

Advice on Workflow Processes to Help Complete a CPR

Observations from the first cycle of audits

- The auditors were impressed with the development of a large-scale database to record, track and report on the stages of proposals and reviews connected with the IQAP at one university. This record system was seen to serve as a model of best practices and, when fully instituted, was deemed to mark an important turning point in the progress and evolution of quality assurance at this particular university.
- Auditors were impressed by the improvements made by one QA office with systems such as Monday.com (project management system), Curriculog (curriculum management system) and WISC (inventory management system) to monitor and track the processes and documentation associated with quality assurance activities and to make resources available centrally and electronically.
- Other universities that used bespoke or third-party tools were similarly commended, while virtually every university that did not have some form of centralized document and QA-activity tracking tool received some form of suggestion or, in some instances, a recommendation, to implement one.

From the Omnibus Report (pages 13 – 15)

Session 2b – Digital Tools for Managing QA Processes

The QA Key Contacts from Carleton University and the University of Guelph, as well as a staff representative from Ontario Tech University, explained the value of developing and/or refining digital solutions for managing QA processes. Each of these institutions has recently developed or acquired a new system to manage these processes.

Key Themes

Value added for the institution: It was noted that one benefit of a central data and document management system is that it can facilitate a smoother process, which in turn, can encourage critically important buy-in across the university. Other benefits noted included:

- Creates efficiencies, can reduce complexities and minimize errors;
- Documents can be readily tracked, regardless of personnel changes;
- Historical record of all QA processes (new program approvals, CPRs, major modifications) and the associated governance steps;
- Internal bottlenecks can more readily be identified;
- Stakeholder consultation and governance steps can easily be tracked;
- QA processes are centrally managed and tracked;
- Customized forms and templates can be associated with the system;

- Program Learning Outcomes can be recorded and mapped; and
- Depending on the system, the integration of curriculum / program development, student information systems, and the calendar can also be centrally supported.

Customized versus “out-of-the-box” software: Third-party systems were preferred, as internally developed systems can be costly to develop and maintain. The third-party systems being used by the presenters and/or throughout the course of the first Cycle of Audits were as follows:

- Courseleaf (curriculum management system) (see also here: [Institutional Quality Assurance | \(uoguelph.ca\)](https://www.uoguelph.ca/institutional-quality/assurance))
- Curriculog and Acalog (curriculum management systems)
- Jira (work management system)
- Monday.com (project management system)
- SharePoint (project and document management system)
- WISC (inventory management system)

Challenges and Opportunities:

- The implementation of such systems requires significant up-front resources in the form of staff time and money;
- The merging of historical and existing practices and data into the new system will need to be thought through;
- While such systems result in increased transparency, attention also needs to be paid to the issue of confidentiality (NOTE: System permissions based on user type can be helpful in this regard); and
- The implementation of such systems requires institutional change with appropriate training. The rollout, volume and frequency of such training will also need to be determined.

Other items of note: When determining which system is best for your institution, the QA Key Contacts advised considering who will be the end users and how many will need access to the system? For example, will the users only be internal to the university, or will there also be external users? What are the plans for the launch of the new system? What can be done to ensure quality control? Finally, it is always helpful to capture lessons learned and to expect the evolution of the system accordingly.

Some related observations from the first cycle of audits: Virtually all of the audit reports included a suggestion that the relevant university consider implementing a central QA tracking system where one was not already in place. Those that were in the process of building or had already established such a system were commended for doing so, with many of these systems being cited as a best practice.

Additional resources – These are available via the following link:

- [Exchange Forum Resources – June 20 2021](#) (password protected)