

Best Practice Advice for the Preparation of Final Assessment Reports and Implementation Plans Arising from Cyclical Program Reviews

The Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan should include all of the elements that are required under the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF Section 4.2.5 and 4.2.6). Use the checklist below to see the summary of requirements. Remember that the primary users of these reports are the faculty and staff responsible for the program reviewed. They need ready access to the information in these reports to ensure that program changes and improvements are made as a result of the review. The Executive Summary is to be posted on the University website for ready access by a wider audience. (In some institutions, the IQAP may require that the full Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan are posted [leaving out any confidential information], in which case an Executive Summary may not be needed).

- Provide the institutional synthesis of the external evaluation and internal responses and assessments
- Identify any significant strengths of the program
- Identify opportunities for program improvement and enhancement
- Set out and prioritize the recommendations that are selected for implementation
- May include a confidential section (where personnel issues need to be addressed)
- Include an institutional **Executive Summary**, exclusive of any such confidential information, and suitable for publication on the web
- Include an implementation Plan that identifies:
 - Who will be responsible for approving the recommendations set out in the Final Assessment Report
 - Who will be responsible for providing any resources made necessary by those recommendations
 - Who will be responsible for acting on those recommendations;
 - Timelines for acting on and monitoring the implementation of those recommendations

The checklist above is used by the Quality Council when it reviews the Final Assessment Reports and Implementation Plans that it receives from each university.

In addition to these elements, the Quality Council has found that these reports are strengthened if they also include the following information:

- Names and affiliations of the reviewers who conducted the arm's length assessment of the program(s)
- Recommendations that were not selected for implementation
- Name of Committee/Individual with sign-off on the FAR and Implementation Plan

- FAR/IP Approval Date
- Final status of program (e.g. approved to continue; approved to continue with report; admissions suspended; program to be discontinued, etc.)
- Date of next program review

Following are examples of reports that meet these best practice criteria. Note that these are for illustrative purposes only and are not meant to be prescriptive.

FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT & IMPLEMENTATION PLAN for the REVIEW OF THE MICROBIOLOGY (BSc and BSc Co-op) PROGRAMS

In accordance with the University Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), this final assessment report provides a synthesis of the external evaluation and the internal response and assessments of the undergraduate programs delivered by the Department of Microbiology. This report identifies the significant strengths of the program, together with opportunities for program improvement and enhancement, and it sets out and prioritizes the recommendations that have been selected for implementation.

The report includes an Implementation Plan that identifies who will be responsible for approving the recommendations set out in the Final Assessment Report; who will be responsible for providing any resources entailed by those recommendations; any changes in organization, policy or governance that will be necessary to meet the recommendations and who will be responsible for acting on those recommendations; and timelines for acting on and monitoring the implementation of those recommendations.

Summary of the Cyclical Program Review of the Department of Microbiology Undergraduate Programs

The Department of Microbiology submitted a self-study to the Director of the Office of Quality Assurance on August 15, 2012. The self-study presented the program descriptions and learning outcomes, an analytical assessment of these two programs, and program data including the data collected from a student survey along with the standard data package prepared by the Office of Institutional Analysis. Appended were the course outlines for all courses in the program and the CVs for each full-time faculty member in the Department.

Two arm's-length external reviewers (Dr. ABC, Professor of Microbiology, University of Alberta and Dr. XYZ, Associate Professor of Microbiology, Dalhousie University) and one internal reviewer (Dr. GHI, Professor of Psychology) selected by the Senate Committee on Quality Assurance from a set of proposed reviewers, were appointed by the Provost. They reviewed the self-study documentation and then conducted a site visit to the University on January 15-16, 2013. The visit included interviews with the Provost and Vice-President (Academic); Associate Vice-President Academic; Director, Office of Quality Assurance; Dean of the Faculty of Science, Chair of the Department of Microbiology, and meetings with a group of current undergraduate students and recent graduates of the program, full-time faculty and support staff. The Review Team also had an opportunity to meet with a small group of employers of microbiology co-op students, and to visit the undergraduate laboratories, library, and the Co-operative Education offices.

