

ONTARIO UNIVERSITIES
COUNCIL ON QUALITY ASSURANCE

Quality Assurance Framework



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 QUALITY ASSURANCE: THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

Quality assurance of university academic programs has been adopted around the world and is widely recognized as a vital component of every viable educational system. Considerable international experimentation in the development of quality assurance processes, along with increasing pressure for greater public accountability, has raised the bar for articulating Degree Level Expectations and learning outcomes in postsecondary education.

In developing the new Quality Assurance Framework for postsecondary education, Ontario universities have shown significant leadership and a firm commitment to cultivating a culture of quality in education. This new quality assurance process is more streamlined, more effective, more transparent, and more publicly accountable. By bringing Ontario's universities into line with international quality assurance standards, the Framework will also facilitate greater international acceptance of our degrees and improve our graduates' access to university programs and employment worldwide. With the implementation of the Framework, Ontario universities place themselves in the mainstream of quality assurance both nationally and internationally.

Care has been taken in developing the new Quality Assurance Framework for Ontario universities to balance the need for accountability with the need to encourage normal curricular evolution. In particular, if quality assurance measures become too onerous or restrictive, they can become impediments rather than facilitators of continuous program improvements. Ontario universities have kept this issue in mind in order to produce a Quality Assurance Framework that supports innovation and improvement while cultivating a culture of transparency and accountability – i.e. quality *assurance* that produces quality *enhancement*.

1.2 QUALITY ASSURANCE IN ONTARIO

Rigorous quality assurance has long been a priority for Ontario's publicly assisted universities. As early as 1968, Ontario conducted external appraisals of new graduate programs. In 1982, Ontario initiated periodic external appraisal of approved graduate programs through the Ontario Council on Graduate Studies (OCGS). By submitting all new and continuing graduate programs to external quality appraisal, Ontario universities were trailblazers in the area of systematic and system-wide quality assurance in higher education.

Ontario remained among the leaders in quality assurance by regularly reviewing its quality assurance programs and procedures. In 1999, the Council of Ontario Universities (COU) commissioned a former chair, Dr. George Connell, a former president of the University of Toronto, to do an external review of the operations of OCGS, which subsequently implemented a number of the recommendations.

In 1996, COU adopted procedures for external auditing of university processes for reviewing undergraduate programs. The audits were to be conducted by the Undergraduate Program Review Audit Committee (UPRAC) and managed by the executive director of OCGS, under the direction of the Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents (OCAV). Much of the impetus for this initiative was the publication of the report of the Task Force on University Accountability (the Broadhurst Report), which also re-affirmed the central role of boards of governors in accountability and the assurance of quality.

OCGS adopted its statement of Graduate University Degree Level Expectations in January 2005. This was followed in December 2005 by COU endorsing the Guidelines for University Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations (UUDLES) developed by OCAV (see [Appendix 1](#)). The Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents subsequently incorporated UUDLES into its UPRAC Review and Audit Guidelines with an

implementation date of June 2008. OCAV's adoption of the Degree Level Expectations set out the academic standards of Ontario's universities. Each university is expected to develop its own institutional expression of the undergraduate and graduate Degree Level Expectations and to have them applied to each academic program.

In 2006–07, the Council of Ontario Universities commissioned a former chair, Dr. Richard Van Loon, a former president of Carleton University, to do a comprehensive analysis of the long-established OCGS procedures. The recommendations in Van Loon's 2007 report included establishing a new quality assurance body under the direction of OCAV and aligning the quality assurance processes for undergraduate and graduate programs.

The new quality assurance body is called the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance (the Quality Council). The Quality Council was established by OCAV in 2010 and its work is supported by an Appraisal Committee and Audit Committee. Its operations are managed by a secretariat, headed by the Executive Director of Quality Assurance. (See [Appendix 2](#) for more information on this organization's Mission, Mandate and Operating Principles.)

Building on well-tested processes, the work of the Quality Council ensures that Ontario continues to have a rigorous quality assurance framework. This Council operates at arm's length from universities and the government to ensure its independence. Moreover, in establishing the Quality Council, OCAV fully acknowledges that academic standards, quality assurance and program improvement are, in the first instance, the responsibility of universities themselves. This Framework recognizes the institution's autonomy to determine priorities for funding, space, and faculty allocation.

1.3 QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK

Over a period of two years, during which there was extensive consultation, OCAV developed this Framework for quality assurance of all graduate and undergraduate programs offered by Ontario's publicly assisted universities. Under this Framework, these institutions have undertaken to design and implement their own **Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP)** that is consistent not just with their own mission statements and their university Degree Level Expectations, but also with the protocols of this Framework. The IQAPs are at the core of the quality assurance process. Furthermore, the universities have vested in the Quality Council the authority to make the final decision on whether, following the Council-mandated appraisal of any proposed new undergraduate or graduate program, such programs may commence.

This Quality Assurance Framework comprises four distinct components:

The **Protocol for New Program Approvals** applies to both new undergraduate and graduate programs. Universities use the protocol when developing new for-credit programs, which are then reviewed by the Appraisal Committee of the Quality Council. This Council has the authority to approve or decline new program proposals.

In accordance with the **Protocol for Expedited Approvals** each institution will be responsible in its IQAP to assure program quality where major substantive changes are made to existing and previously approved programs, and where learning outcomes are not changed in ways that denote a truly new program. Institutions will set out their own procedures for the identification and approval of Major Modifications in their IQAP which will, itself, be subject to initial Quality Council ratification. Institutions will report annually to the Quality Council on the Major Modifications approved that year. Institutions have the option of requesting the Quality Council to review a proposal for Major Modifications, in which case an **Expedited Approval** process would apply.

The **Protocol for the Cyclical Review of Existing Programs** is used to secure the academic standards of existing undergraduate programs of specialization and graduate degree programs and for-credit graduate Diploma programs, and to assure their ongoing improvement. Undergraduate and graduate program reviews may be conducted concurrently and in conjunction with departmental reviews, when institutions so choose.

The **Audit Process** is conducted through a panel of auditors that reports to the Audit Committee of the Quality Council. The panel examines each institution's compliance with its own **Institutional Quality Assurance Process** for the **Cyclical Review of Existing Programs**, as ratified by the Quality Council. The Quality Council has the authority to approve or not approve the auditors' report.

The subsequent four sections of this document outline these four components. The **Definitions** Section ([Framework Section 1.6](#), below) contains definitions of some of the specialized vocabulary used throughout. Readers are encouraged to review this document in conjunction with the [Guide to the Quality Assurance Framework](#) (the Guide) which includes information, guidance and templates designed to assist institutions in implementing the protocols and audit process.

1.4 SCOPE OF APPLICATION OF THE INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES

Every publicly assisted Ontario university that grants degrees and diplomas is responsible for ensuring the quality of all of its programs of study, including modes of delivering programs and those academic and student services that affect the quality of the respective programs under review, whether or not the program is eligible for government funding.

Institutional responsibility for quality assurance extends to new and continuing undergraduate and graduate degree/diploma programs whether offered in full, in part, or conjointly by any institutions federated and affiliated with the university. These responsibilities also extend to programs offered in partnership, collaboration or other such arrangement with other postsecondary institutions including colleges, universities, or institutes, including Institutes of Technology and Advanced Learning (ITALs). For definitions of the inter-institutional arrangements see the Definitions Section.

1.5 RATIFICATION OF THE INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES

Before implementing its IQAP for **New Program Approvals**, **Expedited Approvals**, and **Cyclical Program Reviews**, each university must first submit it to the Quality Council for ratification. The Council will test their consistency with the substance and principles set out in the respective Quality Council protocols. The same process will apply whenever an institution implements any substantive change to its own quality assurance processes. The Quality Council will conduct its subsequent audit of institutional compliance with its ratified Institutional Quality Assurance Process for cyclical program reviews.

1.6 DEFINITIONS

Academic Services: Academic Services are defined as those services integral to a student's ability to achieve the learning outcomes expected from a program. Such services would typically include, but are not limited to, academic advising and counselling appropriate to the program, information technology, library and laboratory resources directed towards the program, and internship, co-operative education and practicum placement services – where these experiential components are a required part of a program. Excluded from academic services are items such as intramural and extramural activities, residence services, food services, health and wellness services, psychological services, financial aid services and career services, except where any of these services are specifically identified to be an integral part of the academic program.

Collaborative Specialization: This is an intra-university graduate field of study that provides an additional multidisciplinary experience for students enrolled in and completing the degree requirements for one of a number of approved masters and/or PhD programs. Students meet the admission requirements of and register in the participating (or “home”) program but complete, in addition to the degree requirements of that program, the additional requirements specified by the Collaborative Specialization. The degree conferred is that of the home program, and the completion of the Collaborative Specialization is indicated by a transcript notation indicating the additional specialization that has been attained (e.g., MA in Political Science with specialization in American Studies).

A Collaborative Specialization must have:

- At least one core one-semester course that is foundational to the specialization and does not form part of the course offerings of any of the partner programs. This course must be completed by all students from partner programs registered in the specialization and provides an opportunity for students to appreciate the different disciplinary perspectives that can be brought to bear on the area of specialization. This course may serve as an elective in the student’s home program.
- Clear and explicit requirements for each Collaborative Specialization. In programs requiring a major research paper, essay, or thesis, the topic must be in the area of the collaborative specialization. In course-only Master’s programs, at least 30% of the courses must be in the area of specialization including the core course described above. Courses in the area of specialization may be considered electives in the home program.
- Only core faculty that are those faculty members in the participating home programs who have an interest and expertise in the area of the collaborative specialization (this may include faculty appointed 100% to an interdisciplinary academic unit – for example, an Institute of American Studies – that provides the anchor for the specialization).
- In place appropriate administrative and academic oversight/governance to ensure requirements associated with the specialization are being met.

Degree: An academic credential awarded on successful completion of a prescribed set and sequence of requirements at a specified standard of performance consistent with the OCAV’s Degree Level Expectations and the institution’s own expression of those Expectations (see [Appendix 1](#)).

Degree Level Expectations: The Degree Level Expectations established by OCAV serve as Ontario universities’ academic standards and identify the knowledge and skill outcome competencies that reflect progressive levels of intellectual and creative development. They may be expressed in subject-specific or in generic terms. Graduates at specified degree levels (*e.g.*, BA, MSc) are expected to demonstrate these competencies. Each university has undertaken to adapt and describe the degree level expectations that will apply within its own institution. Likewise, academic units will describe their institution’s expectations in terms appropriate to its academic program(s). Further information, together with examples for successive degree levels, is provided in the [Guide](#).

Degree Program: The complete set and sequence of courses, combinations of courses and/or other units of study, research and practice prescribed by an institution for the fulfillment of the requirements of a particular degree.

Diploma Programs: Universities may grant diplomas in acknowledgement of students’ participation in either **for-credit** or **not-for-credit** activities at the undergraduate and graduate level. **Not-for-credit** and **for-credit** undergraduate diploma programs are not subject to approval or audit by the Quality Council.

The Quality Council recognizes only three types or categories of **Graduate Diploma** (see definition below and [Guide](#)) and has specific appraisal conditions (and an associated submission [template](#)) applying to each. In each case, when proposing a new graduate diploma, a university may request an **Expedited Approval** process (see definition below).

Type 1: Awarded when a candidate admitted to a master's program leaves the program after completing a certain proportion of the requirements. Students are not admitted directly to these programs.

When new, these programs require submission to the Quality Council for an **Expedited Approval** (no external reviewers required) prior to their adoption. Once approved, they will be incorporated into the institution's schedule for cyclical reviews as part of the parent program.

Type 2: Offered in conjunction with a master's (or doctoral) degree, the admission to which requires that the candidate be already admitted to the master's (or doctoral) program. This represents an additional, usually interdisciplinary, qualification.

When new, these programs require submission to the Quality Council for an **Expedited Approval** (no external reviewers required) prior to their adoption. Once approved, they will be incorporated into the institution's schedule for cyclical reviews as part of the parent program.

Type 3¹: A stand-alone, direct-entry program, generally developed by a unit already offering a related master's (and sometimes doctoral) degree, and designed to meet the needs of a particular clientele or market.

Where the program has been conceived and developed as a distinct and original entity, the institution will use the **Expedited Approval** (see below).

All such programs, once approved, will be subject to the normal institutional cycle of program reviews, typically in conjunction with the related degree program.

Emphasis, Option, Minor Program (or similar): An identified set and sequence of courses, and/or other units of study, research and practice within an area of disciplinary or interdisciplinary study, which is completed on an optional basis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the awarding of a degree, and may be recorded on the graduate's academic record. While requiring recognition in the IQAP, proposals for their introduction or modification do not require reference to the Quality Council unless they are part of a **New Program**.

Expedited Approvals: The Quality Council will normally require only an **Expedited Approval** process where:

- a) an institution requests endorsement of the Quality Council to **declare a new Field in a graduate program**. (Note that institutions are not required to declare fields in either master's or doctoral programs.); or
- b) there are proposals for **new for-credit graduate diplomas**; or
- c) an institution requests it, there are **Major Modifications to Existing Programs**, as already defined through the **IQAP**, proposed for a degree program or program of specialization.

The Expedited Approval Process requires the submission to the Quality Council of a Proposal Brief (see [template](#)) of the proposed program change/new program (as detailed above) and the rationale for it.

¹ "Type 3" Graduate Diplomas now incorporate both types 3 and 4 which had existed in the previous OCGS procedures.

Only the applicable criteria outlined in [Framework Section 2.1](#) will be applied to the proposal. The process is further expedited by not requiring the use of external reviewers; hence Framework Sections 2.2.6 through 2.2.8 (inclusive) do not apply. Furthermore, the Council's appraisal and approval processes are reduced. (See [Framework Section 3](#))

The outcomes of these expedited approval processes will be conveyed to the proposing institution directly by the Executive Director and reported to the Quality Council.

Field: In graduate programs, field refers to an area of specialization or concentration (in multi/interdisciplinary programs a clustered area of specialization) that is related to the demonstrable and collective strengths of the program's faculty. Institutions are not required to declare fields at either the master's or doctoral level. Institutions may wish, through an expedited approval process, to seek the endorsement of the Quality Council.

Graduate Level Course: A course offered by a graduate program and taught by institutionally-approved graduate faculty, where the learning outcomes are aligned with the Graduate Degree Level Expectations and the majority of students are registered as graduate students.

Inter-Institutional Program Categories:

- 1. Conjoint Degree Program:** A program of study, offered by a postsecondary institution that is affiliated, federated or collaborating with a university, which is approved by the university's Senate or equivalent body, and for which a single degree document signed by both institutions is awarded.
- 2. Cotutelle:** A customized program of doctoral study developed jointly by two institutions for an individual student in which the requirements of each university's doctoral programs are upheld, but the student working with supervisors at each institution prepares a single thesis which is then examined by a committee whose members are drawn from both institutions. The student is awarded two degree documents though there is a notation on the transcripts indicating that the student completed his or her thesis under cotutelle arrangements.
- 3. Dual Credential Program:** A program of study offered by two or more universities or by a university and a college or institute, including Institutes of Technology and Advanced Learning, in which successful completion of the requirements is confirmed by a separate and different degree/diploma document being awarded by each of the participating institutions.
- 4. Joint Degree Program:** A program of study offered by two or more universities or by a university and a college or institute, including an Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning, in which successful completion of the requirements is confirmed by a single degree document. (See [Guide](#))

In the case of the **Cotutelle**, since this arrangement relates to an existing, approved program, no separate appraisal or review processes will apply.

For all inter-institutional programs in which all partners are institutions within Ontario, the Quality Council's standard New Program Approval and Cyclical Program Review Processes will apply to all elements of programs regardless of which partner offers them, including Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology and Institutes of Technology and Advanced Learning. For joint programs in which some partners are institutions outside Ontario, the elements of the programs contributed by the out-of-province partner will be subject to the quality assurance processes in their respective jurisdictions. The Quality Council will maintain a directory of bodies whose post-secondary assurance processes are recognized and accepted as being comparable to our own. In cases where such recognition is not available, the Quality Council will determine, on a case-by-case basis, the appropriate action to be taken on quality assurance if the collaboration is to be permitted to proceed.

Major Modifications to Existing Programs: As part of the ratification step, institutions will be required to define, for the Quality Council, within their IQAP, their internal definition of what constitutes a “significant change” in the requirements, intended learning outcomes or human and other resources associated with a degree program or program of specialization. (See [Guide](#))

Major modifications include the following program changes:

- a) Requirements that differ significantly from those existing at the time of the previous cyclical program review;
- b) Significant changes to the learning outcomes;
- c) Significant changes to the faculty engaged in delivering the program and/or to the essential physical resources as may occur, for example, where there have been changes to the existing mode(s) of delivery (*e.g.*, different campus, online delivery, inter-institutional collaboration);
- d) The addition of a new field to an existing graduate program. This modification is subject to an **Expedited Approval**. Note that institutions are not required to declare fields for either master’s or doctoral programs.

Institutions will be responsible for approvals of categories a), b) and c) of Major Modifications using their internal quality assurance processes and for reporting annually to the Quality Council on the programs that have been modified in the past year.

If institutions request a Quality Council review of a Major Modification to an Existing Program, the **Expedited Approval** process will apply.

Mode of Delivery: The means or medium used in delivering a program (*e.g.*, lecture format, distance, on-line, problem-based, compressed part-time, different campus, inter-institutional collaboration or other non-standard form of delivery).

New Program: Any degree, degree program, or program of specialization, currently approved by Senate or equivalent governing body, which has not been previously approved for that institution by the Quality Council, its predecessors, or any intra-institutional approval processes that previously applied. A change of name, only, does not constitute a new program; nor does the inclusion of a new program of specialization where another with the same designation already exists (*e.g.*, a new honours program where a major with the same designation already exists). To clarify, for the purposes of this Framework, a ‘new program’ is brand-new: that is to say, the program has substantially different program requirements and substantially different learning outcomes from those of any existing approved programs offered by the institution. Examples of what constitutes a ‘new program’ are provided in the [Guide](#).

The approval process for the introduction of new undergraduate and graduate programs follows the **New Program Approval Protocol** in [Framework Section 2](#). All Proposal Briefs submitted to the Quality Council will report whether the program is a professional program and/or a full cost recovery program.

Program of Specialization (*e.g.*, a **major, honours program, concentration** or similar): An identified set and sequence of courses, and/or other units of study, research and practice within an area of disciplinary or interdisciplinary study, which is completed in full or partial fulfillment of the requirements for the awarding of a degree, and is recorded on the graduate’s academic record.

