



ONTARIO UNIVERSITIES
COUNCIL on QUALITY ASSURANCE

**SUMMARY OF THE PRINCIPAL
FINDINGS OF THE QUALITY
ASSURANCE AUDIT OF OCAD
UNIVERSITY**

SEPTEMBER 2019

Summary of the Principal Findings of the Quality Assurance Audit of OCAD University

September 2019

OCAD University is one of three universities to be audited in the seventh year of this first cycle of quality assurance audits under the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF). The primary objective of the audit is to determine if the institution has complied with the parameters of its Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), as ratified by the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance (the Quality Council), for the development of new programs, cyclical program reviews and major program modifications. Three arm's-length members of the Quality Council Audit Panel conducted the audit, with assistance throughout the process from Quality Council staff.

The audit itself included a review of the OCAD University IQAP (the original version ratified by the Quality Assurance Council in 2011) and subsequent IQAPs, ratified by the Quality Assurance Council in 2012 and 2018. The audit focused on a sample of nine programs that have undergone the various processes included in the QAF. A desk audit of documents for each program preceded a three-day site visit, which took place from March 13 – 15, 2019. During the site visit, auditors met with faculty, staff, and students associated with the programs selected for audit, as well as with senior academic administrators. The site visit was very well planned and the wide range of participants from OCAD University were very well prepared. Further, they demonstrated that OCAD University has firmly embraced the quality assurance process and seeks to make improvements on an ongoing basis. The auditors commend those responsible for organizing the meetings and offer their thanks for the hospitality and assistance they received throughout their stay.

The audit focused on the following programs:

- **New Programs**
 - Design for Health, MDes
 - Creative Writing, BFA

- **Cyclical Program Reviews**
 - Photography, BFA (2013/14)
 - Environmental Design, BDes (2015/16)
 - Strategic Foresight, MDes (2015/16)
 - Digital Futures, MA/MFA/GDip (in progress)
 - Digital Futures, BFA/BDes (in Progress)

- **Major Modifications**
 - Interior Design, BDes – new specialization
 - New Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation – minor for all undergraduate programs

The audit report makes six recommendations. Broadly speaking, these concern: the requirement for the University to adhere to its ratified IQAP; the need to bring its IQAP and practices in preparing responses to external review reports in conformity with the Quality Assurance Framework; the involvement of staff in cyclical program reviews; and the need to adhere to its IQAP by ensuring that one-year monitoring reports are prepared for new programs and that new program proposals address all of the evaluation criteria required by the QAF.

The audit report also includes twelve suggestions, which are offered to assist OCAD University in strengthening its demonstrated commitment to the quality assurance agenda. The suggestions refer to:

- Ways in which OCAD University might improve its overall quality assurance processes;
- Clarifying the roles of Senate committees, students and internal reviewers in quality assurance process; and
- Suggestions specific to cyclical program reviews such as adding timelines and creating a formal description of the lead individual.

In addition to recommendations and suggestions, the report identifies nine commendations related to institution-wide instances of substantial support for the quality assurance process. Many of these relate to the efforts to build a dynamic and engaged quality assurance community within the institution. The Office of the Vice President Academic and Provost (VPAP), specifically the Manager of Academic Initiatives, Governance and Quality Assurance and the Faculty and Curriculum Development Centre, have played an acknowledged leadership role in this regard.

The audit identified four aspects of OCAD University's quality assurance process that are examples of best practice in specific cases that could be deployed more broadly within the University and may also be of value to other institutions. These relate to: the diligent use, by programs, Faculties and VPAP, of Final Assessment reports and Implementation Plans in on-going program planning and reporting; the strong involvement of students in a CPR process; and the increasingly sophisticated environmental scans used to assess the demand for new programs.

In conclusion, OCAD University demonstrates a remarkable level of energy in its quality assurance, with a focus on excellence and on using quality assurance to its strategic advantage.

Recommendations

OCAD University must:

RECOMMENDATION 1: Use the IQAP ratified by the Quality Council in its quality assurance processes.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Ensure that there are separate responses to external review reports prepared by the program and the appropriate Dean.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Ensure the engagement of staff in cyclical program reviews.

RECOMMENDATION 4: Complete one-year reports on new programs for consideration by Senate.

RECOMMENDATION 5: Ensure that learning outcomes are linked to curriculum (through curriculum mapping) and to modes of assessment.

RECOMMENDATION 6: Ensure that new program proposals address all of the evaluation criteria required by the Quality Assurance Framework.

Suggestions

There are 12 suggestions, which are listed below.

OCAD University should:

SUGGESTION 1: Develop a flowchart or clear summary statement clarifying the roles of Senate committees with responsibilities for quality assurance.

SUGGESTION 2: Continue to increase its emphasis on providing data and support for data analysis to programs going through QA, especially the CPR process.

SUGGESTION 3: Consider involving the Senate Undergraduate Studies Committee and the Senate Graduate Studies Committee more directly in the IQAP revision process.

SUGGESTION 4: Consider integrating the contributions of courses and resources from the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the School of Interdisciplinary Studies into the development of new programs and the review of existing programs earlier in the quality assurance process.

SUGGESTION 5: Consider developing a formal description of the role and responsibilities of individuals assigned the lead in a CPR or new program development.

SUGGESTION 6: Develop a protocol for ensuring an arm's length relationship between members of the institution and external reviewers during the site visit.

SUGGESTION 7: Consider broadening the membership of the Senate Graduate Studies Committee.

SUGGESTION 8: Review the process for engaging with students to ensure that they understand the intent and nature of the quality assurance process and their roles in the process.

SUGGESTION 9: Consider adding timelines to its CPR processes in the IQAP.

SUGGESTION 10: Adopt the practice of reviewing whether to merge its cyclical reviews of undergraduate and graduate programs on a case-by-case basis.

SUGGESTION 11: Review the role of the internal reviewer in writing the reviewers' report.

SUGGESTION 12: Include a statement in its IQAP about how it will link quality assurance to accreditation processes.