In their report (March 2013), the Review Team provided feedback that describes how the Microbiology programs meet the IQAP evaluation criteria and are consistent with the University's mission and academic priorities. The admission standards, curriculum structure and delivery, and teaching methods are appropriate. Further, the program reflects the current state

of the discipline. While the Reviewers found that the program learning outcomes were appropriately mapped to the University's undergraduate degree level expectations, the documentation of how well the students were achieving the learning outcomes was not as well developed. The Department makes effective use of resources that were deemed to be minimally "sufficient". One area for further development is the co-op program where a full-time co-op coordinator was deemed now to be needed. The faculty members are active in research and have secured external funding that is used extensively to support students in the microbiology programs. The Review Team was impressed by the positive attitudes and strong program endorsement displayed by the group of students who were interviewed. The co-op employers interviewed made very positive comments about the overall quality of students who are completing co-op work terms in their worksites and they made some suggestions for some curriculum enhancements to increase the job readiness of students. The Review Team made a number of suggestions to help guide future curriculum reviews. In addition, the Review Team provided recommendations with supporting rationale for future consideration. The following program strengths and weaknesses were noted:

Strengths

- faculty represent a range of sub-disciplines within microbiology allowing for a very rich array of courses in the program
- there is a positive research environment with faculty members productively engaged with undergraduate and graduate students
- high level of student satisfaction with the programs and the Department
- co-op option has attracted outstanding students to the program
- graduates are being accepted at high rates into graduate programs or employment following program completion

Weaknesses

- assessment of learning outcomes is still in an early stage of development
- laboratory space is too limited- especially for the first and second year laboratories; laboratory equipment is not always functioning reliably.
- the learning outcomes for the co-op and non- co-op options need to be revised to distinguish between these two options
- more support is needed to develop co-op employment places for the increasing enrolments in this option.

The Chair of the Department of Microbiology, after consultation with faculty and staff in the Department, submitted a response to the Reviewers' Report (April 3, 2013). The Dean of the Faculty of Science submitted her response to the Reviewers' Report and the Program's Response on April 20, 2013. Specific recommendations were discussed, and clarifications and corrections presented. Follow-up actions and timelines were included.

Summary of the Reviewers' Recommendations with the Department's and Dean's Responses

Recommendations

1. Clearer learning outcomes should be developed to distinguish the co-op and non-co-op options in the program.

The Department plans to review and revise their program learning outcomes for Microbiology by December 2013. The Dean endorsed this response.

2. The range of assessments of learning outcomes should be developed to document more clearly the outcomes of the Program.

The Program recognizes that it is focused primarily on tests, exams and lab exercises at the present time and that there are some additional assessment techniques it could undertake. The Department will invite the Teaching and Learning Centre to provide it with some advice about what other methods of assessment are appropriate for assessing its updated learning outcomes. The Centre will be consulted early in the fall term and recommendations will be developed by the curriculum committee by January 2014.

The Dean endorsed this approach and offered support for two faculty members to attend a professional development workshop related to this topic in the coming year.

3. Purchase/update some additional discipline specific software for student's use in their third and fourth year courses.

The Department will initiate discussions with Technical Support Services (TSC) regarding the installation of updated software on the university computers (or making it available through the network).

The Dean indicated that she would give priority to these updates in her allocation of funds for technology support for the 2013-14 budget year.

4. The part-time co-op coordinator position should be moved to full-time, given the increased (30%) enrolments over the past two years.

The Department fully endorsed this proposal indicating that without a FT coordinator's position, there would not be adequate capacity to add the new positions that they believe they will need in the next two years. The Department indicated that its current budget would not allow for this hire.

The Dean indicated that it would be challenging to meet this request in the immediate budget year but that she would prioritize this for the next budget year. In the meantime she committed to working with the Co-operative Education Director to see if resources in another area of the Faculty or University might be freed up to assist for this current year.

5. The Reviewers recommended that University plan for the updating and improvement of microbiology teaching laboratories and equipment over the next 5 years.

The Department agreed with the reviewers that this is an important priority/ Members committed to serving on a planning committee.

The Dean indicated that updating of science labs is near the top of the list of capital projects to be undertaken in the next 2-4 years. She will be convening a planning task force by the beginning of fall term 2014 on which the Department will have representation.