It should be noted that:

- a) A program constitutes “full” fulfillment of the requirements for the awarding of a degree when the program and degree program are one and the same;
- b) A program constitutes “partial” fulfillment of the requirements for the awarding of a degree when the program is a subset of the degree program. Typically, a bachelor’s degree requires the completion of a program of specialization, often referred to as a major, an honours program, a concentration or similar.

1.7 ACRONYMS

COU	Council of Ontario Universities
FIPPA	Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
GDLES	Graduate Degree Level Expectations
IQAP	Institutional Quality Assurance Process (See Framework Section 1.3)
ITAL	Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning
MTCU	Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
OCAV	Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents
UPRAC	Undergraduate Program Review Audit Committee
UUDLES	University Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations

2. PROTOCOL FOR NEW PROGRAM APPROVALS

The primary responsibility for the design and quality assurance of new programs lies with institutions, and their governing bodies. The institution is responsible for curriculum design, the development of program objectives, the determination of learning outcomes, and generally for the assembly of human, instructional and physical resources needed. (See [Guide](#))

Each institution will establish an IQAP (see [Framework Section 1.3](#)) that sets out the steps to be taken internally to assemble and provide the information required for New Program Proposals. This proposed IQAP will be submitted to the Quality Council for initial ratification (see [Framework Section 1.5](#)) before it may be implemented.

[Flow Chart 1: Overview of the Protocol for New Program Approvals](#) shows the major steps, within the institution and through the Quality Council, required for the approval of new programs by this protocol.

Institutions will submit all new undergraduate and graduate degree programs, program of specialization and for-credit graduate diploma program proposals to the Quality Council. Each proposal will be appraised by the Council's Appraisal Committee. On the basis of their appraisal, the Council will decide whether to approve or reject the proposals. This requirement applies to all New Program Proposals regardless of whether or not the institution will be applying for provincial funding.

Proposals for new for-credit graduate diploma programs require no external review, and are subject only to an **Expedited Approval**. The **Proposal Brief** for new for-credit graduate diplomas will be subject to inclusion, where applicable, of Framework steps 2.2.1 to 2.2.5, as described below. Since no external review is required, these Proposal Briefs are exempt from inclusion of steps 2.2.6 to 2.2.8. The Council's appraisal process will also be substantially abbreviated.

2.1 EVALUATION CRITERIA

Prior to submitting a Proposal Brief to the Quality Council for appraisal, institutions will evaluate any new graduate or undergraduate programs against the following criteria:

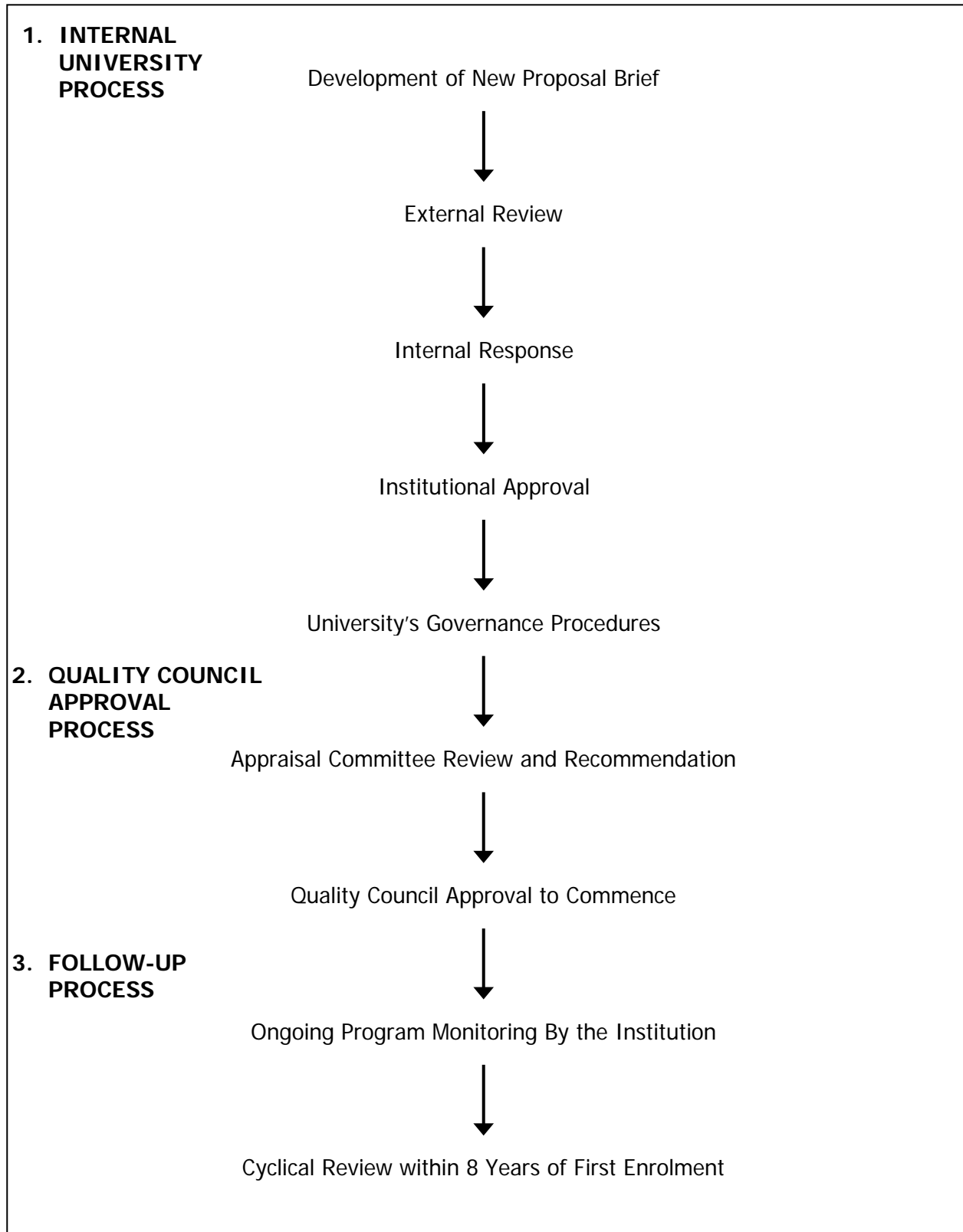
2.1.1 Objectives

- a) Consistency of the program with the institution's mission and academic plans.
- b) Clarity and appropriateness of the program's requirements and associated learning outcomes in addressing the institution's own undergraduate or graduate Degree Level Expectations.
- c) Appropriateness of degree nomenclature.

2.1.2 Admission requirements

- a) Appropriateness of the program's admission requirements for the learning outcomes established for completion of the program.
- b) Sufficient explanation of alternative requirements, if any, for admission into a graduate, second-entry or undergraduate program, such as minimum grade point average, additional languages or portfolios, along with how the program recognizes prior work or learning experience.

FLOW CHART 1: OVERVIEW OF PROTOCOL FOR UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE NEW PROGRAM APPROVALS (STEPS SHOWN FOR PROGRAMS APPROVED TO COMMENCE. NEW GRADUATE DIPLOMAS FOLLOW THE PROTOCOL FOR EXPEDITED APPROVALS SEE FLOW CHART 2).



2.1.3 Structure

- a) Appropriateness of the program's structure and regulations to meet specified program learning outcomes and degree level expectations.
- b) For graduate programs, a clear rationale for program length that ensures that the program requirements can be reasonably completed within the proposed time period.

2.1.4 Program content

- a) Ways in which the curriculum addresses the current state of the discipline or area of study.
- b) Identification of any unique curriculum or program innovations or creative components.
- c) For research-focused graduate programs, clear indication of the nature and suitability of the major research requirements for degree completion.
- d) Evidence that each graduate student in the program is required to take a minimum of two-thirds of the course requirements from among graduate level courses.

2.1.5 Mode of delivery

Appropriateness of the proposed mode(s) of delivery (see [Definitions](#)) to meet the intended program learning outcomes and Degree Level Expectations.

2.1.6

2.1.7 Assessment of teaching and learning (see [Guide](#))

- a) Appropriateness of the proposed methods for the assessment of student achievement of the intended program learning outcomes and Degree Level Expectations (see [Guide](#)).
- b) Completeness of plans for documenting and demonstrating the level of performance of students, consistent with the institution's statement of its Degree Level Expectations (see [Guide](#)).

2.1.8 Resources for all programs

- a) Adequacy of the administrative unit's planned utilization of existing human, physical and financial resources, and any institutional commitment to supplement those resources, to support the program.
- b) Participation of a sufficient number and quality of faculty who are competent to teach and/or supervise in the program.
- c) Evidence that there are adequate resources to sustain the quality of scholarship produced by undergraduate students as well as graduate students' scholarship and research activities, including library support, information technology support, and laboratory access.

2.1.9 Resources for graduate programs only

- a) Evidence that faculty have the recent research or professional/clinical expertise needed to sustain the program, promote innovation and foster an appropriate intellectual climate.
- b) Where appropriate to the program, evidence that financial assistance for students will be sufficient to ensure adequate quality and numbers of students.
- c) Evidence of how supervisory loads will be distributed, and the qualifications and appointment status of faculty who will provide instruction and supervision.

2.1.10 Resources for undergraduate programs only

Evidence of and planning for adequate numbers and quality of: (a) faculty and staff to achieve the goals of the program; or (b) of plans and the commitment to provide the necessary resources in step with the implementation of the program; (c) planned/anticipated class sizes; (d) provision of supervision of experiential learning opportunities (if required); and (e) the role of adjunct and part-time faculty.

2.1.11 Quality and other indicators

- a) Definition and use of indicators that provide evidence of quality of the faculty (*e.g.*, qualifications, research, innovation and scholarly record; appropriateness of collective faculty expertise to contribute substantively to the proposed program).
- b) Evidence of a program structure and faculty research that will ensure the intellectual quality of the student experience.

2.2 INITIAL INSTITUTIONAL PROCESS

The process the institution follows to approve new undergraduate and graduate programs will, at a minimum¹:

2.2.1 Identify authorities

Identify the authority or authorities responsible for the IQAP and its application.

2.2.2 Identify contact

Identify the authoritative contact between the institution and the Quality Council. This will be the sole contact for communication between the institution and the Quality Council about the approval process.

2.2.3 Identify steps

Identify the institutional steps required to develop and approve new programs. The IQAP will also set out the intra-institutional steps that will apply to the quality assurance of other new programs (for example, a new **Emphasis, Option, Minor Program or similar**) which do *not* require Quality Council appraisal and approval.

2.2.4 Evaluation Criteria

Require, at a minimum, the evaluation criteria specified in [Framework Section 2.1](#) above.

2.2.5 Program Proposal Brief

Require the preparation of a **Program Proposal Brief** that addresses the above criteria and meets the requirements of this Quality Assurance Framework together with any further institutional requirements which it chooses to apply (see [template](#) and [Guide](#)). For proposals for new for-credit graduate diplomas, apply only the applicable components of the Evaluation Criteria (see [2.1](#)). Since no external reviewers are required, steps 2.2.6 through 2.2.9, inclusive, in the Initial Institutional Process will not apply.

2.2.6 External reviewers

Establish and describe a process for the selection and appointment of external reviewers and any others who will review the new program proposal. There will be at least one reviewer for new undergraduate programs and two for new graduate programs. External review of new graduate program proposals must incorporate an on-site visit. External review of new undergraduate program proposals will normally be conducted on-site, but may be conducted by desk audit, video-conference or an equivalent method if the external reviewer is satisfied that the off-site option is acceptable. The reviewers will normally be associate or full professors, or the equivalent, with program management experience, and will be at arm's length from the program under review. (See [Guide](#) for a definition of [arm's length](#) and for suggestions on the [selection of reviewers](#).)

2.2.7 Reviewers' report

Excepting occasions when two languages are used or when contrary circumstances apply, the reviewers will normally provide a joint report (see [template](#)) that appraises the standards and quality of the

¹ Institutions are free to add to this list of required components of the new program approval process.

proposed program and addresses the criteria set out in Section 2.1, including the associated faculty and material resources. They will also be invited to acknowledge any clearly innovative aspects of the proposed program together with recommendations on any essential or otherwise desirable modifications to it.

2.2.8 Internal response

Require, in response to the Reviewers' Report(s) and recommendations, responses from both the proposing academic unit and the relevant deans or their delegates.

2.2.9 Institutional approval

Based on the Proposal Brief, the Reviewers' Report(s) and the internal responses to both, and in accordance with the IOAP, the institution will determine whether or not the proposal meets its quality assurance standards and is thus acceptable or needs further modification. The institution may stop the whole process at this or any subsequent point.

2.2.10 Quality Council Secretariat

After completion of any other requirements of its IOAP, the institution will submit the [Proposal Brief](#), together with all required reports and documents, to the Quality Council Secretariat. The submission [template](#) will require information on whether or not the proposed program will be a cost-recovery program. The same standards and protocols apply regardless of the source of funding.

2.2.11 Announcement of new programs

Subject to approval by the university's senior academic officer (e.g. Provost and Vice-President Academic), an institution may announce its intention to offer a new undergraduate or graduate program in advance of approval by the Quality Council. When such announcements are made in advance of Quality Council approval, they must contain the following statement: "Prospective students are advised that offers of admission to a new program may be made only after the university's own quality assurance processes have been completed and the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance has approved the program."

2.3 INITIAL APPRAISAL PROCESS

2.3.1 Secretariat check

The Quality Council Secretariat will confirm that the Proposal Brief and associated reports and internal responses to them (as set out in [Framework Section 2.2](#) above) are complete. If there is missing information or defects of substance, the Secretariat will return the Proposal Brief to the institution for revision or amendment and resubmission. Otherwise the Proposal Brief and accompanying documents will be forwarded directly to the Quality Council Appraisal Committee.

2.3.2 Appraisal Committee reviews and recommends

The Quality Council's Appraisal Committee reviews and appraises the complete file. This committee may seek further information from the institution, in which case it provides reasons for its requests to the institution. In rare instances, the Appraisal Committee may invite further input from an external expert, either through desk audit or site visit. If no further information is required, the Appraisal Committee, through the Quality Council, will advise the institution of its proposed recommendation, including a brief explanation of its reasons. This assessment includes one of the following recommendations:

- a) Approval to commence;
- b) Approval to commence, with report;¹

¹ This typically refers to some provision or facility not currently in place but planned for later implementation, often two to three years in the future. The *with report* condition implies no lack of quality in the program at this point, does not hold up the implementation of the new program, and is not subject to public reference, whether on the web or elsewhere.

- c) Deferral for up to one year during which time the university may address identified issues and report back; or
- d) Against approval.

This step will normally be completed within forty-five days of receipt of the institution's submission, provided that the submission is complete and in good order, and that no further information or external expert advice is required. Where additional information is required by the Appraisal Committee, one of the four possible recommendations (see above) to the Council will be made within a further thirty days of its receipt.

2.3.3 Institution may consult/appeal to Committee

When the recommendation is one of b), c) or d) in 2.3.2 above, the proposing university may, within sixty days, make an appeal to, or request a meeting with, the Appraisal Committee for reconsideration. Normally, the grounds for seeking reconsideration are that the institution will be providing new information, or that there were errors of fact in the Appraisal Committee's commentary, or there were errors of process. Following such communication, the Appraisal Committee revisits and may revise its assessment. It will convey its final recommendation to the Quality Council.

2.3.4 Institution may appeal to Council. Council decides

Having received and considered the Appraisal Committee's final assessment and recommendation, any additional comments from the institution on the assessment, and further, having heard any requested appeal from the institution on matters of fact or procedure, the Council makes one of the following decisions:

- a) Approved to commence;
- b) Approved to commence, with report;
- c) Deferred for up to one year, affording the institution an opportunity to amend and resubmit its proposal brief; or
- d) That the program proposal is declined.

When the Quality Council chooses option c), then the Appraisal Committee suspends the assessment process until the institution has resubmitted its Brief. After this, the Appraisal Committee reactivates its appraisal process (see [Framework Section 2.3.2](#) above). When the Appraisal Committee does not receive a response within the specified period, it considers the proposal to have been withdrawn.

2.3.5 Council reports decision

The Quality Council conveys its decision to the institution through the designated institutional contact, and reports it for information to OCAV and to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU). The Quality Council and the institution post information about decisions on approval to commence new programs on their respective websites, together with a brief description of the program. Only at this point may institutions make offers of admission to the program.

2.3.6 Waiting period before resubmission

To allow time for revisions to proposals, any institution declined permission to proceed at this stage (2.3.4) of the process, or following a denied appeal of the decision (2.3.8), will normally wait until one year has elapsed from the date of the Quality Council's decision before resubmitting a revised version of its proposal. The same waiting period normally applies when a university does not resubmit a deferred program proposal within the specified period.

2.3.7 Subsequent *with report* appraisal

When an institution has been given approval to commence a program *with report*, the Appraisal Committee reviews the subsequently submitted report, conducts whatever consultation it requires, and then makes one of the following recommendations to the Council. That:

- a) The program be approved to continue without condition;
- b) The program may continue accepting admissions but the Council requires additional follow-up and report within a specified period, prior to the conduct of the initial cyclical review. On the Council's receipt of that required report, the procedure returns to this same step in the appraisal process (*i.e.*, 2.3.8).
- c) The program be required to suspend admissions for a minimum of two years. The Quality Council will then specify the conditions to be met in the interim in order for admissions to the program to resume.
- d) The institution may appeal, to the Quality Council, the proposed recommendation of the Appraisal Committee to suspend admissions to the program (2.3.7 c), on the same terms as are set out in Framework Section 2.3.3 above (*i.e.*, the institution will be providing new information; and/or there were errors of fact in the Appraisal Committee's commentary; and/or there were errors of process).

2.3.8 Council hears *with report* appeal. Council decides

Having received and considered the Appraisal Committee's recommendation, and the institution's appeal, if any, the Quality Council may decide either:

- a) To approve the program without condition, or
- b) To approve the program continuing admissions with a further report, or
- c) To require the program to suspend admissions for a minimum of two years. This decision is final. The Quality Council conveys its decision to the institution, and reports it to OCAV and to MTCU for information.

2.4 SUBSEQUENT INSTITUTIONAL PROCESS

2.4.1 First cyclical review

The first cyclical review for any new program must be conducted no more than eight years after the date of the program's initial enrolment and normally in accordance with the university's program review schedule.

2.4.2 Implementation window

After a new program is approved to commence, the program will begin within thirty-six months of that date of approval; otherwise the approval will lapse.

