



ONTARIO UNIVERSITIES
COUNCIL on QUALITY ASSURANCE

**SUMMARY OF AUDITORS' REPORT ON THE
SCOPE OF QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY'S RESPONSE
TO THE QUALITY ASSURANCE AUDIT**

NOVEMBER 2015

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**AUDITORS' REPORT ON THE INSTITUTIONAL ONE-YEAR
FOLLOW-UP RESPONSE ON THE QUALITY ASSURANCE AUDIT OF
QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY**

SUMMARY

The Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance (Quality Council) undertook an Audit of Quality Assurance at Queen's University in 2014. As with all such audits, the purpose was to assess the extent to which Queen's University is in compliance with its own Institutional Quality Assurance Processes (outlined in the Queen's University Quality Assurance Processes framework - QUQAP) and to affirm that institutional practices are consistent with the Quality Assurance Framework that governs quality assurance activities at publicly-assisted Ontario Universities.

A team of three Quality Council auditors prepared a report based on a desk audit of documents submitted by Queen's University and a three-day site visit to the institution. The Report on the Quality Assurance Audit of Queen's University was approved by the Quality Council on September 16, 2014 and sent to the University on September 18, 2014.

The Quality Assurance Framework requires that each institution submit a one-year follow-up response to the Quality Council in which it describes the steps it has taken to address the recommendations in the Audit Report. This response is reviewed by the auditors who prepare a report, and summary of that report, for consideration by the Audit Committee and, ultimately, by the Quality Council. Upon approval of the Institutional One-year Response, the Auditor's Report and its summary, the Institutional One-year Response and Auditor's Summary Report are published on the Quality Council website.

The 2014 Audit Report of Queen's University contained eight recommendations (listed below) as well as nine suggestions. Under the Quality Assurance Framework, universities must satisfy audit recommendations, as they identify institutional practices that are not compliant with the university's IQAP. Suggestions are made by the auditors in the spirit of encouraging reflection on how practice might be improved, however compliance is not mandatory.

Recommendation 1 Review Teams should be advised that, in their reports, they are expected to address all the evaluation criteria, for each program under consideration.

Recommendation 2 The QUQAPs should be revised to include the titles of all officers, including their delegates, who fulfill specified QA roles.

Recommendation 3 The Senate Committee on Cyclical Program Review should ensure that each program under review is addressed in its reports to the Provost.

Recommendation 4 The University should undertake to identify all of its academic programs and ensure that they are included in the calendar of Cyclical Program Review.

Recommendation 5 The QUQAPs should be revised to include the full definition of “new program” from the Quality Assurance Framework.

Recommendation 6 The QUQAPs should be revised to clarify the criteria used to define whether proposals should be treated as ‘new programs’, ‘major modifications’ or ‘minor modifications’.

Recommendation 7 The QUQAPs should specify the University official(s) authorized to determine whether a proposal constitutes a new program, a major modification, or a minor modification and thereby determine the process to be followed.

Recommendation 8 The University should take steps to ensure that all programs are reviewed within the eight years required by the Quality Assurance Framework.

CONCLUSION

After reviewing the University’s response to the recommendations and commentary on the suggestions, the auditors find that Queen’s University has complied with all the recommendations in the Audit Report. The auditors wish to commend Queen’s University for its commitment to ongoing improvement to its quality assurance processes.



INITIATIVE CAMPAIGN

September 14, 2015

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Dear Dr. Woolcott:

In reply to your letter dated June 10, 2015 regarding the *Institutional One Year Follow-up Report* to the quality assurance audit at Queen's University I am pleased to provide the following responses to each of the eight recommendations:

RECOMMENDATION 1: Review Teams should be advised that, in their reports, they are expected to address all the evaluation criteria, for each program under consideration.

Modifications have been made to the *Review Team Report Form* (found [here](#)) which highlight the requirement that reviewers are to address all evaluation criteria for each program under review. Both the initial instructions and the section on evaluation criteria have been modified to make this expectation clear. I meet with reviewers at the start of each site visit and stress to them that they should cover each program fully in their subsequent report.

RECOMMENDATION 2: The QUQAPs should be revised to include the titles of all officers, including their delegates, who fulfill specified QA roles.

Please see Section 1.1 of the revised [QUQAP](#) (Queen's University Quality Assurance Processes) as ratified by the Quality Council on June 19, 2015.

RECOMMENDATION 3: The Senate Committee on Cyclical Program Review should ensure that each program under review is addressed in its reports to the Provost.

New processes have been put in place for the Senate Cyclical Program Review Committee (SCPRC) including assigning a first reader to each cyclical program review. The responsibility of the first reader is to do a thorough review and analysis of the file and then report back to the SCPRC on the highlights and deficiencies of the materials. All materials associated with a cyclical program review (self-

study, review team report, internal responses, etc.) are rigorously vetted by the committee and the reports to the provost are carefully crafted to ensure completeness.