Implementation Plan:

Sample 1

Recommendation	Proposed Follow-up	Responsibility for Leading Follow-Up*	Timeline for Addressing Recommendation
Develop clearer statements for the learning outcomes of the BSc and BSc co-op programs	A review and revision of all program learner outcomes will be undertaken	Department Chair (working with faculty)	By Spring 2014
Enhance the range of assessment techniques used to assess learning outcomes	Consult with Teaching and Learning Centre Faculty to attend professional development re Assessment of Learning Outcomes New assessment techniques to be determined and phased in	Department Chair and faculty Dean to provide funding to support Department Chair and Faculty	By January 2014 By January 2014 By September 2014
Acquire additional current specific software for students	Plan for installation of the updated software Budget for updates Install upgrades	Department Chair, Director of TSC Department Chair/ Dean TSC	By January 2014 April 2014 By September 2014

Recommendation	Proposed Follow-up	Responsibility for Leading Follow-Up*	Timeline for Addressing Recommendation
Plan for updating and improving laboratory space and equipment	Document the lab space and equipment issues Create planning group Develop Plan and proposal for funding	Department Chair working with Facilities Dept Dean Department Chair, Dean, Provost and Advancement	By March 2014 By Fall 2014 By March 2015

*The Dean of the Faculty, in consultation with the Department Chair shall be responsible for monitoring the Implementation Plan. The details of progress made will be presented in the Deans' Annual Reports and filed in the Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic). Monitoring reports will be posted on the University web site.

ONTARIO UNIVERSITY **Sample 1**
Executive Summary of the Review of the Microbiology (BSc) Program

In accordance with the Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), the Department of Microbiology submitted a self-study (prepared by faculty and students representatives on the Department Curriculum Committee) in August 2012 to the Office of Quality Assurance to initiate the cyclical program review of its undergraduate programs. The approved self-study presented program descriptions, learning outcomes, and analyses of data provided by the Office of Institutional Analysis. Appendices to the self-study contained all course outlines associated with the program and the CVs for each full-time member in the Department.

Two arm's-length external reviewers (Professor, University of Alberta, Associate Professor, Dalhousie University) and one internal reviewer (Department of Psychology), selected from a set of proposed reviewers, examined the materials and completed a site visit January 15-16, 2013. The visit included interviews with the Provost and Vice-President (Academic); Associate Vice-President Academic; Director, Office of Quality Assurance; Dean of the Faculty of Science, Chair of the Department of Microbiology, and meetings with a group of current undergraduate students and recent graduates of the program, full-time faculty and support staff. The Review Team also had an opportunity to meet with a small group of employers of microbiology co-op students, and to visit the undergraduate laboratories, library, and the Co-operative Education offices.

In their report (March 2013), the Review Team provided feedback that describes how the Microbiology programs meet the IQAP evaluation criteria and are consistent with the University's mission and academic priorities. The admission standards, curriculum structure and delivery, and teaching and assessment methods were judged appropriate, reflecting the current state of the discipline, and as effective in preparing graduates to meet defined outcomes and the University's undergraduate degree level expectations. The Reviewers noted that the Learning Outcomes for the program were clearly articulated but that, for future reviews, more work will be required in documenting their achievement. The Program was seen to make effective use of the available resources and to have developed a strong rationale for a new co-op program coordinator to assist in the expansion of the co-op option. The faculty members were seen as active in research and in securing external funding that is used extensively to support students in the microbiology program. The Review Team was impressed by the positive attitudes and strong program endorsement of the students who were interviewed. The co-op employers interviewed made valuable suggestions for curriculum enhancement to support further development of job skills. A number of suggestions were provided to help guide future curriculum reviews. In addition, the Review Team provided several recommendations for consideration for program improvement.

The Chair of the Department of Microbiology and the Dean of the Faculty submitted responses to the Reviewers' Report (April 2013). Specific recommendations were discussed, and clarifications and corrections presented. Follow-up actions and timelines were included. Based on all of the above documentation, A Final Assessment Report and an Implementation Plan were prepared by the Director of the Office of Quality Assurance for the Senate Committee on Quality Assurance (May 2013). These were approved by Senate June 2013.