2.4.3 Monitoring

The IQAP will ensure monitoring of new programs.

2.5 FINAL PROCESS

At least one of the undergraduate programs and one of the graduate programs selected for the sample for each institutional audit (See [Framework Section 5.2.2](#)) will be a New Program or a Major Modification to an Existing Program approved within the period since the conduct of the previous audit. The audit cannot reverse the approval of a program to commence.

3. PROTOCOL FOR EXPEDITED APPROVALS

The Protocol for **Expedited Approvals** applies when:

- a) an institution requests endorsement of the Quality Council to **declare a new Field in a graduate program**. (Note that institutions are not required to declare fields in either master's or doctoral programs.); or
- b) there are proposals for **new for-credit graduate diplomas**; or
- c) an institution requests it, there are **Major Modifications to Existing Programs**, as already defined through the IQAP, proposed for degree program or program of specialization.

The **Expedited Approvals** process requires the submission to the Quality Council of a **Proposal Brief** (see [template](#)) of the proposed program change/new program (as detailed above) and the rationale for it. Only the applicable criteria outlined in [Framework Section 2.1](#) will be applied to the proposal. The process is further expedited by not requiring the use of external reviewers; hence [Framework Sections 2.2.6](#) through 2.2.8 (inclusive) do not apply. Furthermore, the Council's appraisal and approval processes are reduced. (See [Framework Section 3.2](#))

[Flow Chart 2: Overview of the Protocol for Expedited Approvals](#) shows the major steps, within the institution and through the Quality Council.

3.1 PROPOSAL BRIEF

The **Proposal Brief** will describe the new program or the significant changes being proposed (including, as appropriate, reference to learning outcomes, faculty and resources), provide a brief account of the rationale for the changes, and address the Evaluation Criteria (see [Framework Section 2.1](#)) where they apply. A [template](#) will be used for submission of the Brief.

3.2 EXPEDITED APPROVAL PROCESS

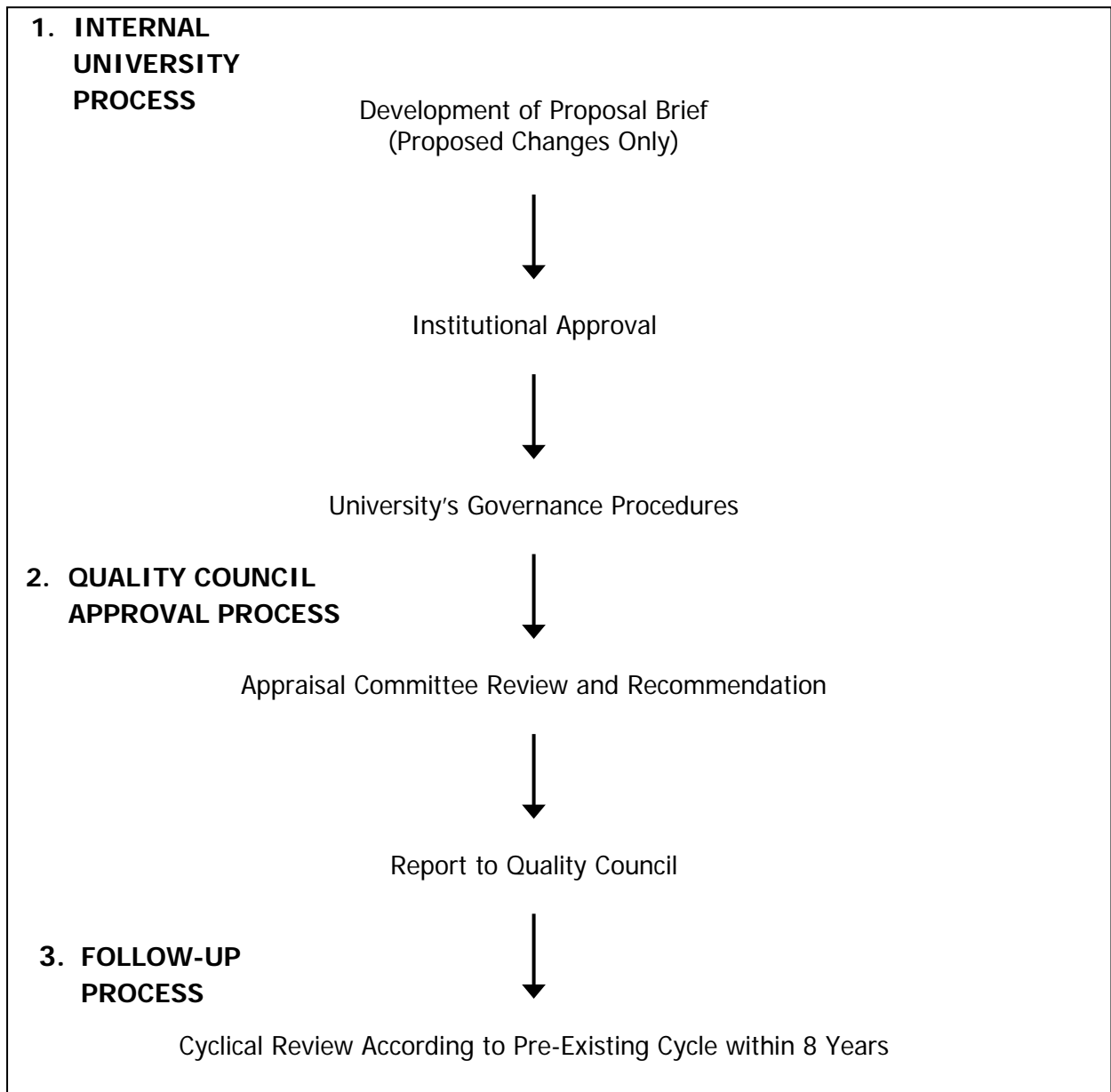
After reviewing the submission, conferring with the proposing institution, and receiving further information as needed, the Council's Appraisal Committee will come to its decision:

- a) That the institution proceed with the proposed changes/new programs;
- b) That it consult further with the institution, over details of interest or concern, regarding the proposed changes/new programs. It can be anticipated that these subsequent consultations will normally be brief and affirmative in their outcome.

The outcomes of these **Expedited Approvals** will be conveyed to the proposing institution, through the identified authoritative contact, directly by the Executive Director and reported to the Quality Council.

The final decision of the Appraisal Committee will be conveyed to the proposing institution, by the Quality Council, within forty-five days of receipt of a final and complete submission.

FLOW CHART 2: OVERVIEW OF PROTOCOL FOR EXPEDITED APPROVALS



Institutional Identification of Major Modifications to Existing Programs

The fundamental purpose of the identification of major modifications to existing programs, and their submission through a robust quality assurance process which does not require but may include the Quality Council, is to assure the institution, and the public, of the ongoing quality of all of the institution's academic programs. The institutions themselves are best placed to determine when a major change is being proposed.

Major modifications typically include one or more of the following program changes:

- a) Requirements for the program that differ significantly from those existing at the time of the previous cyclical program review;
- b) Significant changes to the learning outcomes;
- c) Significant changes to the faculty engaged in delivering the program and/or to the essential physical resources as may occur, for example, where there have been changes to the existing mode(s) of delivery.

Institutions are required, within their IQAP, to provide their internal definition of what constitutes a "significant change" in the requirements, intended learning outcomes or human and other resources associated with the program.

The IQAP will also set out the intra-institutional steps that will apply to the quality assurance of other program changes (for example, changes to an existing Emphasis, Option, Minor Program, or similar which do not require Quality Council appraisal and approval).

Major modifications to existing programs, except when an institution requests endorsement of the Quality Council for the addition of fields to graduate programs, do not require submission of a **Proposal Brief** to the Quality Council. An institution may, at its discretion, request that the Quality Council review a major modification proposal and normally that will occur through an Expedited Approval Process. Each institution will set out, within its IQAP (see [Framework Section 1.3](#)), the information required and steps to be taken internally for its own approval process for such major modifications. The IQAP will also provide for the preparation of the **Proposal Brief** to be submitted to the Quality Council for those cases when the institution may request a Quality Council Review. For a Quality Council review, this Brief requires:

- a) A description of, and rationale for, the proposed changes; and
- b) Application of the relevant criteria outlined in [Framework Section 2.1](#), to the proposed changes.

The institutional process is abbreviated by not requiring the use of external reviewers; hence Framework Sections 2.2.6 to 2.2.8 do not apply.

3.3 ANNUAL REPORT TO THE QUALITY COUNCIL

Each institution will file an annual report (see [Guide](#)) to the Quality Council which provides a summary of major program modifications that were approved through the university's internal approval process in the past year.

4. PROTOCOL FOR CYCLICAL PROGRAM REVIEWS

The Quality Council's Protocol for the conduct of **Cyclical Program Reviews** has five principal components:

- a) Self-study (see [Framework Section 4.2.3](#));
- b) External evaluation (peer review) with report and recommendations on program quality improvement (see [Framework Section 4.2.4](#));
- c) Institutional evaluation of the self-study and the external assessment report resulting in recommendations for program quality improvement (see [Framework Section 4.2.5](#));
- d) Preparation and adoption of plans to implement the recommendations and to monitor their implementation (see [Framework Section 4.2.5](#)); and
- e) Follow-up reporting on the principal findings of the review and the implementation of the recommendations (see [Framework Section 4.2.6](#)).

Degree Level Expectations, combined with the expert judgment of external disciplinary scholars, provide the benchmarks for assessing a program's standards and quality.

Below are the minimum process requirements for the cyclical review of undergraduate and graduate programs whether or not those programs are supported by government funds (see [Flow Chart 3: Overview of the Protocol for Cyclical Program Reviews](#)).

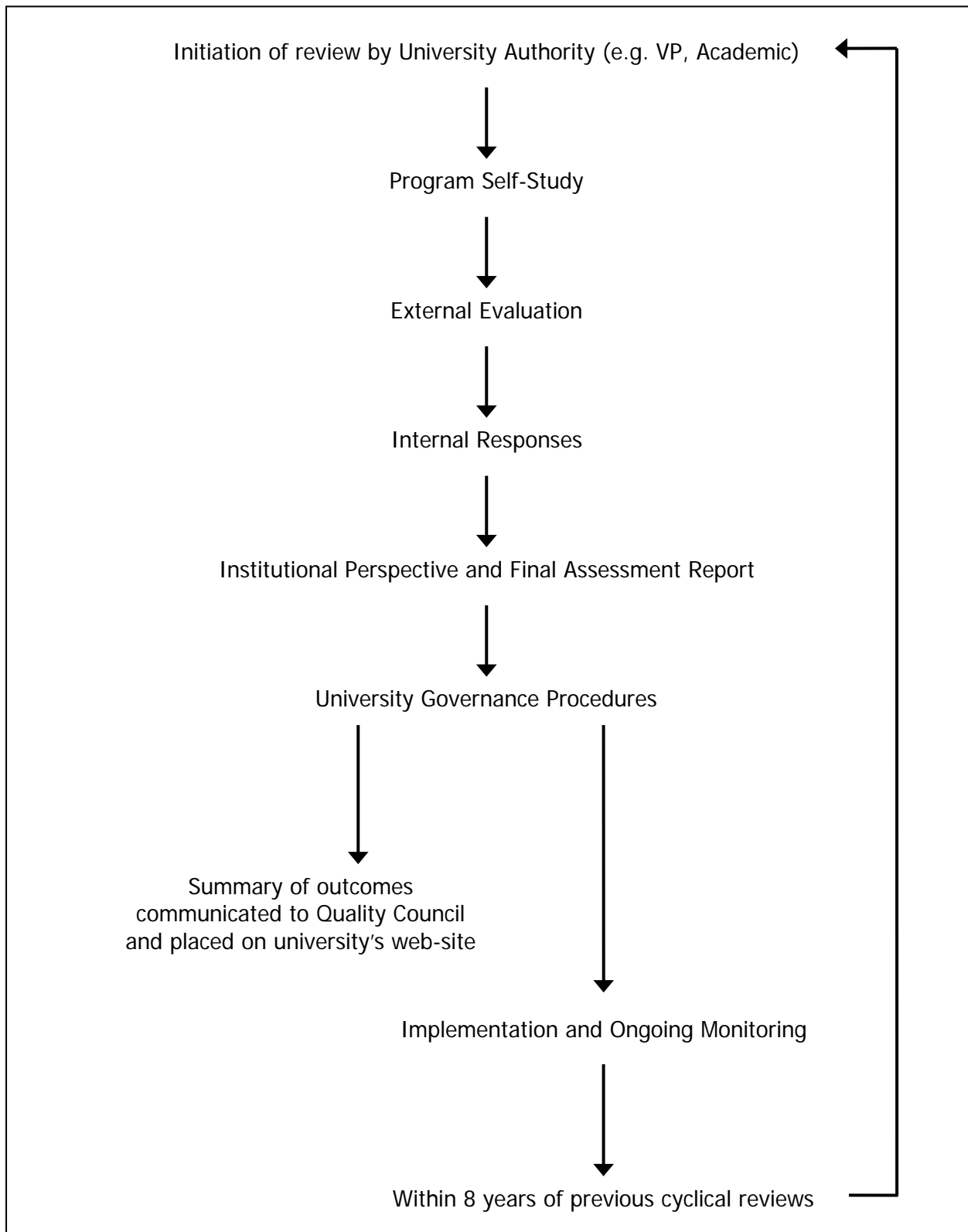
4.1 SCHEDULE OF REVIEWS

Establish a cycle, not to exceed eight years, for the review of the institution's full complement of undergraduate programs of specialization and graduate degree and diploma programs, and indicate how the cycle may coincide with any other internal reviews and professional accreditation (see [Guide](#)). This review cycle should record all independent offerings (different faculty, resources, learning outcomes, delivery mode) of each program.

Institutions have considerable flexibility in scheduling their program reviews. Cyclical program reviews of undergraduate programs may be conducted either independently from, or concurrently with, reviews of graduate programs, and/or departments and other academic units. Nevertheless, it is essential that the quality of each academic program and the learning environment of the students in each program will be explicitly addressed in the reviewers' report(s) as set out in these protocols. The review cycle will include all joint, multi-disciplinary, interdisciplinary, multi-sited and inter-institutional programs, and all modes of delivery.

When an institution chooses to review different program levels (for example, graduate and undergraduate), program modes, or programs offered at different locations, institutions may, in accordance with their respective IQAPs, prepare separate reports for each discrete program or address each program within a single omnibus report provided that the distinctive attributes of each discrete program are reviewed and reported on by the reviewers.

FLOW CHART 3: PROTOCOL FOR THE CYCLICAL REVIEW OF EXISTING PROGRAMS



4.2 INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS REQUIREMENTS

Institutions may enlarge or enhance the quality assurance process requirements set out below to meet their own needs. While accommodating the institution's own culture and practice, the IQAP for cyclical program reviews will:

4.2.1 Authority

- a) Identify the authority or authorities responsible for the IQAP and its application.
- b) Identify the authoritative contact between the institution and the Quality Council.

4.2.2 The Program or programs

Identify the specific program or programs that will be reviewed and identify, where there is more than one mode or site involved in delivering a specific program, the distinct versions of each program that are to be reviewed. (See [Guide](#) for information on reviewing joint programs with other institutions.)

4.2.3 Self-study: Internal program perspective

- a) Include the submission of a self-study document (see [Guide](#)) that is broad-based, reflective, forward-looking and includes critical analysis.
- b) Identify any pertinent information which the institution deems appropriate for inclusion.

Ensure that the self-study will address and document the:

1. Consistency of the program's learning outcomes with the institution's mission and Degree Level Expectations, and how its graduates achieve those outcomes;
2. Program-related data and measures of performance, including applicable provincial, national and professional standards (where available);
3. Integrity of the data;
4. Review criteria and quality indicators identified in [Framework Section 4.3](#);
5. Concerns and recommendations raised in previous reviews;
6. Areas identified through the conduct of the self-study as requiring improvement;
7. Areas that hold promise for enhancement;
8. Academic services that directly contribute to the academic quality of each program under review (see [Guide](#));
9. Participation of program faculty, staff, and students in the self-study and how their views will be obtained and taken into account (see [Guide](#)).

The input of others deemed to be relevant and useful, such as graduates of the program, representatives of industry, the professions, practical training programs, and employers may also be included.

- c) Identify the authority or authorities who will review and approve the self-study report (see [Framework Section 4.2.1](#)) to ensure that it meets the above.

4.2.4 External evaluation: External perspective

- a) Provide for an external evaluation. Normally the evaluation will be conducted by a Review Committee composed of at least:
 1. One external reviewer for an undergraduate program;
 2. Two such reviewers for a graduate program qualified by discipline and experience to review the program(s);
 3. Two such reviewers for the concurrent review of an undergraduate and graduate program;

4. One further reviewer, either from within the university but from outside the discipline (or interdisciplinary group) engaged in the program, or external to the university.

All members of the Review Committee will be at [arm's length](#) from the program under review. The external and institutional reviewers will be active and respected in their field, and normally associate or full professors with program management experience.

Additional discretionary members may be assigned to the Review Committee where the IQAP so provides. Such additional members might be appropriately qualified and experienced people selected from industry or the professions, and/or, where consistent with the institution's own policies and practices, student members.

- b) Describe how the members of the Review Committee are selected as well as any additional reviewers who might be included in the site visits.
- c) Describe the steps to be taken to ensure that all members of the Review Committee will:
 1. Understand their role and obligations;
 2. Identify and commend the program's notably strong and creative attributes;
 3. Describe the program's respective strengths, areas for improvement, and opportunities for enhancement;
 4. Recommend specific steps to be taken to improve the program, distinguishing between those the program can itself take and those that require external action;
 5. Recognize the institution's autonomy to determine priorities for funding, space, and faculty allocation.
 6. Respect the confidentiality required for all aspects of the review process.

The Review Committee's evaluation and report(s) (preferably one joint report, where circumstances permit) should address the substance of both the self-study report and the evaluation criteria set out in [Framework Section 4.3](#) (below).

