

ÉSIS Program Planning Framework

The American Library Association's *Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library and Information Studies* (2008) emphasise the need for "broad-based, continuous program planning, assessment, development, and improvement." Systematic planning entails:

an ongoing, active, broad-based approach to (a) continuous review and revision of a program's vision, mission, goals, objectives, and learning outcomes; (b) assessment of attainment of goals, objectives, and learning outcomes; (c) realignment and redesign of core activities in response to the results of assessment; and (d) communication of planning policies, programs, and processes, assessment activities, and results of assessment to program constituents.¹

The ALA *Standards* further emphasise that:

effective broad-based, systematic planning requires engagement of the program's constituents and thorough and open documentation of those activities that constitute planning. Many programs achieve their planning processes through development of formal planning documents that incorporate explicit targets or deadlines for achievement of planning processes.²

The purpose of this proposal is to outline the general framework for the ÉSIS program planning process—its scope, the activities and actors involved, and the instruments required to carry it out—and to establish timelines and responsibilities for the process.

1. Scope

The program planning process outlined in this proposal encompasses planning for all aspects of the School's mission—teaching and learning, research, and community engagement.

Program planning associated with teaching and learning includes planning for the development and delivery of the curriculum for the master's degree and the graduate diploma, the CO-OP option, experiential learning, directed studies, capstone experiences, and the total student learning experience.

Program planning associated with research includes planning related to the master's thesis option, faculty research, partnerships with other research organizations and projects, and research in the field of information studies at large.

Program planning associated with community engagement includes planning focused on relationships with alumni, members of the profession, professional associations and interest groups, employers of information professionals, volunteer organizations, and the wider communities that they serve.

¹ American Library Association, *Standards for Accreditation of Master's Programs in Library and Information Studies* (Chicago: American Library Association Office for Accreditation, 2008), 4.
http://www.ala.org/accreditedprograms/sites/ala.org.accreditedprograms/files/content/standards/standards_2008.pdf

² *Ibid.*

The proposed framework addresses all phases of the planning cycle—establishing goals and objectives, setting priorities and developing action plans, assessing progress in achieving program goals and objectives, refocusing priorities and refining plans—and establishes timelines and responsibilities for the process.

2. Key Elements

There are six key elements of the proposed framework:

- articulation of mission, goals, and objectives
- liaison with key stakeholders
- analysis of the current environment and emerging trends
- assessment of progress in achieving goals and objectives
- setting priorities for the planning period
- communicating program priorities and plans

2.1 Articulation of Mission, Goals, and Objectives

The program’s mission, goals, and objectives are the keystone of the program planning process.

The mission, goals, and objectives for the program are set within the context of those that have been established for the University³ and the Faculty of Arts⁴.

The mission statement describes what the program does, with whom and for whom it does it, and, in broad terms, how it does it.

Objectives for the teaching and learning aspects of the School’s program are stated in terms of student learning outcomes (the knowledge, skills, and values that students develop during the course of their studies), and meet the requirements for program accreditation set by the American Library Association⁵ and the degree level expectations set by the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance⁶.

Objectives for the research aspect of the School’s program are stated in terms of research outcomes, and focus on contributions made to the advancement of knowledge in the field of information studies and to the development of the information professions.

Objectives for the community engagement aspect of the School’s program are stated in terms of the contributions our faculty, students, alumni, and partners make to strengthening and enriching the network of information professionals and the communities they serve in the National Capital Region and beyond.

³ University of Ottawa, *Destination 2020: The University of Ottawa’s Strategic Plan*.

<http://destination2020.uottawa.ca/documents/destination-2020-strategic-plan.pdf>

⁴ Faculty of Arts, University of Ottawa, *Arts 2015: Strategic and Action Plan*.

http://www.arts.uottawa.ca/eng/pdf/Arts2015_en.pdf

⁵ American Library Association, *op. cit.*, 6.

⁶ Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance, *Quality Assurance Framework* (Toronto: OUCQA, 2012), 33-34. [http://www.cou.on.ca/related-sites/the-ontario-universities-council-on-quality-assura/pdfs-\(1\)/quality-assurance-framework---guide-may-2012](http://www.cou.on.ca/related-sites/the-ontario-universities-council-on-quality-assura/pdfs-(1)/quality-assurance-framework---guide-may-2012)

2.2 Liaison with Key Stakeholders

Identification of key stakeholders in the program and effective liaison with those stakeholders are essential elements in defining and achieving the program's goals and objectives.

