

Team will review all submitted documents and vote to approve the committee's program categorization.

3. The chair of the SPR committee will report the Program Review Outcome to the Faculty Senate, along with the outcome of the Seminary Team's vote. Faculty Senate will then vote to accept or deny the recommended categorization. If Faculty Senate accepts the recommended categorization, the Dean of the Seminary or Provost will present the outcome categorization to the Board of Directors for awareness. If the Faculty Senate denies the categorization of the program review, the SPR committee will reconvene to review any suggested changes and go through the approval process again.

#### *Phase IV: Departmental Response*

Once the program has been given a categorization, the program coordinator will create an action plan based on the recommendations given by the external review panel and the SPR committee. The action plan should include the coordinator's rationale for their response to each recommendation.

Every two years, a report on progress and necessary adjustments to the action plan will be submitted by the program coordinator/department chair to the Seminary Dean who will pass these on to the Seminary Team, which may respond as needed.

#### *Timetable*

PHASE I: PROGRAM SELF-STUDY			
Date	Activity	Responsibility Of	Details
First Seminary Team Meeting in January	Seminary Team approves which programs will be reviewed in the next 2-3 academic years.	Office of the Dean of the Seminary	The ODS will present a list of proposed programs due for SPR in the next 2 Academic Years.
February/ March	The Dean of the Seminary and department chair/program coordinator will work together to assign the SPR committee	Program coordinator or department chair. The Nominations Committee should be involved to avoid overloading any one faculty member.	Committee will consist of: 1. Department chair or program coordinator (chair) 2. Two faculty members who do not belong to the department
February/ March	Begin self-study. The self-study data collection is due <b>September 15</b> .	Program coordinator/department chair	Any program-related student surveys should be completed during the winter semester. Contact

			the ODS for any data that may be needed.
Three weeks before site visit	Analysis of self-study data (no longer than 5,000 words)	SPR chair	The analysis and supporting materials are sent to the External Review Panel.

PHASE II: SPR COMMITTEE, EXTERNAL REVIEW AND SITE VISIT			
Date	Activity	Responsibility Of	Details
By September 15	Confirmation of external review panel	SPR committee in collaboration with the relevant department and the Dean of the Seminary.	
January	Site visit with the External Review Panel	SPR committee in collaboration with the ODS.	See "External Reviewers Policy"
Within 3 weeks following site visit	External Review Panel report due.	Sent to chair	
February/ March 30	SPR committee writes final recommendations in response to the External Program Review. The response will include a categorization for the program.	SPR committee	See "Strategic Program Review Outcomes" below for categorizations.

PHASE III: SPR RECOMMENDATIONS AND CATEGORIZATION			
Date	Activity	Responsibility Of	Details
First Seminary Team meeting in April	Department chair/program coordinator presents final recommendations and categorization to	Department chair/program coordinator	Documents to include: 1. Analysis of self-study data to external reviewers 2. External review panel report

	Seminary Team for approval.		3. SPR final recommendations and categorization
April 30 **Authorized programs only	Program review report due to the SHEQAB.	Chair in consultation with the Dean of the Seminary	Report should include: 1. Self-study data 2. Analysis to external reviewers 3. External review panel report 4. Formal response as per SHEQAB standards.
First Faculty Senate meeting after Seminary Team approval	Final recommendations and categorization presented to the Faculty Senate for approval.	Chair	SPR committee's final recommendations and categorization.
June	Inform the Board	Dean of the Seminary or Provost	Categorization of the program

PHASE IV: DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSE			
Date	Activity	Responsibility Of	Details
After Seminary Team Approval	Program faculty create an Action Plan in response to the recommendations and categorization. It should include rationale for their response to each recommendation.	Overseen by program coordinator/ department chair. Includes all members of program.	Action Plan should be a response to all recommendations, including any that will not be implemented. The final action plan will be submitted to the Seminary Team by the program coordinator or department chair in September.
Every 2 years after completed review	Follow up report on program action plan given to Seminary Team.	Report written by program coordinator or department chair, who	

		submits the report to the Seminary Team.	
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### *Appendix A – Self-study Template*

A summary of the program addressing:

- I. The aims, goals and/or objectives of the program;
- II. The anticipated contribution of the program to the mandate and strategic plan of the institution;
- III. Linkages between the learning outcomes and the curriculum design, an indication as to the requirement for a work experience/work-place term for degree completion, and, if so, a description of the purpose and role of the work experience within the program;
- IV. To what extent the curriculum incorporates relevant Canadian content/practices and/or Canadian regulatory and legal frameworks;
- V. To what extent the curriculum addresses the particular demographics of Saskatchewan (e.g., First Nations population);
- VI. Potential areas/sectors of employment for graduates and/or opportunities for further study;
- VII. Delivery methods;
- VIII. Program SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats<sup>2</sup>) analysis.

### *Appendix B – SPR’s Analysis to External Reviewers*

The analysis of the self-study provides a concise and grounded presentation of how well a program is aligned with the mission and values of Briercrest Seminary and is achieving its program objectives. The report should assess the quality of the program, demand for the program, the efficiency with which the program uses resources, and the importance of the program to the furtherance of the Seminary mission.

The report should be presented as a narrative that introduces evidence and commentary relevant to the categories outlined below (but need not be limited to them). It must not exceed 5000 words (not including appendices).

- I. Introduction
  - A. Program History (within 10 years)
  - B. Program’s Key and Unique Features
  - C. Program Objectives
- II. Congruence with the Institution – Does the program support departmental, seminary and institutional mission and objectives?

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<sup>2</sup> From the University of Regina’s “Unit Review Self Study Template”



- A. Briercrest Seminary Mission and Values<sup>3</sup>
    - 1. Does the program perform a clear role in fulfilling the mission?
    - 2. Does the program perform a clear role in fulfilling the values?
  - B. Divisional, and Program Objectives
    - 1. Does the program perform a clear role in fulfilling the objectives of the division and the department?
    - 2. Are the program objectives suitable for the discipline, at the graduate level, and complementary to the seminary-wide objectives?
  - C. Seminary program fit
    - 1. Does the program complement other programs within the Seminary?
    - 2. Does the program have any overlap with other programs in the Seminary, putting them in direct competition with one another?
- III. Quality – Does the program exhibit an acceptable level of quality in the following areas?
- A. Curriculum
    - 1. Does the curriculum provide a broad enough scope of the field relative to the level of degree offered?
    - 2. Does course sequence progress from foundational to advanced levels of content and study?
    - 3. Does the curriculum evidence sensitivity to the cultural context in which students serve and work and/or is it taught with sensitivity to the cultural context in which students serve and work?
    - 4. Do appropriate prerequisite and/or curricular requirements exist to ensure that students are capable of pursuing advanced studies in the discipline?
    - 5. Does the curriculum provide an opportunity for integration, not only of faith but also with other disciplines, and for the student to gain a mature Christian worldview?
    - 6. Does the curriculum adequately meet the program objectives?
    - 7. Does the curriculum compare favourably with similar programs at other institutions? Is the content and level of education appropriate to the degree being offered?<sup>4</sup>
    - 8. Does the curriculum require the appropriate level of analytical research and communications skills needed for life-long learning commensurate with the level of education?
  - B. Faculty
    - 1. Do faculty members have qualifying credentials?
    - 2. Does the program have enough faculty members?

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<sup>3</sup> The ODS can provide electronic and/or print versions of all applicable mission and goal statements.

<sup>4</sup> The ODS will coordinate the compilation of this information.