- d) Identify what reports and information the Review Committee will receive in addition to the self-study. Describe how site visits will be conducted, including how reviewers will meet with faculty, students, staff, and senior program administrators. In the case of professional programs, describe how the views of employers and professional associations will be solicited and made available to the Review Committee.
- e) Identify to whom the Review Committee submits its report(s) and specify a time frame for its submission (see [Report template](#)).
- f) Require those who produced the self-study to provide a brief written response to the report(s) of the Review Committee.
- g) Identify the relevant dean(s) or academic administrator(s) responsible for the program, who will provide their responses to each of the following:
 1. The plans and recommendations proposed in the self-study report;
 2. The recommendations advanced by the Review Committee;
 3. The program's response to the Review Committee's report(s);

and will describe:

4. Any changes in organization, policy or governance that would be necessary to meet the recommendations;

5. The resources, financial and otherwise, that would be provided in supporting the implementation of selected recommendations; and
6. A proposed timeline for the implementation of any of those recommendations.

4.2.5 Institutional perspective and report

- a) Describe how the self-study and the plans and recommendations issuing from it, and the reviewers' report and responses to it, will be assessed by institutional peers. Most universities have an existing (standing) committee that undertakes this function. The description should identify the participants and how they are selected.
- b) Describe how a **Final Assessment Report** (see [Guide](#)), providing the institutional synthesis of the external evaluation and internal responses and assessments, will be drafted which:
 1. Identifies any significant strengths of the program;
 2. Identifies opportunities for program improvement and enhancement;
 3. Sets out and prioritizes the recommendations that are selected for implementation;
 4. May include a confidential section (where personnel issues require to be addressed); and
 5. Includes an institutional **Executive Summary**, exclusive of any such confidential information, and suitable for publication on the web.
- c) Unless already specified elsewhere in the IQAP, the Final Assessment Report will include an **Implementation Plan** that identifies:
 1. Who will be responsible for approving the recommendations set out in the Final Assessment Report (4.2.5 [b]3);
 2. Who will be responsible for providing any resources made necessary by those recommendations;
 3. Who will be responsible for acting on those recommendations; and
 4. Timelines for acting on and monitoring the implementation of those recommendations.

4.2.6 Reporting requirements

- a) Provide for the distribution of the Final Assessment Report (excluding all confidential information) and the associated Implementation Plan, to the program, Senate (or equivalent authority, as identified in [Framework Section 4.2.1](#), above) and the Quality Council.
- b) Require that the institutional Executive Summary (provided for in [Framework Section 4.2.5 \[b\] 5](#) above) of the outcomes of the review, and the associated Implementation Plan ([Framework Section 4.2.5 \[c\]](#)) be posted on the institution's website and copies provided to both the Quality Council and the institution's governing body.
- c) Provide for the timely monitoring of the implementation of the recommendations, and the appropriate distribution, including web postings, of the scheduled monitoring reports.
- d) Establish the extent of public access to the:
 1. Information made available for the self-study;
 2. Self-study report;
 3. Report of the Review Committee; and
 4. Specified responses to the report of the Review Committee.

It is expected that the report from the Review Committee will be afforded an appropriate level of confidentiality.

4.2.7 Use of accreditation and other external reviews in the Institutional Quality Assurance Process

The IQAP may allow for and specify the substitution or addition of documentation or processes associated with the accreditation of a program, for components of the institutional program review process, when it is fully consistent with the requirements established in this Framework (see [Guide](#)). A record of substitution or addition, and the grounds on which it was made, will be eligible for audit by the Quality Council.

4.2.8 Institutional Manual

Provide for the preparation and systematic maintenance of an institutional manual that describes the cyclical program review and supports such reviews. Among other items, this manual should do the following:

- a) Provide guidance on the conduct of rigorous, objective and searching self-studies, and describe the potential benefits that can accrue from them;
- b) Establish the criteria for the nomination and selection of arm's length external peer reviewers;
- c) Identify responsibilities for the collection, aggregation and distribution of institutional data and outcome measures required for self-studies;
- d) Specify the format required for the self-study and external reviewers' reports; and
- e) Set out the institution's cycle for the conduct of undergraduate and graduate program reviews.

4.3 EVALUATION CRITERIA

The IQAP for review of existing undergraduate and graduate programs shall require, and may where it chooses extend the evaluation criteria set out below.

4.3.1 Objectives

- a) Program is consistent with the institution's mission and academic plans.
- b) Program requirements and learning outcomes are clear, appropriate and align with the institution's statement of the undergraduate and/or graduate Degree Level Expectations.

4.3.2 Admission requirements

Admission requirements are appropriately aligned with the learning outcomes established for completion of the program.

4.3.3 Curriculum

- a) The curriculum reflects the current state of the discipline or area of study.
- b) Evidence of any significant innovation or creativity in the content and/or delivery of the program relative to other such programs.
- c) Mode(s) of delivery to meet the program's identified learning outcomes are appropriate and effective.

4.3.4 Teaching and assessment

- a) Methods for assessing student achievement of the defined learning outcomes and degree learning expectations are appropriate and effective.
- b) Appropriateness and effectiveness of the means of assessment, especially in the students' final year of the program, in clearly demonstrating achievement of the program learning objectives and the institution's (or the Program's own) statement of Degree Level Expectations.

4.3.5 Resources

Appropriateness and effectiveness of the academic unit's use of *existing* human, physical and financial resources in delivering its program(s). In making this assessment, reviewers must

recognize the institution's autonomy to determine priorities for funding, space, and faculty allocation.

4.3.6 Quality indicators

While there are several widely used quality indicators or proxies for reflecting program quality, institutions are encouraged to include available measures of their own which they see as best achieving that goal. Outcome measures of student performance and achievement are of particular interest, but there are also important input and process measures which are known to have a strong association with quality outcomes. It is expected that many of the following listed examples will be widely used. The [Guide](#) makes reference to further sources and measures that might be considered.

- a) **Faculty:** qualifications, research and scholarly record; class sizes; percentage of classes taught by permanent or non-permanent (contractual) faculty; numbers, assignments and qualifications of part-time or temporary faculty;
- b) **Students:** applications and registrations; attrition rates; time-to-completion; final-year academic achievement; graduation rates; academic awards; student in-course reports on teaching; and
- c) **Graduates:** rates of graduation, employment six months and two years after graduation, post-graduate study, "skills match" and alumni reports on program quality when available and when permitted by the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA). Auditors will be instructed that these items may not be available and applicable to all programs.

4.3.7 Quality enhancement

Initiatives taken to enhance the quality of the program and the associated learning and teaching environment.

4.3.8 Additional graduate program criteria

- a) Evidence that students' time-to-completion is both monitored and managed in relation to the program's defined length and program requirements.
- b) Quality and availability of graduate supervision.
- c) Definition and application of indicators that provide evidence of faculty, student and program quality, for example:
 - 1. Faculty: funding, honours and awards, and commitment to student mentoring;
 - 2. Students: grade-level for admission, scholarly output, success rates in provincial and national scholarships, competitions, awards and commitment to professional and transferable skills;
 - 3. Program: evidence of a program structure and faculty research that will ensure the intellectual quality of the student experience;
 - 4. Sufficient graduate level courses that students will be able to meet the requirement that two-thirds of their course requirements be met through courses at this level (see [Guide](#).)

5. AUDIT PROCESS

The objective of the audit is to determine whether or not the institution, since the last review, has acted in compliance with the provisions of its IQAP for Cyclical Program Reviews as ratified by the Quality Council.

All publicly assisted universities in Ontario associated with the Quality Council have committed to participating in this audit process once every eight years. Additional audits for specific institutions may take place within any cycle, as described below. The Quality Council consults with OCAV in establishing the schedule of institutional participation in the audit process within the eight-year cycle and publishes the agreed schedule on its website.

5.1 QUALITY COUNCIL AUDIT PANEL: SELECTION OF THE AUDITORS

The selection of auditors follows a four-step process:

- a) The Quality Council solicits nominations of auditors;
- b) The Quality Council generates a long list of potential auditors and submits the list to OCAV;
- c) OCAV selects a roster of auditors from the list; and
- d) The Quality Council appoints the required number of auditors from the OCAV-selected list.

The slate of appointees will include present and past faculty members, not currently holding an administrative appointment in an Ontario university but having had senior administrative experience at the faculty or university level. They are selected for their recognized strength in the development and operation of undergraduate and/or graduate programs and their experience, typically, in one or more Ontario universities. Some will be bilingual. From time to time, one or two auditors may be required to have had senior administrative experience in an academic services area, such as operating student academic support functions. The full complement of auditors is known as the Quality Council Audit Panel.

5.2 STEPS IN THE AUDIT PROCESS

5.2.1 Assignment of auditors for the conduct of the audit

Normally, no fewer than three auditors, selected by the Executive Director of the Quality Council, conduct an institutional audit. These auditors will be at arm's length from the institution undergoing the audit. The Executive Director and a member of the Secretariat normally accompany the auditors on their site visit.

5.2.2 Selection of the sample of programs for audit

Auditors independently select programs for audit, typically four undergraduate and four graduate cyclical program reviews. At least one of the undergraduate programs and one of the graduate programs will be a New Program or Major Modifications to an Existing Program approved within the period since the previous audit. The Executive Director authorizes the proposed selection, assuring, for example, a reasonable program mix.

Specific programs may be added to the sample when an immediately previous audit has documented causes for concern, and when so directed in accordance with [Framework Section 5.2.5 \(b\)](#). When the institution itself so requests, specific programs may also be audited.

The auditors may consider, in addition to the required documentation, any additional elements and related documentation stipulated by the institution in its IQAP.

5.2.3 Desk audit¹ of the institutional quality assurance practices

Once every eight years, and in preparation for a scheduled on-site visit, the auditors participate in a desk audit of the institution's quality assurance practices. Using the institution's records of the sampled cyclical program reviews, together with associated documents, this audit tests whether the institution's practice conforms to its own IQAP, as ratified by the Quality Council.²

It is essential that the auditors have access to all relevant documents and information to ensure they have a clear understanding of the institution's practices. The desk audit serves to raise specific issues and questions to be pursued during the on-site visit and to facilitate the conduct of an effective and efficient on-site visit.

The documentation to be submitted for the programs selected for audit will include:

- a) All the documents and other information associated with each step of the institution's IQAP, as ratified by the Quality Council.
- b) The record of any revisions of the institution's IQAP, as ratified by the Quality Council.

Institutions may provide any additional documents at their discretion.

During the desk audit, the auditors will also determine whether or not the institution's web-based publication of the Executive Summaries, and subsequent reports on the implementation of the review recommendations for the programs included in the current audit, meet the requirements of [Framework Section 4.2.6](#).

The auditors undertake to preserve the confidentiality required for all documentation and communications and meet all applicable requirements of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA).

5.2.4 On-site interaction with the institution

After the desk audit, auditors normally visit the institution over two or three days. The principal purpose of the on-site visit is to answer questions and address information gaps that arose during the desk audit. Ultimately, the purpose of the on-site visit is for the auditors to get a sufficiently complete and accurate understanding of the institution's application of its IQAP so that they can meet their audit responsibilities.

In the course of the site visit, the auditors will speak with those identified by the IQAP as participants and in particular those accountable for various steps, responsibilities, and obligations in the process. The institution, in consultation with the auditors, will establish the program and schedule for these interviews prior to the site visit.

5.2.5 Audit report

- a) Following the conduct of an institutional audit, the auditors prepare a report, which:
 1. Describes the audit methodology and the verification steps used;
 2. Provides a status report on the program reviews carried out by the institution;
 3. On the basis of the programs audited, describes the institution's compliance with its IQAP as ratified by the Quality Council;
 4. Identifies and records any notably effective policies or practices revealed in the course of the audit of the sampled programs; and
 5. Where appropriate, makes suggestions and recommendations and identifies causes for concern.

¹ A desk audit is a limited-scope, off-site examination of the relevant documents and records by the auditors.

² Changes to the institution's process and practices within the eight-year cycle are to be expected. The test of the conformity of practice with process will always be made against the ratified Institutional Quality Assurance Process applying at the time of the conduct of the review.

Suggestions will be forward-looking, and are made by auditors when they identify opportunities for the institution to strengthen its quality assurance practices. Suggestions do not convey any mandatory obligations and sometimes are the means for conveying the auditors' province-wide experience in identifying good, and even on occasion, best practices. Institutions are under no obligation to implement or otherwise respond to the auditors' suggestions, though they are encouraged to do so.

Recommendations are recorded in the auditors' report when they have identified failures to comply with the IQAP and/or there is misalignment between the IQAP and the Quality Assurance Framework. The institution must address these recommendations.

Causes for concern In some cases the auditors may identify that there is cause for concern. These may be potential structural weaknesses in quality assurance practices (for example, when, in two or more instances, the auditors identify inadequate follow-up monitoring (as called for in [Framework Section 4.2.5\[c\]](#)); a failure to make the relevant implementation reports to the appropriate statutory authorities (as called for in [Framework Section 4.2.6.](#)), or the absence of the Manual (as called for in [Framework Section 4.2.8](#)).

- b) When the auditors have identified, with supporting reason and evidence, cause for concern, it will be reported to the Audit Committee and the institution. Following deliberation, including possible discussion with the institution, the Committee may then recommend that the Quality Council investigate by taking one of the following steps:
1. Directing specific attention by the auditors to the issue within the subsequent audit as provided for in [Framework Section 5.2.2](#);
 2. Scheduling a larger selection of programs for the institution's next audit; and/or
 3. Requiring an immediate and expanded institutional audit (further sample) of the respective process(es).

The decision of the Quality Council will be reported to the institution by the Executive Director.

5.2.6 Disposition of the audit report and summary

The auditors prepare a **draft report**, together with a **summary of the principal findings** suitable for subsequent publication. The Secretariat provides a copy of these to the institution's "authoritative contact" identified in [Framework Section 4.2.1\(b\)](#), for comment. This consultation is intended to ensure that the report and associated summary do not contain errors or omissions of fact.

That authority submits a response to the draft report and summary within sixty days. This response becomes part of the official record, and the auditors may use it to revise their report and/or associated summary prior to their submission to the Audit Committee.

The Executive Director submits the final audit report and associated summary, together with the institutional response, to the Audit Committee for consideration and, when necessary, for consultation with the auditors. When satisfied that the auditors followed the required audit procedures correctly and that the university had an appropriate opportunity to respond, the Audit Committee recommends to the Quality Council approval of the report and associated summary. When a report or associated summary is rejected, the Council determines the actions to be taken.

5.2.7 Submission of the audit report to the institution

The Secretariat sends the approved report and associated summary to the institution and to the Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents (OCAV), the Council of Ontario Universities (COU) and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) for information.

5.2.8 Publication of main audit findings

The Secretariat publishes the approved summary of the overall findings, together with a record of the recommendations on the Quality Council's website, and sends a copy of both to the institution for publication on its website.

5.2.9 Institutional one-year follow-up

Within a year of the publication of the final audit report, the institution will inform the auditors, through the Secretariat, of the steps it has taken to address the recommendations. The auditors will draft an accompanying commentary on the scope and adequacy of the institution's response, together with a draft summary of their commentary, suitable for publication. The auditors' response and summary are then submitted to the Audit Committee for consideration. The Audit Committee will submit a recommendation to the Quality Council on whether or not to accept the institutional one-year follow-up response. When the Audit Committee is not satisfied with the reported institutional response, it recommends to the Quality Council the course of action to be taken.

5.2.10 Web publication of one-year follow-up report

The Secretariat publishes the auditors' summary of the scope and adequacy of the institution's response on the Quality Council website and sends a copy to the institution for publication on its website and to OCAV, COU and MTCU for information.

6. REVIEW OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK

6.1 AMENDMENT OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK

The Quality Council or OCAV may request changes at any time, subject to approval of both the Quality Council and OCAV.

6.2 AUDIT OF THE QUALITY COUNCIL AND QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK

The Quality Assurance Framework and the Quality Council will be reviewed periodically and independently (every eight years) using a methodology agreed to by the Quality Council and OCAV.

APPENDIX 1: ONTARIO COUNCIL OF ACADEMIC VICE-PRESIDENTS' UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE DEGREE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS

UNDERGRADUATE

	Baccalaureate/bachelor's degree This degree is awarded to students who have demonstrated the following:	Baccalaureate/bachelor's degree: honours This degree is awarded to students who have demonstrated the following:
1. Depth and breadth of knowledge	<p>a) General knowledge and understanding of many key concepts, methodologies, theoretical approaches and assumptions in a discipline</p> <p>b) Broad understanding of some of the major fields in a discipline, including, where appropriate, from an interdisciplinary perspective, and how the fields may intersect with fields in related disciplines</p> <p>c) Ability to gather, review, evaluate and interpret information relevant to one or more of the major fields in a discipline</p> <p>d) Some detailed knowledge in an area of the discipline</p> <p>e) Critical thinking and analytical skills inside and outside the discipline</p> <p>f) Ability to apply learning from one or more areas outside the discipline</p>	<p>a) Developed knowledge and critical understanding of the key concepts, methodologies, current advances, theoretical approaches and assumptions in a discipline overall, as well as in a specialized area of a discipline</p> <p>b) Developed understanding of many of the major fields in a discipline, including, where appropriate, from an interdisciplinary perspective, and how the fields may intersect with fields in related disciplines</p> <p>c) Developed ability to: i) gather, review, evaluate and interpret information; and ii) compare the merits of alternate hypotheses or creative options, relevant to one or more of the major fields in a discipline</p> <p>d) Developed, detailed knowledge of and experience in research in an area of the discipline</p> <p>e) Developed critical thinking and analytical skills inside and outside the discipline</p> <p>f) Ability to apply learning from one or more areas outside the discipline</p>
2. Knowledge of methodologies	<p>An understanding of methods of enquiry or creative activity, or both, in their primary area of study that enables the student to:</p> <p>a) evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems using well established ideas and techniques; and</p> <p>b) devise and sustain arguments or solve problems using these methods.</p>	<p>An understanding of methods of enquiry or creative activity, or both, in their primary area of study that enables the student to:</p> <p>a) evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems using well established ideas and techniques;</p> <p>b) devise and sustain arguments or solve problems using these methods; and</p>

	Baccalaureate/bachelor's degree This degree is awarded to students who have demonstrated the following:	Baccalaureate/bachelor's degree: honours This degree is awarded to students who have demonstrated the following:
		c) describe and comment upon particular aspects of current research or equivalent advanced scholarship.
3. Application of knowledge	<p>The ability to review, present, and interpret quantitative and qualitative information to:</p> <p>a) develop lines of argument;</p> <p>b) make sound judgments in accordance with the major theories, concepts and methods of the subject(s) of study; and</p> <p>The ability to use a basic range of established techniques to:</p> <p>a) analyze information;</p> <p>b) evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems related to their area(s) of study;</p> <p>c) propose solutions; and</p> <p>d) make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources.</p>	<p>The ability to review, present and critically evaluate qualitative and quantitative information to:</p> <p>a) develop lines of argument;</p> <p>b) make sound judgments in accordance with the major theories, concepts and methods of the subject(s) of study;</p> <p>c) apply underlying concepts, principles, and techniques of analysis, both within and outside the discipline;</p> <p>d) where appropriate use this knowledge in the creative process; and</p> <p>The ability to use a range of established techniques to:</p> <p>a) initiate and undertake critical evaluation of arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts and information;</p> <p>b) propose solutions;</p> <p>c) frame appropriate questions for the purpose of solving a problem;</p> <p>d) solve a problem or create a new work; and</p> <p>e) to make critical use of scholarly reviews and primary sources.</p>
4. Communication skills	The ability to communicate accurately and reliably, orally and in writing to a range of audiences.	The ability to communicate information, arguments, and analyses accurately and reliably, orally and in writing to a range of audiences.