The program has been approved to continue and is scheduled for its next review in eight years (2019-20).

Prepared by Director, Office of Quality Assurance
July 6, 2013

FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT & IMPLEMENTATION PLAN for the REVIEW OF THE ECONOMICS PROGRAMS (BA, MA, and PhD)

In accordance with the University Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), this final assessment report provides a synthesis of the external evaluation and the internal response and assessments of the programs (BA, MA, PhD) delivered by the Department of Economics. This report identifies the significant strengths of the programs, together with opportunities for program improvement and enhancement, and it sets out and prioritizes the recommendations that have been selected for implementation.

The report includes an Implementation Plan that identifies who will be responsible for approving the recommendations set out in the Final Assessment Report; who will be responsible for providing any resources entailed by those recommendations; any changes in organization, policy or governance that will be necessary to meet the recommendations and who will be responsible for acting on those recommendations; and timelines for acting on and monitoring the implementation of those recommendations.

Summary of the Cyclical Program Review of the Department of Economics Programs

The Department of Economics submitted a self-study to the Director of the Office of Quality Assurance on August 15, 2012. The self-study contained three sections- one for each of the degree programs offered by the Department. Each section presented the relevant program description and learning outcomes, an analytical assessment of the program, and program data including the data collected from student surveys along with the standard data package prepared by the Office of Institutional Analysis. Appended were the course outlines for all courses in the program and the CVs for each full-time faculty member in the Department.

Three arm's-length external reviewers (Dr. ABC, Professor of Economics, University of British Columbia; Dr. LMN, Professor of Economics, McGill University; and Dr XYZ, Professor of Economics, Yale University) selected by the Senate Committee on Quality Assurance from a set of proposed reviewers, were appointed by the Provost. They reviewed the self-study documentation and then conducted a site visit to the University on January 15-17, 2013. The visit included interviews with the Provost and Vice-President (Academic); Associate Vice-President Academic; Director, Office of Quality Assurance; Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Science; Dean of Faculty of Graduate and Post Doctoral Studies; Chair of the Department of Economics, and meetings with groups of current undergraduate, MA and PhD students, full-time faculty and support staff. The reviewers visited the economics teaching and research facilities, library, and University Teaching and Learning Centre.

In their report (March 2013), the Review Team provided feedback that describes how the each of the Economics programs meet the IQAP evaluation criteria and are consistent with the University's mission and academic priorities. The BA program was described as very successful with healthy enrolments and very engaged students. All of the evaluation criteria were met and

exceeded for this program. The Graduate Programs were seen to have more challenges, especially the PhD program. The Reviewers reported that the graduate programs did not have clearly articulated learning outcomes linked to the Graduate Degree Level Expectations and that curriculum issues that were identified in the previous review had not yet been addressed by the Department. Time to completion for students in the master's program (course-based) were judged to be appropriate at two years, but those in the PhD program were not (average time to completion in the PhD program since the last review was 7.3 years). This is in contrast to the Graduate Calendar description of the PhD as a 4-year program. The Reviewers also noted that enrolments had slipped in the PhD program over the past 10 years from 22 to the current enrolment of 6 students. The PhD program advertises four sub-specializations but all of the current students have gravitated towards only one of these. The Reviewers noted that the faculty work very effectively together to coordinate the BA and MA programs, but have not been able to come to an agreement about how to move forward to address the current enrolment crisis in the PhD program or the other program issues that were identified in the last review (e.g. too many courses required, comprehensive examination requirements; timing of qualifying examination; too many sub-specializations). The Reviewers learned from their visit that this PhD program was operating with different program requirements with respect to comprehensive and qualifying examinations than those in place for other PhD programs at the University. PhD students interviewed indicated that it was difficult to get timely feedback from their supervisor on their thesis research- some reported that they had waited up to six months to receive feedback on a thesis chapter.

In sum, the Reviewers found the BA and MA programs were strong and for the most part met the evaluation criteria in the IQAP. The PhD program requires some attention if it is to remain viable.