RECOMMENDATION 4: The University should undertake to identify all of its academic programs and ensure that they are included in the calendar of Cyclical Program Review.

To address this recommendation, extensive work has been done in coordination with the Office of the University Registrar and individual Faculties/Schools to ensure that all academic programs are included in Queen's Cyclical Program Review schedule. Appendix 2 of the revised QUQAP lists all the programs currently offered at Queen's and the dates they are due for cyclical review. I am pleased to report that Queen's undergraduate medical program will be undergoing its first ever cyclical program review in 2016-17.

RECOMMENDATION 5: The QUQAPs should be revised to include the full definition of "new program" from the Quality Assurance Framework.

Please see Section 1.5 of the revised QUQAP.

RECOMMENDATION 6: The QUQAPs should be revised to clarify the criteria used to define whether proposals should be treated as 'new programs', 'major modifications' or 'minor modifications'.

Please see Sections 1.5 and 3.0-3.4 of the revised QUQAP.

RECOMMENDATION 7: The QUQAPs should specify the University official(s) authorized to determine whether a proposal constitutes a new program, a major modification, or a minor modification and thereby determine the process to be followed.

Please see Section 1.5 of the revised QUQAP.

RECOMMENDATION 8: The University should take steps to ensure that all programs are reviewed within the eight years required by the Quality Assurance Framework.

The CPR schedule (appendix 2 of QUQAP) reflects the requirement that all programs be reviewed within the eight-year cycle. Extensions are now granted only in extremely extenuating circumstances. Work is also being done to harmonize engineering accreditation with the cyclical program review process, which will initially mean a 9-year gap for some programs, but will ultimately result in a shortened review time-span for a number of programs in Queen's Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science.

For your information I have also included an update on Queen's institutional response to the nine suggestions made in the Auditors Report:

SUGGESTION 1: The University should ensure that documents prepared in compliance with QUQAPs are clearly signed and dated by the relevant parties named in the QUQAPs.

Our attention to detail has improved immensely with the hiring of a Teaching and Learning Coordinator in March 2014. All QUQAP documents are now signed and dated.

SUGGESTION 2: The QUQAPs and related documents should be revised to clarify what is expected from the academic units in terms of the length and scope of responses to Review Team Reports.

Communications (memos, emails, etc.) to academic units and relevant deans, requesting their internal responses, have been improved to ensure clarity around the length and scope required.

SUGGESTION 3: Program representatives who are invited to appear at SCPRC meetings should be informed in advance about issues of concern and/or provided with some general questions to assist them in preparing for the meeting.

As we gain more experience with cyclical program reviews it has not been necessary to invite a program representative to a SCPRC meeting. If in the future we do have to ask someone to attend we will definitely keep this suggestion in mind.

SUGGESTION 4: The QUQAPs should be revised to include more specific language about timelines by which Departmental responses as well as Final Assessment Reports and Implementation Plans must be prepared and submitted.

Consideration was given to this suggestion but due to variations with the scheduling of SCPRC meetings, decisions about timelines are made on an individual basis. Generally, department heads and deans are asked to submit their responses to review team reports within 2-4 weeks. In the 2014-15 CPR cycle, all Final Assessment Reports and Implementation Plans have been prepared prior to the start of the 2015-16 academic year. These will be submitted to Quality Council once signed.

SUGGESTION 5: The QUQAPs should be revised to make explicit how reviewers are to be instructed in their roles and by whom.

After review of our QUQAP we decided that it was adequate. Modifications have been made to the QUQAP Guide, including new instructions to review teams and standard letters for faculties to send to reviews in preparation for the site visit.

SUGGESTION 6: The roles of internal reviewers should be clarified, including their responsibilities with respect to the preparation of the Review Team Report Form.

Amendments have been made to the Review Team Report template, the QUQAP Guide and the instructions to reviewers to address the role of the internal reviewer.

SUGGESTION 7: The University should specify the academic unit or units responsible for each program review.

The yearly memos to the relevant deans, initiating the cyclical program review process, specify the academic unit responsible for each program review.

SUGGESTION 8: The University should develop a process for formally discontinuing programs that are no longer operating.

The Senate approved a [policy](#) to formally close programs in April 2014.

SUGGESTION 9: The University should look for ways to simplify review templates.

A working group was established this past summer to review all QUQAP templates. A number of changes have been made resulting in more simplified forms (available on the [QUQAP website](#)). One example is the review team nomination form. Many sections of the form which asked for information already available in the nominees' CVs have been removed.

I trust that this report meets the requirements of the final step in the quality assurance audit process as outlined in the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF 5.2.9; 5.2.10). On behalf of Queen's, I would once again like to thank the Audit Team for their work both in putting together the report and in taking the time and energy to understand Queen's quality assurance processes. The recommendations and suggestions in the audit report have helped us to strengthen our processes.

Sincerely,



Jill Scott
Vice-Provost (Teaching and Learning)