	Baccalaureate/bachelor's degree This degree is awarded to students who have demonstrated the following:	Baccalaureate/bachelor's degree: honours This degree is awarded to students who have demonstrated the following:
5. Awareness of limits of knowledge	An understanding of the limits to their own knowledge and how this might influence their analyses and interpretations.	An understanding of the limits to their own knowledge and ability, and an appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits to knowledge and how this might influence analyses and interpretations.
6. Autonomy and professional capacity	Qualities and transferable skills necessary for further study, employment, community involvement and other activities requiring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making; b) working effectively with others; c) the ability to identify and address their own learning needs in changing circumstances and to select an appropriate program of further study; and d) behaviour consistent with academic integrity and social responsibility. 	Qualities and transferable skills necessary for further study, employment, community involvement and other activities requiring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the exercise of initiative, personal responsibility and accountability in both personal and group contexts; b) working effectively with others; c) decision-making in complex contexts; d) the ability to manage their own learning in changing circumstances, both within and outside the discipline and to select an appropriate program of further study; e) and behaviour consistent with academic integrity and social responsibility.

GRADUATE

	Master's degree This degree is awarded to students who have demonstrated the following:	Doctoral degree This degree extends the skills associated with the Master's degree and is awarded to students who have demonstrated the following:
1. Depth and breadth of knowledge	A systematic understanding of knowledge, including, where appropriate, relevant knowledge outside the field and/or discipline, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study, or area of professional practice;	A thorough understanding of a substantial body of knowledge that is at the forefront of their academic discipline or area of professional practice including, where appropriate, relevant knowledge outside the field and/or discipline.
2. Research and scholarship	<p>A conceptual understanding and methodological competence that</p> <p>a) Enables a working comprehension of how established techniques of research and inquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline;</p> <p>b) Enables a critical evaluation of current research and advanced research and scholarship in the discipline or area of professional competence; and</p> <p>c) Enables a treatment of complex issues and judgments based on established principles and techniques; and,</p> <p>On the basis of that competence, has shown at least one of the following:</p> <p>a) The development and support of a sustained argument in written form; or</p> <p>b) Originality in the application of knowledge.</p>	<p>a) The ability to conceptualize, design, and implement research for the generation of new knowledge, applications, or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the research design or methodology in the light of unforeseen problems;</p> <p>b) The ability to make informed judgments on complex issues in specialist fields, sometimes requiring new methods; and</p> <p>c) The ability to produce original research, or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, and to merit publication.</p>
3. Level of application of	Competence in the research process by applying an existing body of knowledge	The capacity to

	Master's degree This degree is awarded to students who have demonstrated the following:	Doctoral degree This degree extends the skills associated with the Master's degree and is awarded to students who have demonstrated the following:
knowledge	in the critical analysis of a new question or of a specific problem or issue in a new setting.	a) Undertake pure and/or applied research at an advanced level; and b) Contribute to the development of academic or professional skills, techniques, tools, practices, ideas, theories, approaches, and/or materials.
4. Professional capacity/autonomy	a) The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring: i) The exercise of initiative and of personal responsibility and accountability; and ii) Decision-making in complex situations; b) The intellectual independence required for continuing professional development; c) The ethical behaviour consistent with academic integrity and the use of appropriate guidelines and procedures for responsible conduct of research; and d) The ability to appreciate the broader implications of applying knowledge to particular contexts.	a) The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex situations; b) The intellectual independence to be academically and professionally engaged and current; c) The ethical behaviour consistent with academic integrity and the use of appropriate guidelines and procedures for responsible conduct of research; and d) The ability to evaluate the broader implications of applying knowledge to particular contexts.
5. Level of communications skills	The ability to communicate ideas, issues and conclusions clearly.	The ability to communicate complex and/or ambiguous ideas, issues and conclusions clearly and effectively.
6. Awareness of limits of knowledge	Cognizance of the complexity of knowledge and of the potential contributions of other interpretations, methods, and disciplines.	An appreciation of the limitations of one's own work and discipline, of the complexity of knowledge, and of the potential contributions of other interpretations, methods, and disciplines.

APPENDIX 2: ONTARIO UNIVERSITIES COUNCIL ON QUALITY ASSURANCE

The Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance (the Quality Council) was established by the Council of Ontario Universities to oversee quality assurance processes for all levels of programs in its publicly assisted universities, as of March 1, 2010.

MISSION

The Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance is the provincial body responsible for assuring the quality of all programs leading to degrees and graduate diplomas granted by Ontario's publicly assisted universities and the integrity of the universities' quality assurance processes. Through these practices, the Quality Council also assists institutions to improve and enhance their programs. In fulfilling its mission, the Quality Council operates in a fair, accountable and transparent manner with clear and openly accessible guidelines and decision-making processes, and through reasoned results and evidenced-based decisions.

MANDATE

The roles and responsibilities of the Quality Council, while respecting the autonomy and diversity of the individual institutions, are the following:

- to guide Ontario's publicly assisted universities in the ongoing quality assurance of their academic programs;
- to review and approve proposals for new graduate and undergraduate programs;
- to ensure through regular audits that Ontario's publicly assisted universities comply with quality assurance guidelines, policies and regulations for graduate and undergraduate programs;
- to communicate final decisions to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities;
- to review and revise, from time to time for future application, the Council of Ontario University's quality assurance protocols in light of its own experiences and developments in the field of quality assurance;
- to liaise with other quality assurance agencies, both provincially and elsewhere; and
- to undergo regular independent review and audit at intervals of no longer than eight years.

OPERATING PRINCIPLES

1. The Quality Council and its processes express the commitment of Ontario's publicly assisted universities to quality assurance and will be the provincial body responsible for ensuring the academic accountability of the Ontario publicly assisted universities both individually and as a system.
2. The Quality Council will operate in accordance with publicly communicated principles, policies and procedures that respect the individual autonomy of Ontario's publicly assisted universities and the role of senates and other internal bodies in ensuring the quality of academic programs.
3. Both the Quality Council's assessment process and the internal quality assurance process of individual universities will be open and transparent, except as limited by constraints of laws and regulations for the protection of individuals.
4. The quality assurance processes for both graduate and undergraduate programs will as far as possible mirror each other so that quality assurance program reviews will take place contemporaneously for both undergraduate and graduate programs whenever feasible.

5. Proposals for both new undergraduate and new graduate programs shall include the report of an initial review, conducted by external reviewers identified by the university.
6. The Quality Council shall undergo a regular periodic quality assessment review by a review committee that includes, equally, reviewers who are external to the system and to the province, and reviewers who are internal to the system and to the province.
7. The Quality Council or OCAV may request changes to the Quality Assurance Framework at any time, subject to approval of both the Quality Council and OCAV.
8. The Chair of the Quality Council will make periodic reports to the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

AUTHORITY

The Quality Council has final authority for decisions concerning recommendations for approval of new programs and compliance with audit guidelines. In all other respects, the Quality Council is responsible to OCAV and COU.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE QUALITY COUNCIL

There are nine voting members of the Quality Council as follows:

- One member, who shall serve as Chair, external to OCAV but chosen by OCAV¹
- Two OCAV members, one from a medical/doctoral university and one from a non-medical/doctoral university
- One graduate² dean or equivalent from a COU member institution
- One undergraduate³ dean or equivalent from a COU member institution
- Two Academic Colleagues from the Council of Ontario Universities, excluding those member institutions represented by the graduate or undergraduate deans or their equivalents listed above.
- One member from outside Ontario with significant experience involving a post-secondary quality assurance organization
- One citizen member appointed by the Council of Ontario Universities through its Executive Committee

The Executive Director of Quality Assurance will serve as Secretary, non-voting.

Members (except for the Executive Director) shall be appointed by OCAV following an open nominations process for three year terms, renewable once. Initially, to ensure continuity, there will be staggered two and three year terms.

The inaugural selection and appointment of the Quality Council will be conducted by OCAV. A process for subsequent selection and appointment of members to the Quality Council shall be established by OCAV.

APPRAISAL AND AUDIT COMMITTEES

The quality assurance process will be undertaken by an Appraisal Committee and an Audit Committee with responsibility for making recommendations to the Quality Council on the approval of new programs and on the audits of existing programs.

Members of these committees shall be senior academics with experience in the development, delivery and quality assessment of both graduate and undergraduate programs and shall not be members of the Quality Council. The Executive Director will be an *ex officio* member of these committees and will convene meetings and maintain records.

-
- ¹ Candidate pools may include former OCAV members, former Deans or Vice-Provosts with experience in QA, former Executive Heads and other with significant experience in QA at the university level
 - ² 'Graduate' dean means towards those individuals who have principal responsibilities for the overall direction of graduate programs at their institution
 - ³ 'Undergraduate' dean means those individuals who have overall responsibility for undergraduate programming within a Faculty, or – as may be the case – across the institution
-

ONTARIO UNIVERSITIES
COUNCIL ON QUALITY ASSURANCE

Guide to the
Quality Assurance Framework

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1. Introduction ([Section 1.3](#))

The Guide contains practical suggestions, references, and sample templates which can be accessed throughout the Quality Assurance Framework document by clicking on the link provided. The Guide has not been created as a stand-alone document.

We welcome additional examples, references and template ideas from users of the Guide. We will update it regularly as new material becomes available and in response to user suggestions.

We want to encourage best practices in our approach to quality assurance as well as reinforcing institutional efforts to make timely program innovations and modifications and to continue their focus on quality improvements.

Suggestions for additions to the Guide may be sent to us at OUCQA@cou.on.ca.

2. Schema of Possible Degree Level Expectations and Learning Outcomes ([Section 1.6](#))

1. OCAV DLEs (see [Appendix 1](#) Quality Assurance Framework)
2. Institutional DLEs
3. Specific Degree DLEs
4. Degree Program Learning Outcomes
5. Program (of Specialization) Learning Outcomes
6. Course Learning Outcomes

3. Graduate Diplomas

GRADUATE DIPLOMAS are based on Graduate Degree Level Expectations (see Appendix 1 of the Quality Assurance Framework) and will prepare students for employment requiring sound judgment, personal responsibility and individual initiative, in complex and unpredictable professional environments. The typical duration is one to four semesters at the Master’s level and one to six semesters at the doctoral level. Requirements are integrated throughout the program, and may include an experiential learning component (or course); programs normally consist of four to six graduate courses.

	Overall Program Design and Outcome Emphasis	Admission Requirements
Graduate Diploma – Master’s Level (Type 1)	Programs require students to develop a conceptual understanding of fundamental aspects of the discipline. Some programs require students to demonstrate Master’s-level analytical, interpretative, methodological and expository skills through course-specific applications. Some programs may require students to demonstrate these skills in applied activities. Students are not admitted directly to Type 1 diploma programs. A Type 1 Diploma may be awarded when a candidate admitted to a Master’s program leaves the program after completing the specified requirements where such an option has been specified through the program’s approval process.	Baccalaureate/Bachelor’s Degree: Honours, or other undergraduate degree along with bridging requirements where necessary.
Graduate Diploma – Master’s and Doctoral Levels (Type 2)	Master’s Level Type 2 Graduate Diplomas are offered in conjunction with a Master’s or doctoral degree and represent an additional, usually interdisciplinary, qualification. Programs require students to develop a conceptual understanding of fundamental aspects of the discipline(s) and appropriate levels of analytical, interpretative, methodological and expository skills through course-specific applications. Some programs may require students to demonstrate these skills in applied activities.	<p>Master’s Level</p> <p>Baccalaureate/ Bachelor’s Degree: Honours, or other undergraduate degree along with bridging requirements where necessary.</p> <p>Doctoral Level</p> <p>Normally a Master’s Degree.</p> <p>Both</p> <p>As the Diploma is offered in</p>

	Overall Program Design and Outcome Emphasis	Admission Requirements
		<p>conjunction with a Master's or doctoral degree, admission to the graduate diploma program requires that the candidate be already admitted to a Master's / doctoral program.</p>
<p>Graduate Diploma – Master's and Doctoral Levels (Type 3)</p>	<p>These stand-alone, direct-entry graduate diploma programs require students to develop a conceptual understanding of fundamental aspects of the discipline. Programs require students to demonstrate the appropriate level of analytical, interpretative, methodological and expository skills through course-specific applications. Some programs may require students to demonstrate these skills in applied activities.</p> <p>In some specific cases, courses taken for credit as part of a diploma program may be considered for advanced standing credit in subsequent master's programs.</p>	<p>Master's Level</p> <p>Baccalaureate/Bachelor's Degree: Honours, or other undergraduate degree along with bridging requirements where necessary.</p> <p>Doctoral Level</p> <p>Master's Degree.</p>

4. Reviewing Academic Programs that also are Subject to External Accreditation ([Section 4.1](#) and [Section 4.2.7](#))

The Quality Assurance Framework indicates that a "*University IQAP may allow for the substitution or addition of documentation or processes associated with the accreditation of a program, for components of the institutional program review process, when it is fully consistent with the requirements established in the Quality Assurance Framework. A record of substitution or addition, and the grounds on which it was made, will be eligible for audit by the Quality Council.*" ([Section 4.2.7](#))

How a university approaches the question of whether to combine, coordinate or completely segregate the reviews depends on a number of factors including:

- levels and complexity of program offered (undergraduate, graduate, professional)
- review cycle
- qualifications required for reviewers
- evaluation criteria
- issues currently facing program and university

The Quality Council noted in its review of IQAP submissions that only one institution specified that accreditation and cyclical program reviews would be undertaken through a single process using the same reviewers. On the other hand, most IQAPs specified that reviews of undergraduate and graduate programs would be undertaken together, where feasible.

Combining cyclical program review and accreditation reviews can be challenging given the different purposes and evaluation criteria that apply. A recent UNESCO glossary of basic terms and definitions for quality assurance and accreditation describes accreditation as a process by which a program or institution is evaluated to determine if it meets certain pre-determined minimal criteria or standards. In contrast, quality assurance processes are described as on-going and continuous evaluation for the purpose of quality improvement. Quality assurance processes include assessing, monitoring, guaranteeing, maintaining and improving (www.cepes.ro/publications/pdf/Glossary_2nd.pdf). One common characteristic of both accreditation and quality assurance cyclical program review is the development of a self-study by the program undergoing review.

Most university IQAPs contained very brief descriptions of how cyclical review of accredited programs would be undertaken. Many indicated that they would be coordinated so that the academic unit was able to capitalize on the common data to be used in self-studies for each type of review with reviews scheduled close to one another but not at the same time.

The Quality Council noted that Lakehead University and the University of Guelph provided particularly clear guidance on how decisions will be made in their IQAPs (Lakehead University's IQAP is quoted below for easy reference):

"In cases where the professional program accreditation standards mesh fairly well with the standards set out in the Lakehead University IQAP, components of the accreditation may be applied to the University's undergraduate program review process. Prior to the start of an accreditation review, the Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic) will be provided

with a copy of the accreditation review template to compare with the Lakehead University IQAP. The Deputy Provost in consultation with the SAC-QA, will review the guidelines for the accreditation process and determine if, and how, the two assessment processes should be integrated, ensuring compliance with the provisions of the IQAP. The Deputy Provost will then meet with the Dean of the Faculty(s) to review and discuss the guidelines for the accreditation, the degree of alignment or overlap between the accreditation process and the undergraduate program review process, and to determine what additional materials or processes may be necessary. Such discussions should have occurred at the time when work begins by a Unit to prepare for the accreditation process.

The outcome of comparison and discussion may be that:

1. The accreditation review will be accepted as meeting all the criteria for the cyclical program review. The final report of the accrediting body will be submitted directly to the Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and a Final Assessment Report, which provides a synthesis of the external accreditation report and internal responses and assessments, will be drafted by the Deputy Provost, with input and support from the Head of the Academic Unit responsible for the program(s) and the Dean(s); or
2. The accreditation review will be accepted as meeting most of the criteria the cyclical program review. Some supplementary information will need to be submitted to Deputy Provost along with the final report of the accrediting body. A Final Assessment Report, which provides a synthesis of the external accreditation report, supplementary information, and internal responses and assessments, will be drafted by Deputy Provost, with input and support from the Head of the Academic Unit responsible for the program(s) and the Dean(s); or
3. The accreditation review will not sufficiently meet the requirements of the cyclical program review and the process involved with the regular cyclical undergraduate program review will proceed as scheduled." (Source: Lakehead University Institutional Quality Assurance Process, March 28, 2011)

One of the strengths of the IQAP cited above is that it names the authority who will review the IQAP evaluation criteria and the accreditation review to determine to what extent the latter may be useful in the cyclical program review.

As universities gain experience with periodic reviews guided by their IQAP, it is anticipated that more examples of best practice with respect to the cyclical review of accredited programs will be forthcoming.

5. Approval and Review of Joint Programs Offered by Two or More Institutions⁶ ([Section 1.6](#) and [Section 4.2.2](#))

Reviews of Joint Programs and other inter-institutional programs are governed by the IQAPs of the participating university/universities granting the degree. Partner institutions may, but are not required to, use Joint IQAPs (which require the same approval process as IQAPs for individual institutions). Whether a Joint, and separately approved IQAP is used, or whether the separate institutions prefer to build their joint processes into their separate IQAPs, the following are the Quality Council's suggestions for inclusion in the IQAP related to both new program approval and cyclical program reviews:

1. The self-study brief clearly explains how input was received from faculty, staff and students at each partner institution. There will be a single self-study.
2. Selection of the reviewers involves participation by each partner institution.
3. Where applicable, selection of the "internal" reviewer requires joint input.
 - a. It could include one internal from both partners (this is impractical if there are multiple partners); and
 - b. It could give preference to an internal reviewer who is from another Joint program, preferably with the same partner institution
4. The site visit involves all partner institutions and preferably at all sites (with exceptions noted in footnote). Reviewers consult faculty, staff, and students at each partner institution, preferably in person.
5. Feedback on the reviewers' report is solicited from participating units at each partner institution, including the Deans.
6. Preparation of a Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan requires input from each partner.
7. There is one single Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan which go through the appropriate governance processes at each partner institution.
8. The Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan are posted on the university website of each partner.
9. Partner institutions agree on an appropriate monitoring process for the Implementation Plan.
10. The Final Assessment Plan and Implementation Plan should be submitted to the Quality Council by all partners.