The following summarizes the programs' strengths and weaknesses:

Strengths

- undergraduate program is very clearly defined and attracts outstanding students who display very high levels of satisfaction with the program
- faculty in the undergraduate program are enthusiastic teachers and innovative in their use of technology in and out of the classroom
- BA Economics graduates are being accepted at good rates into graduate programs or employment following program completion
- master's program graduates go on to other advanced professional training (e.g. accounting) or into employment in the banking/ financial sector
- faculty are productive scholars and attract good levels of support for their research

Weaknesses

- PhD curriculum/program structure issues that arose at the last review are still in evidence- e.g. too many required courses in PhD program; too many comprehensive exams; timing of qualifying exams)
- too few PhD students available to ensure the regular offering of "required" courses
- sub-optimal scholarly community for doctoral students
- lack of clear policies on role of faculty in supervising PhD students

The Chair of the Department of Economics, after consultation with faculty and staff in the Department, submitted a response to the Reviewers' Report (April 3, 2013). The Dean of the Faculty of Arts submitted his response to the Reviewers' Report and the Program's Response on April 20, 2013. Specific recommendations were discussed, and clarifications and corrections presented. Follow-up actions and timelines were included.

Summary of the Reviewers' Recommendations with the Department's and Dean's Responses

Recommendations

1. The faculty should review the curriculum for the MA Program and
 - a) develop clearly articulated learning outcomes linked to the Graduate Degree Level Expectations
 - b) identify appropriate tools for the assessment of these learning outcomes

The Department plans to review and revise their program learning outcomes for Economics MA program by December 2013. The Dean endorsed this response.

2. The Department needs to reduce the number of sub-specializations it offers in the PhD program. All current students are registered in one specialization – the one that lines up best with the faculty funding. Once the focus of the PhD program is determined, learning outcomes should be identified and tied to the degree level expectations. The curriculum should be streamlined to fit with the focus chosen and the courses should be offered on a regular basis. The number and type of comprehensive examinations should be brought into alignment with the practices for other PhD programs in the University.

The Department Chair will put together a small working group of graduate faculty to work on developing a plan to address these concerns and that the plan will be presented to all of the faculty for input and approval. The Chair indicated that he had contacted the Dean of Graduate Studies who offered his assistance to the Department as it develops its plans, particularly with bringing program requirements into alignment with other PhD programs offered.

The Dean of Arts indicated that if progress was not made in addressing these issues in the next six months with a revised program proposal presented to the Senate for approval, he would be recommending that admissions to the PhD program be suspended for at least a year until the Department could address the issues.

3. The Department should address the times to completion issue in the PhD program especially as it relates to role of faculty advising and supervision of PhD students.

The Department response indicated that some of the issues related to times to completion will be remedied by streamlining the program requirements including reducing the number of comprehensive examinations. The Department indicated that it would develop guidelines for faculty advisors that outlined expectations for provision of advice and timely feedback to students.

The Dean responded that there should be more proactive follow-up with those faculty who are not providing timely feedback and advice to students through the annual faculty performance reviews. The Dean of Graduate Studies indicated that his office provides professional development sessions for graduate faculty members to assist them in enhancing their effectiveness as graduate advisors.

The program has been approved to continue with Report in one year on progress in implementing recommendations. The next review is scheduled for 2019-20 (in eight years).

Implementation Plan:

Sample 2

Recommendation	Proposed Follow-up	Responsibility for Leading Follow-Up*	Timeline for Addressing Recommendation
<p>1. Develop clear learning outcomes for the MA program linked to Degree level expectations</p>	<p>A review and revision of all program learner outcomes will be undertaken</p>	<p>Department Chair (working with faculty)</p>	<p>By December 2013</p>
<p>2. Review the current structure of the PhD program to streamline the number of fields; develop Learning outcomes for the revised program tied to Degree Level Expectations</p>	<p>Small working group of department faculty will draft proposed program changes</p> <p>Revisions to go to Senate for approval</p>	<p>Department Chair to lead approval through department</p> <p>Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies</p>	<p>By January 2014</p> <p>By April 2014</p>
<p>3. Review structure and number of comprehensive examinations to align with the practices of the university for doctoral programs</p>	<p>Small working group of department faculty to draft proposed changes in consultation with the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies</p> <p>Revisions to Senate</p>	<p>Department Chair; Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies</p> <p>Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies</p>	<p>By March 2014</p> <p>By April 2014</p>