The key stakeholder groups include:

- the program's clients (current and prospective students, graduates of the program)
- the administration of the University and the Faculty of Arts
- the administration and faculty of the School
- organizations participating in the CO-OP, experiential learning, and community engagement components of the program
- sponsors and partners in the School's research activities
- current and prospective employers of the School's graduates
- the communities served by the School's students and graduates
- professional associations (local, provincial, and national)
- the information profession at large

Mechanisms for liaison with key stakeholders include:

- representation of the School on University and Faculty of Arts councils and committees
- representation of employers, the profession, and partners on the School's external advisory committees
- representation of students on the Departmental Assembly
- participation of stakeholders in planning sessions, focus groups, information sessions, and consultations in-person and through social media
- surveys of students, graduates of the program, and employers
- participation of faculty and students in professional associations and conferences

2.3 Analysis of the Context: Current Environment and Emerging Trends

Analysis of the current environment within which the program operates (e.g., the administrative policies and financial status of the University and the Faculty of Arts, employment opportunities for graduates, sponsorship and partnership opportunities for research projects) and emerging trends in the information professions, the information industries, information technologies, and the education of information professionals all form essential background to the development of program plans.

Sources of information on the current environment and emerging trends include:

- policy statements, financial planning documents, visioning and strategic planning documents issued by the University and the Faculty of Arts
- employment statistics and projections compiled for various components of the information professions and for the information service and technology sectors
- literature reviews, studies, articles, and symposia on trends in the evolution of the information professions and education for information professionals
- information industry and technology outlooks and forecasts
- surveys of current and prospective employers of graduates of the program
- surveys of alumni
- interviews and focus groups with students, employers, alumni, and representatives of the professions

- “think tank” sessions with faculty members, research partners, and colleagues in the professions

2.4 Assessment of Progress in Achieving Goals and Objectives

The program planning process requires periodic, ongoing assessment of progress against the goals set out in the plan and the achievement of program objectives.

Goals and objectives for all dimensions of the program—teaching and learning, research, and community engagement—must be defined in terms of observable, measurable results. Timelines and reporting procedures must be established for activities and tasks associated with the goals set out in program plans, and progress must be reviewed on a timely basis. Instruments for measuring achievement of program objectives must be designed and implemented, and results need to be reviewed on a regular schedule.

Instruments needed to track progress against goals and assess the achievement of program objectives include:

- action plans (identifying activities and tasks, timelines, responsibilities, and reporting requirements)
- progress reports on action plans
- schedule of sessional course offerings and enrolment
- statistical reports on admissions, enrolment, student grades, CO-OP and experiential learning evaluations, program completion, and post-degree employment
- statistical reports on funding of scholarships and bursaries
- student course evaluations
- surveys of students, graduates of the program, and employers
- summary evaluations of student learning outcomes at the program level as reflected in capstone portfolios and projects
- evaluations of master’s theses
- report on student presentations, poster sessions, and publications
- report on student honours and awards
- exit interviews and interviews with employers
- feedback from advisory committees and focus groups
- report on faculty research support
- report on presentation/publication of faculty research and impact
- report on community engagement activities
- report on faculty honours and awards

Key performance indicators serve to measure the success of the program with respect to critical outcomes. Those key indicators could include:

- enrolment statistics (as an indicator of success in attracting well qualified students to the program)
- capstone evaluations (as an indicator of success in achieving student learning outcomes)
- post-degree employment statistics (as an indicator of success in meeting the needs of employers for well qualified, highly capable graduates)
- publication and citation statistics (as an indicator of the impact of faculty research and publications)

- community engagement participation statistics (as an indicator of success in engaging with the community on issues and activities of mutual interest)

2.5 Setting Priorities for the Planning Period

The program plan must provide a focus on key areas that are critical to the achievement of the program’s goals and objectives, and identify priorities for action.

Priorities need to be focused on actions that will:

- address challenges and opportunities in the current environment
- optimize the effective use of the program’s resources
- enhance the profile of the School within the community and the profession
- leverage the potential of partnerships and collaborations
- give the School a competitive advantage in the context of emerging trends and the future of the field

The priorities established through the program planning process serve as the basis for development of more specific action plans aimed at moving the School forward in reaching its goals. The action plans set concrete objectives, identify tasks and responsibilities, establish firm timelines, and set out the criteria for evaluating success. (See Appendix A: Action Plan Template)

2.6 Communicating Program Priorities and Plans

Transparency and openness in communicating program priorities and plans are essential as a means of engaging stakeholders in support of the program’s goals and the ultimate attainment of its objectives.