6. Major Modifications to Existing Programs ([Section 1.6](#))

It can be challenging to define what constitutes a "major modification" to an existing program. The following examples are offered by the Quality Council to illustrate what will normally constitute a "significant change" and therefore a "major modification".

⁶ For all inter-institutional programs in which all partners are institutions within Ontario, the Quality Council's standard New Program Approval and Cyclical Program Review Processes will apply to all elements of programs regardless of which partner offers them, including Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology and Institutes of Technology and Advanced Learning. For joint programs in which some partners are institutions outside Ontario, the elements of the programs contributed by the out-of-province partner will be subject to the quality assurance processes in their respective jurisdictions. The Quality Council will maintain a directory of bodies whose post-secondary assurance processes are recognized and accepted as being comparable to our own. In cases where such recognition is not available, the Quality Council will determine, on a case-by-case basis, the appropriate action to be taken on quality assurance if the collaboration is to be permitted to proceed. (Source: *Quality Assurance Framework*, p. 6)

a) (Examples of) **Requirements that differ significantly from those existing at the time of the previous cyclical program review**

- The merger of two or more programs
- New bridging options for college diploma graduates
- Significant change in the laboratory time of an undergraduate program
- The introduction or deletion of an undergraduate thesis or capstone project
- The introduction or deletion of a work experience, co-op option, internship or practicum, or portfolio
- At the master's level, the introduction or deletion of a research project, research essay or thesis, course-only, co-op, internship or practicum option
- The creation, deletion or re-naming of a field in a graduate program
- Any change to the requirements for graduate program candidacy examinations, field studies or residence requirements
- Major changes to courses comprising a significant proportion of the program (may be defined in quantitative terms; typically, institutions have chosen one-third)

b) (Example of) **Significant changes to the learning outcomes**

- Changes to program content, other than those listed in a) above, that affect the learning outcomes, but do not meet the threshold for a 'new program'

c) (Examples of) **Significant changes to the faculty engaged in delivering the program and/or to the essential resources as may occur, for example, when there have been changes to the existing mode(s) of delivery (e.g. different campus, online delivery, inter-institutional collaboration)**

- Changes to the faculty delivering the program: e.g. a large proportion of the faculty retires; new hires alter the areas of research and teaching interests
- A change in the language of program delivery
- The establishment of an existing degree program at another institution or location
- The offering of an existing program substantially online where it had previously been offered in face-to-face mode, or vice versa
- Change to full- or part-time program options, or vice versa
- Changes to the essential resources, where these changes impair the delivery of the approved program

The Quality Council strongly recommends the identification, in the university IQAP, of an arbiter or authority whose responsibility it will be to determine whether a change in any of the areas noted above constitutes a "significant change" and hence a "major modification" to an existing program.

7. Examples of New Programs ([Section 1.6](#))

The Quality Council offers the following examples to help define what constitutes a "new program" versus a "major modification":

1. A university has a major program in Spanish that focuses on language, and wishes to create a program in Spanish Studies that focuses on cultural studies. The Spanish Studies program would be viewed as a new program.
2. A university has a major program in Sociology, and wishes to create a program in Social Justice and Equity Studies that incorporates courses from other disciplines and requires the creation of new courses. The Social Justice and Equity Studies program would be viewed as a new program.
3. A university has a minor program in X and wishes to create a major. The new major would be viewed as a new program.
4. A university has an approved Master's program in Community Health Sciences offered by a department in a Faculty of Medicine; it wishes to offer an accredited program in Public Health that would draw on multi-disciplinary expertise from Social Sciences, Philosophy, Nutrition and Statistics, as well as from expertise in Medicine. The Public Health program would be regarded as a new program, whatever its designation (e.g., MHSc or MPH).
5. A university has an approved BA program in Geography with a specialty available in Human Geography. As an extension of its strength in human geography and as a way of involving faculty from other disciplines, it now wishes to offer a program in Planning, with specialties in both Urban and Rural Planning. The new BA in Planning would be regarded as a new program.
6. A university offers a BA in Linguistics. It now wishes to offer a BSc in order to draw on its growing research strength in Neurolinguistics. The BSc would be viewed as a new program.
7. Chemistry has a field in Nano Applications, and it now wishes to establish a program in Nanoscience, in collaboration with other Departments, and involving existing courses from the other Departments, as well as several new courses. The Nanoscience program would be viewed as a new program.
8. A university has an EdD in Education, and it wishes to offer a PhD with a requirement for a dissertation. The latter would be viewed as a new program.
9. A university wants to add a Graduate Diploma in Engineering composed of existing courses. The new GDip would be a new program (requiring only an Expedited Approval from the Quality Council).
10. A university offers an MBA program, and wishes to offer in addition a Master of Financial Administration. Students could then choose which designation they wish to receive. The courses, learning outcomes, and teaching faculty have not changed. This would **not** be viewed as a new program.
11. A university has several approved programs in Mathematics (Pure Mathematics, Applied Mathematics, and Statistics), which it wishes to combine into one Major in Mathematics. This would **not** be viewed as a new program.
12. A university has a Business program (BComm) for which it is seeking accreditation. It must have X number of courses taught by faculty with a PhD. A significant number of new hires are therefore required. This would **not** be viewed as a new program.

Following are a sample of related questions and the answers given by MTCU (in italics):

1. An existing Master's program wanted to change two out of the three participating departments.

This was considered to be a new program as there appeared to be a significant change to the program: the program became a professional program, tuition increased, and two of the three participating departments changed.

2. A new Honours BA program in Health Administration was reported as a variant of the existing Honours BA program in Health Studies and was not submitted for approval. The two programs were distinct with different outcomes and courses. Also, this new program did not replace the existing Health Studies program.

The BA program in Health Administration was deemed to be a brand new program with distinct courses and outcomes. TCU explained that although the Health Administration program shared a few courses with the approved Health Studies program, it was a brand new program that needed to go to the Ministry for approval.

3. A Bachelor of Technology program added on two separate program designations (Biotechnology and Automotive and Vehicle Technology). The institution asked if the addition of program designations required approval.

Both TCU and the institution decided it was a brand new program and required approval from the Ministry.

4. A program changed from a Bachelor of Arts in Fine Arts to a Bachelor of Fine Arts. The institution was unsure if this was considered a new program and asked for clarification.

The new BFA was to be reported as a new program as: (1) There would be a change in the Basic Income Unit (BIU) in the first year which affects operating grant funding; and (2) The program was originally reported as "core" and so did not require/receive approval. Once it became non-core, it required approval.

5. Two BA programs were merged into a single BA program. Objectives, outcomes and BIU would remain the same and the courses were similar.

It was decided that this program could be reported in the Program Development Report and note the closing of the original programs and the merge.

8. Curriculum Design References and Resources ([Section 2.](#))

For those institutions that have one, the Teaching and Learning Office will be able to provide additional assistance in this area.

Diamond, R.M. *Designing Courses and Curricula*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998

Wolf, P. [Curriculum Evolution Process Overview](#), University of Guelph, 2007

Wolf, P., Hill, A. and F. Evers. *Handbook for Curriculum Assessment*. University of Guelph, 2006
www.tss.uoguelph.ca/resources/pdfs/HbonCurriculumAssmt.pdf

Wolf, P. and J. Christensen Hughes. (Eds). *Curriculum Development in Higher Education: Faculty Driven Processes and Practices*. New Directions for Teaching and Learning 112: 2007.

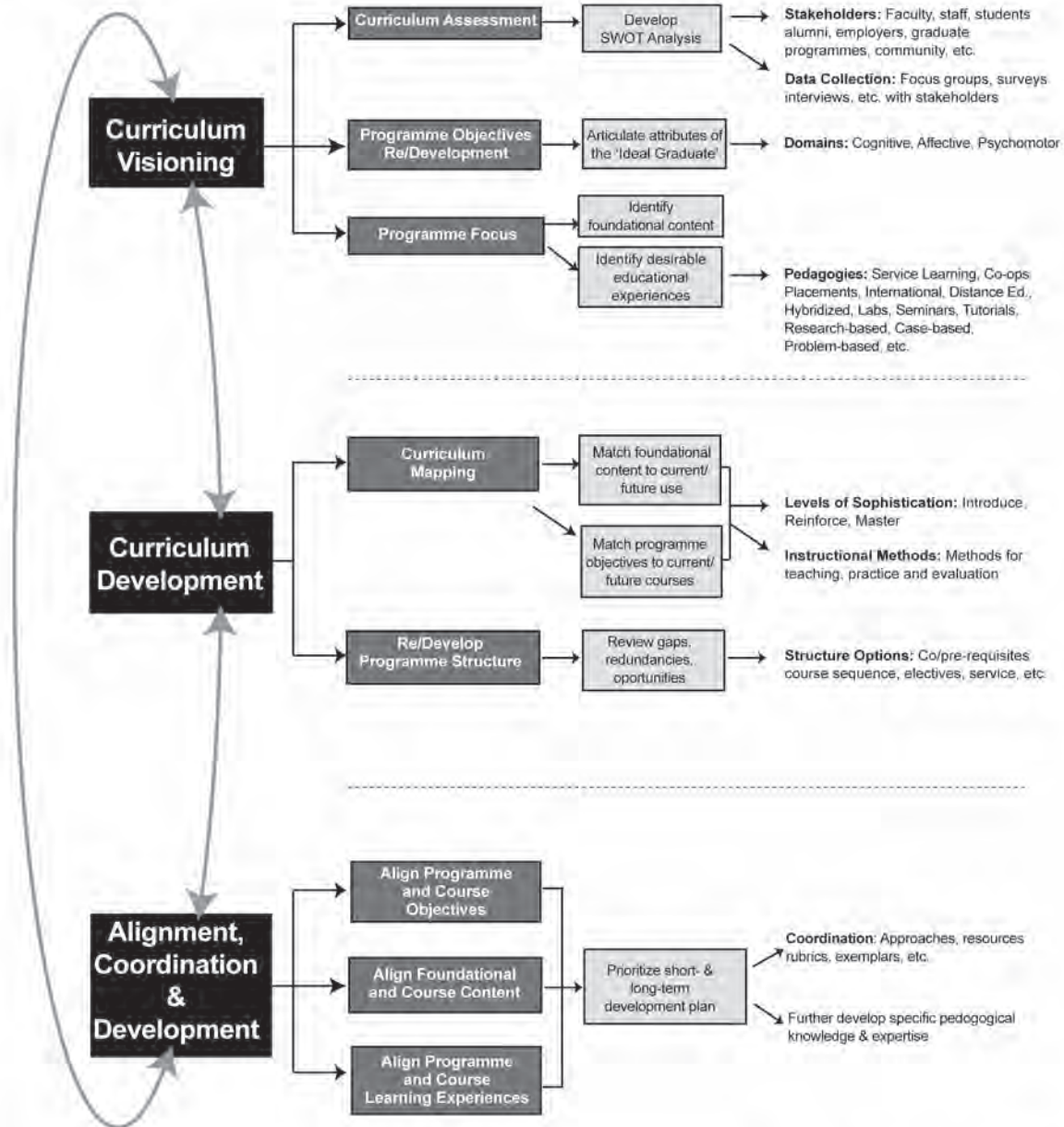
www.josseybass.com

Contains the following chapters:

- Hubball, H. and N. Gold. The Scholarship of Curriculum Practice and Undergraduate Program Reform: Integrating Theory into Practice. (p. 5-20)
- Roy, D., Borin, P. and E. Kustra. Assisting Curriculum Change Through Departmental Initiatives. (p. 21-32).
- Hill. A. Continuous Curriculum Assessment and Improvement: A Case Study. (p. 33-45).
- Devine, SM., Daly, K., Lero, D. and C. MacMartin. Designing a New Program in Family Relations and Applied Nutrition. (p. 47-57).
- Pennee, DP. Between Cultures: Using Curriculum Assessment to Develop and Deliver the Integrated Core of an Arts and Sciences Program. (p. 59-67).
- Zundel, P. and T. Mengel. The University of New Brunswick's Renaissance College: Curricular Evolution and Assessment at the Faculty Level. (p. 69-82).
- Evers, F. and J. Wolstenholme. Integrating Knowledge, Skills and Values into the Curriculum Development Process at University of Guelph-Humber. (p. 83-91).
- Hubball, H., Gold, N., Mighty, J. and J. Britnell. Supporting the Implementation of Externally Generated Learning Outcomes and Learning-Centered Curriculum Development: An Integrated Framework. (p. 93-105).
- Hughes, J.C. Supporting Curriculum Assessment and Development: Implications for the Faculty Role and Institutional Support. (p. 107-110).
- Resource for Curriculum Mapping (free) from Tufts University: <http://vue.tufts.edu>
- Maggie Cusson, Carleton University, Moving Towards an Outcomes-based Curriculum: <http://www1.carleton.ca/oqa/ccms/wp-content/ccms-files/Degree-Level-Expectations-March-2012.pdf>
- Ryerson University, Curriculum Development: <http://www.ryerson.ca/lt/programs/curriculum/curriculumdevelopment/#Analyze>
- University of Guelph, Course progression maps: <http://www.tss.uoguelph.ca/id/currdev/maps/index.cfm>
- University of Waterloo, Curriculum Mapping Template: http://cte.uwaterloo.ca/teaching_resources/OCAV/index.html

9. CURRICULUM EVOLUTION - PROCESS OVERVIEW

Curriculum Evolution Process Overview



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10. Assessment of Teaching and Learning ([Section 2.1.6](#))

The following websites have some excellent resources and examples to illustrate application of Degree Level Expectations, Learning Outcomes:

<http://ontarioedudevelopers.wikispaces.com/Group5>

<http://www.saea.uottawa.ca/>

http://ir.lib.uwo.ca/cjsotl_rcacea/vol1/iss1/8

<http://abcresource.loyalistcollege.ca/>

<http://ccl.mcmaster.ca/COU/>

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/vpacademic/avpa/pdf/LearningOutcomes.pdf>

<http://www.cou.on.ca/Issues-Resources/Student-Resources/Publications/Reports/PDFs/Ensuring-the-Value-of-University-Degrees-in-Ontari.aspx>

<http://www.ryerson.ca/It/programs/curriculum/degreelevelexpectations/index.html>

http://www.oecd.org/edu/imhe/OT_policies_and_practices.pdf

11. Assessment of Teaching and Learning, continued (Sections [2.1.6 a](#) and [b](#))

QAF 2.1.6 a): When developing a new program proposal, what information is reasonable and appropriate to meet the QAF evaluation criterion 2.1.6 a “Appropriateness of the proposed methods for the assessment of student achievement of the intended program learning outcomes and Degree Level Expectations?”

External Reviewers and the Appraisal Committee/Quality Council members need to be able to discern the *relation* between the method of assessment and the particular learning outcome and reflecting the appropriate Degree Level Expectations (UUDLEs or GDLEs). To give an obvious example, if a learning outcome is focused on the development of *oral* communication skills, then a written test as the method of assessment would be questionable. If an outcome indicates the importance of *applying* specific knowledge in order to develop a set of cognitive and conceptual problem-solving skills, then written tests and assignments certainly can be appropriate. If an outcome concerning such application involves achieving designated proficiency of hands-on skill, then a practical assignment with, but not limited to, observational assessment would have a more immediate relation to this outcome. Simply put, “hands-on application” and “written conceptualization” do not convey a clear and immediate relation.

Reviewers of a program proposal ask the same questions that students and instructors ask: “is the assignment or assessment method well-suited for students to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, attributes, etc. and for instructors to be able to assess and evaluate the demonstration?”

Some examples of how universities have provided information that assists reviewers to assess this criterion are included below:

Example 1: Proposal for new undergraduate program

The proposal lists several types of formative and summative assessments methods. The program emphasizes hands-on methods of assessments, such as lab and field work, and independent research projects. The proposal provides a table that shows the alignment between program learning outcomes and assessment methodologies.

Example 2: Proposal for a new Honours Bachelors program

In addition to traditional tests and exams that measure recall of content and application of knowledge, the program will assess comprehensive knowledge through projects that require application. Deep learning, critical thinking, and creative problem-solving include knowledge of alternative bases of wisdom and methodologies in measured relation to those of the “Western” mainstream tradition. There will also be an emphasis on community engagement and experiential learning, wherever possible. Learning is also demonstrated through ethical research practices, as well as written and oral presentations, which are key skills that need to be practiced and developed to prepare graduates for career success.

Examples of such an approach to assessment include:

- Evaluating student ability to merge diverse knowledges, including those non-Eurocentric and community-based with Western theoretical concepts in essays, presentations, research projects and exams
- Measuring student ability to identify and communicate the impacts of historical institutional and governmental policies of the health, wellbeing, self-determination and organization of a specific community
- Gauging student efficacy in identifying, supporting and assisting in the research interests of self-defined communities
- Evaluating student use of community-designed theoretical frameworks towards the development of practical, meaningful and innovative applications that benefit community partners and the university.

The proposal indicated that the assessment practices in program would include:

- Tests & Examinations
- Research Essay
- Seminar Presentation
- Oral Examination/Assessment
- Research Project
- Simulation
- Critical Reflection
- Debates
- Presentations
- Relevant Community Engagement

Example 3: Master’s Program with Capstone

Assessment of Learning Student performance in the program will be assessed through a variety of methods including: reports, presentations, assignments and project portfolios, cumulative for the calculation of course grades. A table presented very clearly the techniques to be used to assess skills and competencies associated with designated program learning outcomes. These included: Assignments, Projects, Capstone, Portfolio, Presentations

Assessing Experiential Learning Through its modular and flexible structure, the program has been designed to be responsive and accommodating to student interests and creativity. Responsiveness necessitates an infrastructure for assessing learning that ensures rigor, consistency and meaningful standards across the potentially diverse outcomes anticipated.

Central to this tension between flexibility and consistency is the capstone project, to be evaluated by the Program Committee.