Recommendation	Proposed Follow-up	Responsibility for Leading Follow-Up*	Timeline for Addressing Recommendation
<p>4. Improve PhD supervision/ advising practices (e.g. more timely response to students)</p>	<p>Department faculty will develop guidelines advising and supervision of graduate students</p> <p>Faculty will be encouraged to attend professional development sessions offered by Faculty of Graduate Studies</p> <p>Dean will monitor faculty performance reports and follow-up where needed</p> <p>Monitor enrollments in the PhD program to assess effectiveness of changes</p>	<p>Department Chair; Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies</p> <p>Department Chair; Dean Faculty of Graduate Studies</p> <p>Department Chair, Dean</p>	<p>By March 2014</p> <p>Annually</p> <p>Annually</p> <p>Within 2 years to determine if program will continue</p>

*The Dean of the Faculty, in consultation with the Department Chair shall be responsible for monitoring the Implementation Plan. The details of progress made will be presented in the Deans' Annual Reports and filed in the Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic). Monitoring reports will be posted on the University web site.

Executive Summary of the Review of the Economics (BA, MA, PhD) Programs

In accordance with the Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), the Department of Economics submitted a self-study in August 2012 to the Office of Quality Assurance to initiate the cyclical program review of its BA, MA and PhD programs. The approved self-study presented program descriptions, learning outcomes, and analyses of data provided by the Office of Institutional Analysis. Appendices to the self-study contained all course outlines associated with the programs and the CVs for each full-time member in the Department.

Three arm's-length external reviewers- all professors of Economics (Prof ABC from University of British Columbia, Dr. LMN from McGill University, Dr. XYZ, Yale University) examined the materials and completed a site visit January 15-17, 2013. The visit included interviews with the Provost and Vice-President (Academic); Associate Vice-President Academic; Director, Office of Quality Assurance; Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Science; Dean of Faculty of Graduate and Post-Doctoral Studies; Chair of the Department of Economics, and meetings with groups of current undergraduate, MA and PhD students, full-time faculty and support staff. The reviewers visited the economics teaching and research facilities, library, and University Teaching and Learning Centre.

In their report (March 2013), the Review Team provided feedback that describes how the each of the Economics programs meet the IQAP evaluation criteria and are consistent with the University's mission and academic priorities. The BA program was described as very successful with healthy enrolments and very engaged students. All of the evaluation criteria were met and exceeded for this program. The Graduate Programs were seen to have more challenges, especially the PhD program. The Reviewers reported that the graduate programs did not have clearly articulated learning outcomes linked to the Graduate Degree Level Expectations and that curriculum issues that were identified in the previous review had not yet been addressed by the Department. Time to completion for students in the master's program (course-based) were judged to be appropriate at two years, but those in the PhD program were not (average time to completion in the PhD program since the last review was 7.3 years). This is in contrast to the Graduate Calendar description of the PhD as a 4-year program. The Reviewers also noted that enrolments had slipped in the PhD program over the past 10 years from 22 to the current enrolment of 6 students. The PhD program advertises four sub-specializations but all of the current students have gravitated towards only one of these. The Reviewers noted that the faculty work very effectively together to coordinate the BA and MA programs, but are still working on how to move forward to address the current enrolment crisis in the PhD program and the other program issues that were identified in the last review (e.g. too many courses required; comprehensive examination requirements; timing of qualifying examination; too many sub-specializations). The Reviewers learned from their visit that this PhD program was operating with different program requirements with respect to comprehensive and qualifying examinations than those in place for other PhD programs at the University. PhD students interviewed indicated that faculty were very slow in providing feedback and approval of dissertation chapters.

In sum, the Reviewers found the BA and MA programs were strong and for the most part met the evaluation criteria in the IQAP. The PhD program requires some attention if it is to remain viable.

Based on all of the above documentation, A Final Assessment Report and an Implementation Plan were prepared by the Director of the Office of Quality Assurance for the Senate Committee on Quality Assurance (May 2013). These were approved by Senate June 2013.

The program has been approved to continue with Report in one year and is scheduled for its next review in eight years (2019-20).

Prepared by Director, Office of Quality Assurance
July 6, 2013