Throughout the program planning process—as goals, objectives, priorities, and plans are articulated and developed—stakeholders need to be kept up to date on the status of the planning process, on the issues under discussion, and on the areas of focus that are being given priority attention.

Communications tools that can be employed to inform and engage stakeholders include:

- the ÉSIS web site
- uoCal (calendar of events)
- the ÉSIS monthly newsletter
- the ÉSIS annual report
- social media
- email / electronic discussion groups
- surveys
- committee meetings, information sessions, consultations, and focus groups
- Dropbox / Virtual Campus
- Informal social events

Effective communication with stakeholders also requires the development of a communications plan—identifying specific target audiences, clarifying the communications objective, framing the message, and establishing a timeline and tools for delivery. (See Appendix B: Communications Plan Template)

3. Planning Timelines

The program planning process operates on a revolving four-year cycle, with each of the four years focusing in turn on:

- mission, goals, and objectives
- teaching and learning
- research
- community engagement

(Note: The planning timeline follows the academic year—May 1 through April 30. The first four-year cycle was initiated in 2010-11 (Year 1), with the ÉSIS Strategic Planning Day in March, 2011, focusing on mission goals, and objectives; in Year 2 (2011-2012) the focus was on teaching and learning, with the comprehensive curriculum review; and in Year 3 (2012-2013) the focus shifted to research, with a series of research retreats.)

Year 1: Mission, Goals, and Objectives

Analysis of the context

- Review of current trends in information programs and services
- Review of current trends in the information industries and technology
- Review of current trends in education for information professionals
- Review of feedback from students, alumni, and employers on the preparation of ÉSIS graduates for professional positions/assignments
- Projection of needs for the near- to mid-term future
- Review of University of Ottawa and Faculty of Arts strategic plans
- Review of ALA accreditation standards and OUCQA guidelines relating to mission, goals, and objectives

Assessment of progress in achieving goals and objectives

- Review of data on the key performance indicators for program objectives
- Assessment of the results of action plans for the previous planning period

Liaison with key stakeholders

- Program planning session with key stakeholders to review ÉSIS mission and program objectives

Articulation of mission, goals, and objectives

- Articulation/refinement of ÉSIS mission statement and program objectives

Setting priorities for the planning period

- Identification of priorities to meet future needs/challenges
- Setting goals for the next four-year planning period

Communicating program priorities and plans

- Informing stakeholders of program planning activities, and engaging them in support of the program's goals and objectives

Year 2: Teaching and Learning

Analysis of the context

- Review of ALA accreditation standard for curriculum
- Review of current trends in education for information professionals
- Review of feedback on the ÉSIS curriculum from students, alumni, employers, and faculty

Assessment of progress in achieving goals and objectives

- Assessment of the results of action plans on teaching and learning for the previous planning period

Liaison with key stakeholders

- Consultation with the Curriculum Advisory Committee

Assessment of progress in achieving goals and objectives

- Assessment of capstone results with respect to program-level student learning outcomes
- Review of core courses
- Review of elective courses
- Review of CO-OP and capstone options

Setting priorities for the planning period

- Setting priorities and timelines for changes to the curriculum

Communicating program priorities and plans

- Informing stakeholders of program planning activities relating to teaching and learning, and engaging them in support of the plan's goals and objectives

Year 3: Research

Analysis of the context

- Compilation of research proposals/projects currently underway within the ÉSIS research community (faculty, students, research partners, associates)
- Review of current trends in research in the field of information studies
- Review of University of Ottawa Strategic Areas of Development in Research⁷

Assessment of progress in achieving goals and objectives

- Assessment of the results of action plans on research for the previous planning period

Liaison with key stakeholders

- Survey of key stakeholders for their views on priority areas for research
- Meeting to discuss current perspectives and focus within the ÉSIS research community

Setting priorities for the planning period

- Identification of opportunities for concentration, coordinated initiatives, and synergies

Communicating program priorities and plans

- Informing stakeholders of program planning activities relating to research, and engaging them in support of the plan's goals and objectives

Year 4: Community Engagement

Analysis of the context

- Review of University of Ottawa and Faculty of Arts goals and priorities for community engagement
- Review of feedback on community engagement from students, alumni, faculty, and the community