Capstone requirements include a project proposal and the selection of a Project Advisory Committee (PAC) for approval by the Program Committee. The project proposal must include a rubric and metric for individual and group evaluation that will be negotiated between students and their PAC and approved by the Program Committee to ensure rigor across projects and the means for final capstone assessment and evaluation. This apparatus will provide project specific flexibility to define deliverables and outcomes, and a program-wide system for assessing quality and student achievement. Students are required to provide project updates every three months to ensure ongoing feedback and review before final deliverable(s) are evaluated. Finally, the Project Advisory Committee will be required to submit a grade and an assessment of the project with clear demarcations of individual student contributions (in the case of group projects) to the Program Committee for review.

Responsibility for helping students to navigate the program and address any flagged issues lies with the program Director and departmental Graduate Coordinators. The Program Committee will also report to the Curriculum Committee and will forward any student issues or appeals that cannot be resolved at the program level to the department committees on standing. At the program level, the Director, Graduate Coordinators, and the Program Committee will be responsible for approving the student admissions, capstone proposals, Project Advisory Committee composition and final project evaluations. Students and student progress through the program as a whole will be closely monitored by program administrators to ensure appropriate progress and that all programmatic requirements are met.

Example 4: Master's Program

Pedagogical and Evaluation Strategies: Faculty members use a multi-modal method for course instruction. This method is also applied to evaluation. Students are evaluated on their core knowledge gained in the course; however, application of these concepts is a key component of the student's evaluation. For example, exams and midterms are designed with a combination of questions to ensure that students not only understand concepts, but also know how to apply them, how to make appropriate decisions to determine potential solutions, and to use their knowledge to develop unique or innovative solutions. Student performance is also measured in terms of their written and oral communication skills in the majority of the courses, which allows students to develop their communication skills continuously throughout their entire degree, leading to graduates who have the basic knowledge and skills required but who can use this knowledge effectively and appropriately. Lastly, students will keep an e-portfolio throughout the entirety of the program. The portfolio includes the deliverables from the core courses, the research method course, the specialization courses and, the Major Research Paper. The portfolio will help them to integrate knowledge acquired in various courses and their MRP, and enable faculty to make an assessment based on the overall program learning outcomes.

Example 5: Master's Program

The program will utilize a variety of methods to assess student achievement across the program-learning objectives during and after the twelve-month program (presented in a Table depicting relations between assessment methods and learning outcomes). Assessment includes community partner feedback through a survey provided at the end of the placement; written and oral class work, such as term papers, draft of proposed methods, critical reflections, presentations, and final grades; the MRP proposal (including the Research Ethics Board application); and the final

MRP. To provide information about classroom work, instructors will be asked to provide a breakdown of the class final grade mean by type of work completed. We will also track presentations at conferences, teaching feedback for TAs, participation in research grants and scholarships and awards. An exit survey will be administered upon completion of the MRP to assess student perspectives on their own achievement, level of satisfaction with the program, and future plans. If students are in agreement, we will occasionally contact program alumni to find out how they have used their MA training.

Rationale: These methods of demonstrating and documenting student achievement are appropriate because they provide an on-going assessment of the student during the program and are easily recorded for longer-term uses. The community partner survey will assess satisfaction with 1) the work accomplished by the student, and 2) placement facilitation and oversight by university staff and faculty. Student reflections at the end of the placement will provide the student perspective on these same topics. Administering an exit survey will then provide a broader overall assessment of the program, from the student's perspective. Following up with the alumni over time provides information of the longer-term value of the program both for students and society, and ensuing cyclical program reviews.

2.1.6 b): When developing a new program proposal, what information is reasonable and appropriate to meet the QAF evaluation criterion 2.1.6 b "Completeness of plans for documenting and demonstrating the level of performance of students, consistent with the institution's statement of its Degree Level Expectations?"

"Documenting" and "demonstrating" depend on the nature of the program. "Level of performance" infers a continuum of success. For instance, many programs, whether traditional academic or those with an immediate practical application, document for their own records the grade spread of a graduating cohort (Undergraduate: cumulative major in the context of cumulative Degree GPA; Graduate: cumulative in-program). Some Programs set a course grade or GPA number which students must achieve for graduation. Many programs calculate completion versus placement rates, sometimes with the assistance of professional organizations for data collection, and devise plans for surveying alumni one-year post-graduation, then five-years. Again, types of documentation as well as the aim and need of demonstration are program-specific. There is no one-size fits all. "Documentation" is a function of the different needs of programs for the information; however, all programs will undergo review every eight years.

Each proposal is assessed, in part, in terms of whether program design and delivery, and student performance of knowledge, skills, and abilities are achieved at the level of the degree (undergraduate Bachelor's, graduate Diploma, Master's, Doctoral). In addition to these expectations, each proposal is also assessed, given the program design and delivery, in terms of whether students are actually achieving the outcomes specified as central to the program. Criterion 2.1.6b asks programs to devise ways of demonstrating and documenting whether such outcomes are being achieved primarily as a means of programs' ongoing self-assessment as well as to provide information for future cyclical program reviews.

Simply put, "how do you plan to assess (document and demonstrate) whether all the effort put into designing and, soon, delivering the program is working in the way you expected and with the levels of success you expected? What sort of information do you need in order to be able to answer that question?" Generally speaking, that information is drawn from students' actual results during the program and upon graduation as well as after graduation.

For some programs, isolating the most appropriate information – the *what*, but also the *how* – is a challenge, including one of human resources; however, meeting the challenge in a program-specific way is a necessity when program design, approval, and delivery befall learning *outcomes*. Some examples of how universities are providing this information in their new program proposals are shown below:

Example 1: Proposal for new undergraduate program

Projects or assignments for the capstone courses will be created with not only the course, but also program learning outcomes in mind, so that both individual faculty and the program as a whole have a way of evaluating whether or not students have met the program learning outcomes and degree level expectations.

To document and demonstrate the level of performance of students with respect to program learning outcomes, the university is using the Desire2Learn Insights tool. With this tool, course level assignments are linked to course and program outcomes and degree level expectations to provide quantitative data on student achievement of program level learning outcomes.

To complement the direct forms of program assessment, as an indirect form, students are exposed to the program learning outcomes when they begin their degree, and in an exit survey upon graduation, they are asked their opinion on how well they feel the outcomes were reflected in the course curriculum, as well as how well they feel they were achieved.

Example 2: Proposal for new Honours Bachelor's Program

The program will be externally reviewed during cyclical reviews, and assessed on an ongoing basis through indicators such as student grades, integrative assessment practices, and awards data. Classes, and assessment practices, will be closely monitored on an ongoing basis and as we receive feedback from students, faculty, teaching assistants, community members, and others. Ultimately, we will judge success by assessing the career success and satisfaction of our graduates and thus we will make every effort to maintain contact with our graduates to this end. Efforts to improve the program, whether in content or delivery, in response to this data/feedback will be routine and on-going in order to better address contemporary issues that arise in relevant communities.

Appendices provide curriculum-mapping and assessment charts (Program Learning Outcomes tied to specific courses and a table indicating with assessment type was attributed to each course learning outcome).

Example 3: Proposal for Master's program in a professional discipline

Proposal indicated that the program would use accreditation requirements to ensure that students are meeting the program learning outcomes.

Example 4: Proposal for new Master's Program

The plans for documenting and demonstrating the level of student performance have been designed specifically to be consistent with the degree level expectations. The program-level learning outcomes are based on the DLEs and provide the backbone for the program. Onto these were mapped appropriate courses and methods of assessment. Since the MRP is the capstone experience and is associated with most of the learning outcomes and DLEs, upon successful completion students will have achieved the program's objectives. In addition, more global

methods of assessment, such as the exit survey, provide a broader view of the program and student performance. Together, these assessment methods provide a complete picture of the program that is easily documented and can be used for formal cyclical reviews or other purposes.

12. Sample Program Proposal Brief ([Section 1.6](#), [Section 2.2.5](#), [Section 2.2.10](#), and [Section 3.1](#))

This template is available for download from the Quality Council's website (<http://www.oucqa.ca/resources-publications/templates/>) and may be adapted to meet the needs of an institution's approved IQAP. However, the information requested in this template is the minimum required to meet the criteria specified in the Quality Assurance Framework. It is anticipated that institutions will have additional information required in their IQAPs and that information is welcomed by the Quality Council in the university's submission.

For details on additional information that MTCU may require for funding purposes, please refer to the annual MTCU memo "Call for Program Approval Submissions".

"[Click here and type the University(s) Name]"

**Program Proposal Brief
of the
[Degree]
Submitted to the
Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance
[date]**

NOTE – This Template should be used for submission of a Proposal for one of the categories described below. Minor adjustments will need to be made to the Template accordingly, although the basic information in the Evaluation Criteria is common to all programs:

- **New Program:** Any degree, degree program, or program of specialization, currently approved by Senate or equivalent governing body, which has not been previously approved for that institution by the Quality Council, its predecessors, or any intra-institutional approval processes that previously applied. To clarify, for the purposes of this Framework, a 'new program' is brand-new: that is to say, the program has substantially different program requirements and substantially different learning outcomes from those of any existing approved programs offered by the institution. Examples of what constitutes a 'new program' are provided in the [Guide](#).
- **Program of Specialization** (*e.g.*, a **major, honours program, concentration** or similar): An identified set and sequence of courses, and/or other units of study, research and practice within an area of disciplinary or interdisciplinary study, which is completed in full or partial fulfillment of the requirements for the awarding of a degree, and is recorded on the graduate's academic record.
- **Expedited Approvals:** The Quality Council will normally require only an **Expedited Approval** process where:
 - a) an institution requests endorsement of the Quality Council to **declare a new Field in a graduate program**. (Note: Institutions are not required to declare fields in either master's or doctoral programs.); or
 - b) there are proposals for **new for-credit graduate diplomas**; or
 - c) there are **Major Modifications to Existing Programs**, as already defined through the **IQAP**, proposed for a degree program or program of specialization. (Note: Applies only in cases where an institution requests a Quality Council review of a major modification.)

As Expedited Approvals do not require the use of external reviewers, Appendices 1 and 2 do not apply.

The Template should be used in conjunction with the Quality Assurance Framework.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Objectives of the program ([Section 2.1.1](#))

[Describe the consistency of the program with the institution's mission and academic plans.

Also describe the program's requirements and associated Learning Outcomes in addressing the institution's own undergraduate or graduate Degree Level Expectations, and the degree nomenclature.]

1.2 Admission requirements ([Section 2.1.2](#))

[Describe the program's admission requirements for the Learning Outcomes established for completion of the program.

Explain any alternative requirements, if any, for admission into an undergraduate, graduate or second-entry program, such as minimum grade point average, additional languages or portfolios, along with how the program recognizes prior work or learning experience.]

1.3 Structure ([Section 2.1.3](#))

[Describe the program's structure and regulations to meet specified program Learning Outcomes and Degree Level Expectations.

For graduate programs, provide a clear rationale for program length that ensures that the program requirements can be reasonably completed within the proposed time period.]

1.4 Program content ([Section 2.1.4](#))

[Describe the ways in which the curriculum addresses the current state of the discipline or area of study.

Identify any unique curriculum or program innovations or creative components.

For research-focused graduate programs, provide a clear indication of the nature and suitability of the major research requirements for degree completion.

Provide evidence⁷ that each graduate student in the program is required to take a minimum of two-thirds of the course requirements from among graduate level courses.]

1.5 Mode of delivery ([Section 2.1.5](#))

[Describe the proposed mode(s) of delivery to meet the intended program learning outcomes and Degree Level Expectations.]

1.6 Assessment of teaching and learning ([Section 2.1.6](#))

[Describe the proposed methods for the assessment of student achievement of the intended program learning outcomes and Degree Level Expectations.

Detail the plans for documenting and demonstrating the level of performance of students, consistent with the institution's statement of its Degree Level Expectations.]

⁷ Including course requirements, with course numbers and course names.
Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance

1.7 Resources for the proposed program ([Section 2.1.7](#))

[Describe the administrative unit's planned utilization of existing human, physical and financial resources, and any institutional commitment to supplement those resources, to support the program.]

Provide evidence of participation of a sufficient number and quality of faculty who are competent to teach and/or supervise in the program.

Provide evidence that there are adequate resources to sustain the quality of scholarship produced by undergraduate students as well as graduate students' scholarship and research activities, including library support, information technology support, and laboratory access.]

1.8 Resources for graduate programs only ([Section 2.1.8](#))

[Provide evidence⁸ that faculty have the recent research or professional/clinical expertise needed to sustain the program, promote innovation and foster an appropriate intellectual climate.]

Where appropriate to the program, provide evidence that financial assistance for students will be sufficient to ensure adequate quality and numbers of students.

Provide evidence of how supervisory loads will be distributed, and the qualifications and appointment status of faculty who will provide instruction and supervision.]

1.9 Resources for undergraduate programs only ([Section 2.1.9](#))

[Evidence of and planning for adequate numbers and quality of:

- (a) faculty and staff to achieve the goals of the program; or*
- (b) of plans and the commitment to provide the necessary resources in step with the implementation of the program;*
- (c) planned/anticipated class sizes;*
- (d) provision of supervision of experiential learning opportunities (if required); and*
- (e) the role of adjunct and part-time faculty.]*

1.10 Quality and other indicators ([Section 2.1.10](#))

[Define and provide indicators that provide evidence² of quality of the faculty (e.g., qualifications, research, innovation and scholarly record; appropriateness of collective faculty expertise to contribute substantively to the proposed program).

Provide evidence of a program structure and faculty research that will ensure the intellectual quality of the student experience.]

1.11 Fields in a graduate program [optional] ([Section 3.](#))

[If a graduate program wishes to have a Quality Council endorsed field, please provide the following information:]

The master's program comprises the following fields: ... *[list, as applicable]*

The PhD program comprises the following fields: ... *[list, as applicable]*

⁸ Faculty CVs provided should be in a standardized format, such as that used by one of the Tri-Councils.
Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance

APPENDIX 1

External reviewer(s)' report ([Section 2.2.7](#))

[Please insert the External Reviewer(s)' Report here.]

APPENDIX 2

Institutional response to the external reviewer(s)' report ([Section 2.2.8](#))

[Please insert the institution's response to the External Reviewer(s)' Report here.]

13. Choosing Arm's Length Reviewers ([Section 2.2.6](#) and [Section 4.2.4](#))

Best practice in quality assurance ensures that reviewers are at arm's length from the program under review. This means that reviewers/consultants are not close friends, current or recent collaborators, former supervisor, advisor or colleague.

Arm's length does not mean that the reviewer must never have met or even heard of a single member of the program. It does mean that reviewers should not be chosen who are likely, or perceived to be likely, to be predisposed, positively or negatively, about the program. It may be helpful to provide some examples of what does and does not constitute a close connection that would violate the arm's length requirement.

Examples of what may not violate the arm's length requirement:

- Appeared on a panel at a conference with a member of the program
- Served on a granting council selection panel with a member of the program
- Author of an article in a journal edited by a member of the program, or of a chapter in a book edited by a member of the program
- External examiner of a dissertation by a doctoral student in the program
- Presented a paper at a conference held at the university where the program is located
- Invited a member of the program to present a paper at a conference organized by the reviewer, or to write a chapter in a book edited by the reviewer
- Received a bachelor's degree from the university (especially if in another program)
- Co-author or research collaborator with a member of the program more than seven years ago
- Presented a guest lecture at the university
- Reviewed for publication a manuscript written by a member of the program

Examples of what may violate the arm's length requirement:

- A previous member of the program or department under review (including being a visiting professor)
- Received a graduate degree from the program under review
- A regular co-author and research collaborator with a member of the program, within the past seven years, and especially if that collaboration is ongoing
- Close family/friend relationship with a member of the program
- A regular or repeated external examiner of dissertations by doctoral students in the program
- The doctoral supervisor of one or more members of the program

ADDITIONAL ADVICE FOR CHOOSING EXTERNAL REVIEWERS/CONSULTANTS

External reviewers/consultants should have a strong track record as academic scholars and ideally should also have had academic administrative experience in such roles as undergraduate or graduate program coordinators, department chair, dean, graduate dean or associated positions. This combination of experience allows a reviewer to provide the most valuable feedback on program proposals and reviews.

14. Sample Template for Reviewers' Reports for New Programs ([Section 2.2.7](#))

This template is available for download from the Quality Council's website (<http://www.oucqa.ca/resources-publications/templates/>) and may be adapted to meet the needs of an institution's approved IQAP.

Reviewers' Report on the Proposed (INSERT DEGREE) Program in (INSERT PROGRAM NAME) at (INSERT UNIVERSITY)

(REVIEWER 1)
UNIVERSITY ADDRESS

(REVIEWER 2)
UNIVERSITY ADDRESS

1. OUTLINE OF THE REVIEW

Please indicate whether this review was conducted by desk audit or site visit. For those reviews that included a site visit, please indicate the following:

- Who was interviewed
- What facilities were seen
- Any other activities relevant to the appraisal

2. EVALUATION CRITERIA

NOTE: Reviewers are asked to provide feedback on each of the following Evaluation Criteria. *(Institutions are to add to these criteria if their IQAP includes additional criteria.)*

2.1 Objectives

- Consistency of the program with the institution's mission and academic plans.
- Clarity and appropriateness of the program's requirements and associated learning outcomes in addressing the institution's own undergraduate or graduate Degree Level Expectations.
- Appropriateness of degree nomenclature.

2.2 Admission requirements

- Appropriateness of the program's admission requirements for the learning outcomes established for completion of the program.
- Sufficient explanation of alternative requirements, if any, for admission into a graduate, second-entry or undergraduate program, such as minimum grade point average, additional languages or portfolios, along with how the program recognizes prior work or learning experience.

2.3 Structure

- Appropriateness of the program's structure and regulations to meet specified program learning outcomes and degree level expectations.
- For graduate programs, a clear rationale for program length that ensures that the program requirements can be reasonably completed within the proposed time period.

2.4 Program content

- Ways in which the curriculum addresses the current state of the discipline or area of study.
- Identification of any unique curriculum or program innovations or creative components.
- For research-focused graduate programs, clear indication of the nature and suitability of the major research requirements for degree completion.

- Evidence that each graduate student in the program is required to take a minimum of two-thirds of the course requirements from among graduate level courses.

2.5 Mode of delivery

Comment on the appropriateness of the proposed mode(s) of delivery to meet the intended program learning outcomes and Degree Level Expectations.