3. Do faculty members' curricula vitae contain clear emphasis on professional development that is relevant to the program, department, and institutional mission and objectives?
- C. Learning Community
1. Do members (including junior and senior learners) of the program participate in dialogue with each other's work?
  2. Do members of the program form a morally, intellectually, and spiritually supportive and challenging community?
- D. Resources
1. Does the library provide adequate resources to facilitate the program curriculum?<sup>5</sup>
  2. Do the classrooms provide an adequate environment for the stipulations of the curriculum?
  3. Does sufficient equipment exist to accommodate different teaching styles and curriculum objectives?
  4. Does the program have adequate monetary resources (budget, scholarships, bursaries etc.)?<sup>6</sup>
  5. Are there sufficient experiential opportunities for students in the program?
- E. Learning Outcomes
1. Are program objectives being achieved in graduates as evidenced by Portfolios and Exit Interviews, GPAs, Placement Surveys, Internship Evaluations, and other relevant assessment tools?<sup>7</sup>
  2. Do adequate procedures exist for assessing learning outcomes specific to the program?
  3. Do students and stakeholders appear satisfied with program outcomes?
  4. What is the completion/retention rate in the program and how does it compare to other programs?<sup>8</sup>
- IV. Demand – What are the following groups saying about the need for this particular program?
- A. Partners
1. How is the program serving the church?
  2. What is the nature of the program's service to the Christian community?
  3. What organizations have a stake in the program?
  4. How have the partners been allowed to have input into the program?
- B. Enrolment
1. Has there been sufficient demand to sustain the program long term?<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> This information will be provided by the Library Director.

<sup>6</sup> A list of currently available bursaries and scholarship will be provided.

<sup>7</sup> Requested data pertinent to this section will be researched and compiled by ODS where available.

<sup>8</sup> The ODS can generate this data based on current student information.

<sup>9</sup> Current information on incoming program students, current students and graduates will be provided.

- 2. Is there evidence of long-term demand in the future?
  - C. Placement
    - 1. What opportunities have grads had?
    - 2. Have they experienced success?<sup>10</sup>
- V. Efficiency – Are we maximizing the strengths and resources we have in this program?<sup>11</sup>
  - A. Discuss ratios such as faculty to program student, proportion of students in core program classes enrolled in program versus students outside the program.<sup>12</sup>
  - B. Averages such as class size, graduation class size, completion rates, etc.
  - C. What unique resources does the program need to be successful (space, equipment, trips, etc.)?
- VI. Summary and Recommendations

Complete study due 3 weeks before site visit.

\*\*Authorized programs only:

The Dean of the Seminary will craft a formal response to the Saskatchewan Higher Education Quality Assurance Board (SHEQAB) once the self-study and external review have been completed. This response will follow the standards as laid out in the "Institution Self-Evaluation Program Review Template".

*Appendix C – External Reviewers Policy (see ["External Reviewers Policy"](#))*

*Appendix D - Strategic Program Review Outcomes*

The outcomes of the review process will result in one of the following categorical assessments:

Category A – evidences clear strength and support as a long-term, sustainable program which contributes to the mission and values of Briercrest Seminary.

Category B – evidences strength and support as a sustainable program with some improvement necessary to more fully contribute to the mission and values of Briercrest Seminary.

Category C – evidences strength and support as a sustainable program with deficiencies that must be addressed within two years in order to contribute to the mission and values of Briercrest Seminary. After two years, the original SPR committee (where possible) will meet to review if the deficiencies found during the review process are being addressed. The SPR committee will then

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<sup>10</sup> Available data from historic surveys will be compiled and assistance will be given in developing any additional tools to survey graduates to gather the necessary information.

<sup>11</sup> Necessary statistical information for this section can be provided by the ODS.

<sup>12</sup> The requested statistical information will be provided for the program review committee to use as they see fit.

send a report to the Seminary Team to decide on what recommendations should be sent to the Faculty Senate.

Category D – evidences lack of strength and support of Briercrest Seminary's mission and values and is unlikely to improve without significant re-design or new resources. If the Faculty Senate affirms a Category D outcome but the Executive Leadership Team decides not to provide resources, the Faculty Senate will decide if the program will continue for the next two years.

*Appendix E*

<p>Related Forms/Policies</p>	<p><a href="#">External Reviewers Policy</a>  <a href="#">SHEQAB Forms and Publications</a>          Additional SHEQAB forms and templates as used in the College authorization process can be obtained in Office of the Dean of the College</p>
<p>Notification Required</p>	<p>The College and Seminary SPR policies should be reviewed in tandem. When this is not possible, the Office of the Dean of the College or the Office of the Dean of the Seminary is to inform the other party of changes being considered before they are approved, so the corresponding office can determine whether the amendments are also relevant to their school.</p>
<p>This policy is published</p>	<p>Briercrest Website</p>
<p>Contact Information</p>	<p>Dean of the Seminary</p>