Assessment of progress in achieving goals and objectives

- Assessment of the results of action plans on community engagement for the previous planning period

Liaison with key stakeholders

- Meeting to discuss needs, opportunities, and expectations for community engagement

⁷ <http://www.research.uottawa.ca/excellence-sadr.html>

Setting priorities for the planning period

- Identification of priorities for promoting community engagement

Communicating program priorities and plans

- Informing stakeholders of program planning activities relating to community engagement, and engaging them in support of the plan's goals and objectives

4. Responsibilities

The committee structure for coordination of the program planning process is as follows:

Program Committee

- └ External Advisory Committee
- └ Accreditation Advisory Committee
- └ Accreditation Working Committee
- └ Accreditation Document Development Committee
- └ Program Objectives Working Group
- └ Governance Working Group
- └ Publicity and Student Recruitment Working Group
- └ Student Association Faculty Advisor
- └ ***Program Subcommittee I: Teaching and Learning***
 - └ Curriculum Advisory Committee
 - └ Curriculum Working Group
 - └ i-Portfolio Working Group
 - └ Case Problems Working Group
 - └ CO-OP Program Coordinator
- └ ***Program Subcommittee II: Research***
 - └ Research Retreat Subgroups
 - └ Research Seminar Series Coordinator
- └ ***Program Subcommittee III: Community Engagement***
 - └ Mentoring Project Coordinator

(Note: The committees, subcommittees, working groups, coordinators, and advisors listed above may have additional responsibilities that fall outside the scope of program planning. This proposed framework covers only those responsibilities that are directly related to program planning. Likewise, the "reporting lines" indicated above pertain only to the program planning responsibilities assumed by working groups, coordinators, and advisors; they are not intended to impose reporting lines in relation to matters that fall outside the scope of program planning.)

4.1 Program Committee

The Program Committee is responsible for the overall coordination of program planning for the School.

The Committee's program planning responsibilities include:

- coordinating activities aimed at articulating/refining the School's mission, goals, and objectives
- liaison with the ÉSIS External Advisory Committee on matters relating to program planning

- coordinating program planning data collection instruments and reports
- assessing progress in achieving program goals and objectives
- coordinating program-wide planning sessions
- recommending program planning priorities to the ÉSIS Departmental Assembly
- coordinating communications on program priorities and plans

4.2 Program Subcommittees

Each of the three Program Subcommittees is responsible for program planning as it relates to the aspect of the program with which the subcommittee is charged (i.e., teaching and learning, research, or community engagement, respectively).

The program planning responsibilities of the Subcommittees include:

- coordinating activities aimed at defining program objectives for the aspect of the program with which the subcommittee is charged
- liaison with relevant external advisory committees on program planning matters pertaining to the broader aspect of the program with which the subcommittee is charged
- developing program planning data collection instruments and reports pertaining to the subcommittee's charge
- coordinating planning sessions pertaining to the subcommittee's charge
- recommending program planning priorities pertaining to the subcommittee's charge to the Program Committee
- coordinating the development and implementation of action plans pertaining to the subcommittee's charge
- coordinating communications on priorities and plans pertaining to the subcommittee's charge

4.3 Working Groups, Coordinators, and Advisors

Working Groups, Coordinators, and Advisors are responsible for developing action plans pertaining to the particular activity with which they are charged.

The program planning responsibilities of Working Groups, Coordinators, and Advisors include:

- liaison with relevant external advisory committees on program planning matters pertaining to the working group, coordinator, or advisor's specific charge
- developing program planning data collection instruments and reports pertaining to the working group, coordinator, or advisor's specific charge
- coordination of planning sessions pertaining to the working group, coordinator, or advisor's specific charge
- recommending program planning priorities pertaining to the working group, coordinator, or advisor's specific charge to the appropriate Program Subcommittee
- developing and implementing action plans pertaining to the working group, coordinator, or advisor's specific charge
- assessing the results of action plans pertaining to the working group, coordinator, or advisor's specific charge
- developing communications plans on action plans pertaining to the working group, coordinator, or advisor's specific charge

4.4 Advisory Committees

Advisory Committees are responsible for advising the Program Committee, or the appropriate Program Subcommittee or Working Group on matters relating to the School's mission, goals, and objectives, and on the School's relationships with its stakeholders, the constituencies it serves, and the wider community.