2.6 Assessment of teaching and learning

- Appropriateness of the proposed methods for the assessment of student achievement of the intended program learning outcomes and Degree Level Expectations.
- Completeness of plans for documenting and demonstrating the level of performance of students, consistent with the institution's statement of its Degree Level Expectations.

2.7 Resources for all programs

- Adequacy of the administrative unit's planned utilization of existing human, physical and financial resources, and any institutional commitment to supplement those resources, to support the program.
- Participation of a sufficient number and quality of faculty who are competent to teach and/or supervise in the program.
- Evidence that there are adequate resources to sustain the quality of scholarship produced by undergraduate students as well as graduate students' scholarship and research activities, including library support, information technology support, and laboratory access.

2.8 Resources for graduate programs only

- Evidence that faculty have the recent research or professional/clinical expertise needed to sustain the program, promote innovation and foster an appropriate intellectual climate.
- Where appropriate to the program, evidence that financial assistance for students will be sufficient to ensure adequate quality and numbers of students.
- Evidence of how supervisory loads will be distributed, and the qualifications and appointment status of faculty who will provide instruction and supervision.

2.9 Resources for undergraduate programs only

Evidence of and planning for adequate numbers and quality of:

- a) faculty and staff to achieve the goals of the program; or
- b) of plans and the commitment to provide the necessary resources in step with the implementation of the program;
- c) planned/anticipated class sizes;
- d) provision of supervision of experiential learning opportunities (if required); and
- e) the role of adjunct and part-time faculty.

2.10 Quality and other indicators *(to be inclusive of the institution's own additional quality indicators)*

- Definition and use of indicators that provide evidence of quality of the faculty (*e.g.*, qualifications, research, innovation and scholarly record; appropriateness of collective faculty expertise to contribute substantively to the proposed program).
- Evidence of a program structure and faculty research that will ensure the intellectual quality of the student experience.

NOTE: Reviewers are urged to avoid using references to individuals. Rather, they are asked to assess the ability of the faculty as a whole to deliver the program and to comment on the

appropriateness of each of the areas of the program (fields) that the university has chosen to emphasize, in view of the expertise and scholarly productivity of the faculty.

3. OTHER ISSUES

4. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

NOTE: The responsibility for arriving at a recommendation on the final classification of the program belongs to the Appraisal Committee. Individual reviewers are asked to refrain from making recommendations in this respect.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

15. Annual Report on Major Modifications ([Section 3.4](#))

Each year, the Quality Council will request an annual report from each university which summarizes the major program modifications approved through the university's internal approval process.

The Quality Assurance Secretariat will request that the Template available on the [Quality Council's website](#) be completed and submitted on an annual basis.

16. Creating an Effective Self-Study for Program Reviews ([Section 4.2.3 a](#))

FEATURE	BEST PRACTICE	POOR PRACTICE
GOAL/PURPOSE	The Self-study is aimed at quality improvement. Self-appraisal asks for analysis of strengths and weaknesses, and asks how improvements can be made.	The Self-study is aimed at defending or justifying the status quo.
FOCUS	The Self-study focuses on the undergraduate /graduate programs (as required by the IOAP and Quality Assurance Framework).	The Self-study focuses on the academic unit (department), rather than on the undergraduate/ graduate program.
CHARACTER/NATURE OF REPORT	The Self-study is reflective, analytical, self-critical, and evaluative.	The Self-study is descriptive rather than reflective, analytical, self-critical, and evaluative.
TREATMENT OF CURRICULUM	The curriculum is critically examined, with an eye to degree level expectations, learning objectives, learning outcomes and to change and improvement.	The curriculum is described.
DEGREE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS/ LEARNING OBJECTIVES/ OUTCOMES	The Self-study expresses degree level expectations and learning objectives that operationally drive admission requirements, curriculum content, modes of delivery, bases of evaluation of student performance and commitment of resources.	The Self-study does not address or only superficially addresses Degree Level Expectations, learning objectives, or learning outcomes
TREATMENT OF DATA	Data are analyzed – e.g. used as the basis for performance evaluation. Data analysis contributes to the assessment of strengths and weaknesses of the program.	Raw data are attached as appendices, or used only in a descriptive manner.

FEATURE	BEST PRACTICE	POOR PRACTICE
AUTHORSHIP	The Self-study results from a participatory self-critical process and documents involvement in its preparation of all faculty in the program, and of students.	The Self-study is written by the Chair, without evidence of buy-in (or sometimes even knowledge) of faculty and students.
STUDENT INVOLVEMENT	The Self-study shows active involvement of students in the agenda-setting, the self-analysis, and the preparation of the Report.	There is no evidence of active involvement of students in the preparation of the Self-study.
STUDENT ROLE	Students contribute to the preparation of the Self-study, as well as meet with the external reviewer(s)	Students meet with the external reviewer(s), but have no input to the self-appraisal.
STUDENT SURVEY	A student survey provides another valuable source of input to the Self-study.	Missing or if a student survey is included, it is conducted after the Self-study is prepared, and so makes no input to that document.
RELATIONSHIP TO EXTERNAL REVIEWER MANDATE	The Self-study does address, and inform, all of the issues external reviewers are asked to review.	The Self-study does not address, or inform, all of the issues external reviewers are asked to review.
IQAP/QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK ELEMENTS	The Self-study does explicitly address each of the "elements" specified in the IQAP and Quality Assurance Framework.	The Self-study does not explicitly address each of the "elements" specified in the IQAP and Quality Assurance Framework.
INSTITUTIONAL CRITERIA	The institution does specify the criteria of program quality used in its program review process.	The institution does not specify the criteria of program quality used in its program review process.

17. Academic Services that Contribute to Academic Quality of Programs ([Section 4.2.3 c\) 8.](#))

The following is a list of academic services (names of such units may vary by institution) that may influence the quality of academic programs and therefore be subject of analysis in conducting a program review. This list of is not meant to be exhaustive. These services may themselves be the subject of periodic review at the university.

- Library
- Co-operative Education
- Academic Advising (including International student advising)
- Teaching and Learning Office
- Technology Support for Teaching and Learning
- Distance/Online Learning
- Peer Learning Support
- Disabilities/Accessibility Services
- Student Academic Support Services
- Academic Computing Services

18. Engaging Stakeholders in the Creation of Self-Studies for Cyclical Program Review and Proposals for New Programs

Introduction:

Like other portions of this *Guide* to the Quality Assurance Framework, this section is designed to acquaint users of the QAF to some ways of interpreting and implementing the expectations set out in the framework.

The material here supplements a chart, drawn from the UPRAC period, which outlines best practices in creating an effective self-study for program reviews. At the key contacts meeting in 2015 some presentations and discussion focussed on institutional best practices in involving principal stakeholders both in the creation of self-studies and in the development of new program proposals. Building on this discussion, the guide offers here some examples and illustrations of the ways several Ontario universities have engaged a variety of stakeholders (e.g. Students, alumni, employers, community partners) in these key aspects of quality assurance.

It is not expected that the advice or the templates provided here will suit every institution or be compatible with every IQAP, but appropriately customized, the tips and cues here should be helpful to institutions seeking guidance on how best to engage stakeholders in the preparation of self-studies and new program proposals.

Surveys:

Soliciting input from stakeholders through on-line or pre-paid mail surveys can provide valuable insight to demonstrate student demand and interest and societal need or labour market demand for proposed new programs. Such input can also provide feedback to evaluate, for example, the quality, value, and relevance of an existing program. At the University of Windsor, and perhaps at other institutions, the IQAP office has blanket approval from the research ethics board for the administration of surveys that adhere to a pre-defined scope.

Once a bank of questions has been developed, a survey can be readily tailored to the specific respondent group and for the particular need. Links to examples of surveys and questions that might be incorporated into surveys are as follows:

1) [Ryerson University Survey Example: Student](#); [Ryerson University Survey Example: Employers](#); [Ryerson University Survey Example: Alumni](#)

2) [Queen's University Survey Example](#): Possible survey questions to determine societal need/labour market demand and student demand for a new program.

3) A final model is drawn from a professional accreditation review in the United States, which proposes various questions that might be asked of employers, students and alumni in the course of preparing a self-study: <http://www.asha.org/academic/accreditation/accredmanual/section4.htm>.

Involvement of Students in Cyclical Review Processes:

Employing meaningful ways to involve students in the development of the cyclical review self-study is an important, yet sometimes challenging, part of the preparation for the cyclical review. Many institutions seek student perspectives by including students in focus groups and/or as part of the team responsible for leading the preparation of the self-study report. Input from alumni is frequently obtained by conducting surveys of past graduates.

Another way to approach this is to ensure that there is ongoing involvement of students in the academic unit's governance structures and processes. When students are providing *regular* input on their courses and program requirements, it is very easy to gather and incorporate that information into a self-study that results in meaningful analysis and reflection. Constant contact with students, through their representation on departmental committees and through their involvement in departmental seminars or workshops, can facilitate their engagement in quality assurance processes.

Curriculum Review Committees are a regular feature of many academic units. They provide an ongoing opportunity for students to reflect on their learning experiences in the program and to provide suggestions for changes as part of a structured curricular review process.

Academic Councils that discuss, advise, and/or recommend policy in the areas of curriculum, practicums, research and professional or community matters often include student representation from across each of the program years. A regular feature of Council meetings can include a report from each cohort of students (such as first-year, second-year, and/or the professional year). Student representatives should be encouraged to use Councils as a way to provide feedback to faculty about their satisfaction with the program and to help inform thinking about future program directions. A collection of student reports submitted over the course of the period covered by the review can provide rich information for the analysis that goes into a self-study.

Student Associations can also provide mechanisms for students to communicate ideas and concerns about the quality of a program from the students' perspective. A student association can serve as a conduit between students and the faculty or Chair, and often can share valuable recommendations that arise from the students' perceptions of the learning environment.

Students Evaluation of Teaching and Their Educational Experience: Written comments, if gathered regularly when students assess the courses they take and the instruction they receive, can be a rich source of information about students' perceptions. Similarly, NSSE or CGPSS data, if suitably disaggregated, can be pressed into service when self-studies are initiated.

Engaging Other Stakeholders in the Self-Study Process:

Staff:

Some universities choose to involve members of the support staff in the development or review of self-studies. For example, a senior secretary, responsible for the administration of a unit's graduate programs might well be included on the committee that drafts a self-study.

Student Awards Offices:

Awards offices can be primed to produce data on awards as an index of student scholarship. In the STEM disciplines, [NSERC's Form 100](#) can also be helpful as a valuable source of information.

Alumni:

When alumni belong to program advisory committees, they can be a resource in the preparation or critiquing of self-studies. Units that are in regular contact with alumni, either through the circulation of newsletters, the use of social media, or regular alumni events, may find it easier to engage alumni for quality assurance processes.

19. Best Practice Advice for the Preparation of Final Assessment Reports and Implementation Plans Arising from Cyclical Program Reviews ([Section 4.2.5 b](#))

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-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	<p>Consult with Teaching and Learning Centre</p> <p>Faculty to attend professional development re Assessment of Learning Outcomes</p> <p>New assessment techniques to be determined and phased in</p>	<p>Department Chair and faculty</p> <p>Dean to provide funding to support</p> <p>Department Chair and Faculty</p>	<p>By January 2014</p> <p>By January 2014</p> <p>By September 2014</p>
Acquire additional current specific software for students	<p>Plan for installation of the updated software</p> <p>Budget for updates</p> <p>Install upgrades</p>	<p>Department Chair, Director of TSC</p> <p>Department Chair/Dean</p> <p>TSC</p>	<p>By January 2014</p> <p>April 2014</p> <p>By September 2014</p>
Plan for updating and improving laboratory space and equipment	<p>Document the lab space and equipment issues</p> <p>Create planning group</p> <p>Develop Plan and proposal for funding</p>	<p>Department Chair working with Facilities Dept</p> <p>Dean</p> <p>Department Chair, Dean, Provost and Advancement</p>	<p>By March 2014</p> <p>By Fall 2014</p> <p>By March 2015</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 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 arms-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

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

Sample 2

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 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>
<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.

ONTARIO UNIVERSITY **Sample 2**
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 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

20. Sample Template for Reviewers' Reports on Existing Programs ([Section 4.2.4 e\)](#))

This template is available for download from the [Quality Council's website](#) and may be adapted to meet the needs of an institution's approved IQAP.

External Reviewers' Report on the (INSERT DEGREE) Program in (INSERT PROGRAM NAME) at (INSERT UNIVERSITY)

(Reviewer 2)

(Reviewer 1)
UNIVERSITY ADDRESS

UNIVERSITY ADDRESS

1. OUTLINE OF THE VISIT

- Who was interviewed
- What facilities were seen
- Any other activities relevant to the appraisal

2. GENERAL OVERVIEW

Recognizing the institution's autonomy to determine priorities for funding, space, and faculty allocation, please address the following:

- Identify and commend the program's notably strong and creative attributes.
- Describe the program's respective strengths, areas for improvement, and opportunities for enhancement.
- Recommend specific steps to be taken to improve the program, distinguishing between those the program can itself take and those that require external action.

3. PROVIDE FEEDBACK ON THE EACH OF THE FOLLOWING EVALUATION CRITERIA

(NOTE: Institutions may add to this list if their IQAP includes additional criteria)

3.1 Objectives

- Is the program consistent with the institution's mission and academic plans?
- Are the program requirements and learning outcomes clear, appropriate and in alignment with the institution's statement of undergraduate and/or graduate Degree Level Expectations?

3.2 Admission requirements

- Are admission requirements appropriately aligned with the learning outcomes established for completion of the program?

3.3 Curriculum

- Does the curriculum reflect the current state of the discipline or area of study?
- What evidence is there of any significant innovation or creativity in the content and/or delivery of the program relative to other programs.
- Are the modes of delivery appropriate and effective to meet with program's identified learning outcomes.

3.4 Teaching and assessment

- Are the methods used to assess student achievement of the defined learning outcomes and degree level expectations appropriate and effective.
- Are the means of assessment (particularly in the students' final year of the program) appropriate and effective to demonstrate achievement of the program learning objectives and the institutions (or program's) own degree level expectations?

3.5 Resources

- Assess the appropriateness and effectiveness of the academic unit's use of existing human, physical and financial resources in delivering its program(s). Note reviewers must recognize the institution's autonomy in determining priorities for funding, space and faculty allocation.
- Comment on the appropriateness and effectiveness of academic services (e.g. library, co-op, technology, etc.) to support the program(s) being reviewed.

3.6 Quality Indicators (to be inclusive of the institution's own additional quality indicators)

- Comment on the outcome measures of student performance and achievement for the program(s).
- Faculty: comment on: the qualifications; research and scholarly record; class sizes; % classes taught by permanent or non-permanent (contract) faculty; number, assignments and qualifications of part-time or temporary faculty.

NOTE: Consultants are urged to avoid using references to individuals. Rather, they are asked to assess the ability of the faculty as a whole to deliver the program and to comment on the appropriateness of each of the areas of the program(s) that the university has chosen to emphasize, in view of the expertise and scholarly productivity of the faculty.

- Students: comment on: applications and registrations; attrition rates, times-to-completion; final year academic achievement; graduation rates; academic awards; student in-course reports on teaching.
- Graduates: comment on: rates of graduation; employment after six months and two years after graduation; post graduate study; skills match' alumni reports on program quality (if available and permitted by FIPPA).

3.7 Additional graduate program criteria

- Is the students' time-to-completion both monitored and managed in relation to the program's identified length and program requirements.
- What is the quality and availability of graduate supervision
- What quality indicators does the program use to provide evidence of faculty, students and program quality, for example:
 - a) Faculty: funding, honours and awards, commitment to student mentoring
 - b) Students: grade-level for admission, scholarly output, success rates in provincial and national scholarships, competitions, awards and commitment to professional and transferable skills
 - c) Program: evidence of program structure and faculty research that will ensure the intellectual quality of the student experience
 - d) Sufficient graduate level courses that the students will be able to meet the requirement that two-thirds of their course requirements be met through courses at this level.

3.8 Quality enhancement

- Comment on initiatives taken to enhance the quality of the program and the associated learning and teaching environment

4. OTHER ISSUES

5. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Signature: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

21. Resources on Curriculum Development, Assessment, Learning Outcomes, Quality Indicators ([Section 4.3.6](#))

- <http://ontarioedudevelopers.wikispaces.com/Group5>
- <http://www.saea.uottawa.ca/>
- <http://cll.mcmaster.ca/COU/>
- Wolf, P. and J. Christensen Hughes (Eds). Curriculum Development in Higher Education: Faculty Driven Processes and Practices. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*. Volume 112, Winter 2007 (www.interscience.wiley.com)
- Wolf P., Hill A., and F. Evers. [Handbook for Curriculum Assessment](#). Winter 2006. University of Guelph, Teaching Support Services
- National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Champaign, IL 61820 (occasional paper series is excellent and available www.learningoutcomesassessment.org)
- Liberal Education and America's Future (LEAP) (<http://www.aacu.org/leap/>) good information on learning outcomes in undergraduate programs
- Kuh, G.D. and P.T. Ewell (2010). The state of learning outcome assessment in the United States. *Higher Education Management and Policy* Volume 22/1:9-28.
- Coates, H. (2010). Defining and Monitoring academic standards in Australian higher education. *Higher Education Management and Policy* Volume 22/1:29-45.
- Christensen Hughes, J. and J. Mighty, eds. *Taking Stock: Research on Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*. Montreal and Kingston: Queen's Policy Studies Series, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010

Thanks to Bob Parsons, University of Ottawa; Peter Wolf, University of Guelph; and Karen Nicholson, McMaster University, for their advice and input to this section of the Guide.

22. Meeting Requirement that Two-Thirds of Course Requirements be met through Courses at the Graduate Level ([Section 4.3.8](#))

OCGS By-Laws and Procedures (section 10.4.4) provide the following description of the expectation for graduate level courses which may be useful to describe this requirement:

"Since graduate work implies work beyond the undergraduate level, quality considerations require that the number of undergraduate or combined courses be limited to a minor proportion of the course requirements for the graduate program; as well, the additional work required of graduate students enrolled in such courses should be outlined. OCGS believes that the number of undergraduate courses or combined courses in which undergraduate students predominate should be not more than one third of the total course requirement for the degree.

Course offerings must be appropriate, in currency and in depth of knowledge, for the level of the program and sufficiently varied to provide breadth. To respect the principle of "truth in advertising," academic units should assess their course offerings to ensure that courses that are advertised are in fact given with some regularity.

It is essential in all cases that the graduate student be required to demonstrate the necessary intellectual development in understanding, argument and professional judgment through suitable vehicles, such as projects."