

# Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance

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# Outline of Presentation

- Overview of quality assurance
  - International context
  - Ontario context
- Quality Council mandate
- Key elements of the new Quality Assurance Framework
- Degree Level Expectations (DLE) and Learning Outcomes
- Questions/discussion

# International Context

- Quality assurance in Ontario universities operates at the level of excellence consistent with western Europe, United Kingdom, United States, and Australia
- Like other global leaders in quality assurance, Ontario universities are shifting their focus to learning outcomes
- Ontario's Degree Level Expectations cover each degree level and universities have learning outcomes for individual courses and programs

# Quality Assurance – Past and New Practices

- Ontario has had rigorous quality assurance for its university programs since the 1960s:
  - Ontario Council on Graduate Studies (OCGS)  
(1965 - 2011)
  - Undergraduate Program Review Audit Committee (UPRAC)  
(1996 - 2011)
- New:
  - Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance (Quality Council) 2010 -

# Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance

- The Quality Council
- Arm's length from universities and government
  - Two committees to carry out its key duties: an Appraisal Committee to review all new programs; and
  - an Audit Committee to audit universities on a periodic cycle
- Recommendations go from committees to the Quality Council for approval

# Membership of the Quality Council

Dr. Sam Scully	Chair (Post Secondary Education Consultant)
Dr. Ron Bond	Out-of Province Quality Assurance Expert (Chair, Campus Alberta Quality Council)
Dr. Sue Horton	Graduate Dean Representative (Associate Provost, Graduate Studies, University of Waterloo)
Mme. Maureen Lacroix	Citizen Representative (Sudbury)
Dr. Moira McPherson	Undergraduate Dean Representative (Associate Vice-President (Academic), Lakehead University)
Prof. Eric Nay	Academic Colleague Representative (Associate Dean Liberal Studies, OCADU)
Dr. Patrick Oosthuizen	Academic Colleague Representative (Professor Emeritus, Engineering, Queen's University)
Dr. Cheryl Regehr	OCAV Representative (Vice-Provost Academic Programs, University of Toronto)
Dr. Bruce Tucker	OCAV Representative (Associate Vice-President Academic Affairs, University of Windsor)
Dr. Donna Woolcott	Ex-Officio Member (Executive Director Quality Assurance)

# About the New Framework

- Each university developed its Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP) to meet framework standards
- All IQAPs were ratified by Quality Council
- Every IQAP includes protocols for:
  1. New program approvals at both institutional and Quality Council levels
  2. Expedited approvals at both levels
  3. Cyclical review of existing programs
  4. Audit process

# New Programs:



# All New Programs

- Must be based on degree level expectations appropriate to degree (undergraduate, graduate)
- Identify learning outcomes

## Undergraduate

Political Science

Autonomy and  
Professional Capacity

Moral Maturity

An ethical  
practitioner who  
values diversity of  
opinion and  
perspectiveWill utilize Canada's  
Charter of Rights and  
Freedoms in  
determining resolution  
to case studies

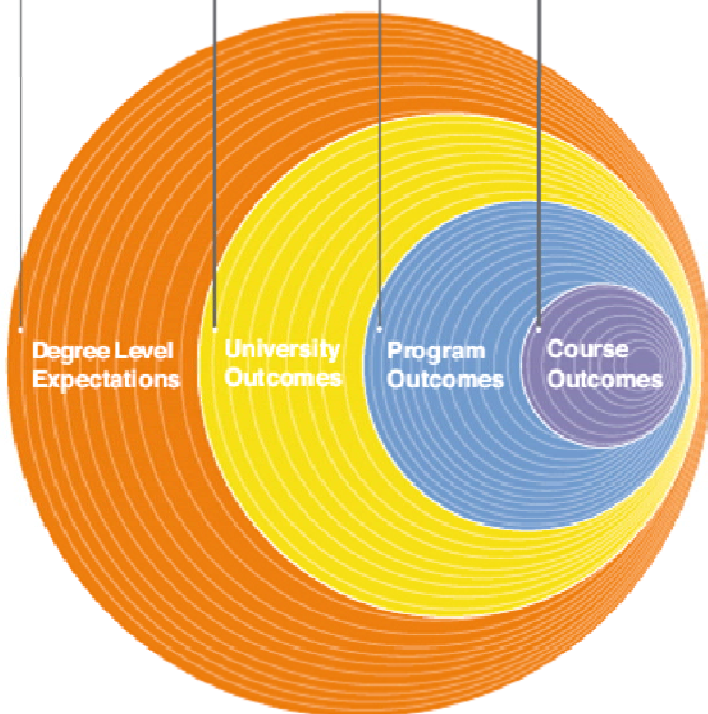
Nursing

Autonomy and  
Professional Capacity

Moral Maturity

A graduate of  
BSN program  
practices in  
compliance with  
the College of  
Nurses of Ontario  
Ethics Practice  
StandardWill demonstrate  
respect for life in  
clinical practicum  
course by  
following the  
behavioural  
directives defined  
in the Ethics  
Practice Standard

## Graduate

PhD program in  
any fieldResearch and  
scholarshipAbility to produce  
original researchPublication of a  
research paper in  
a peer-reviewed  
scholarly/profes-  
sional journalAssess strengths  
and weaknesses of  
various research  
methodologies to  
test hypothesesOntario Universities  
Council on Quality  
AssuranceIntroduction of Degree  
Level Expectations and  
Learning Outcomes

# Examples of Learning Outcomes and Degree Level Expectations

- Three examples of the presentation of program Learning Outcomes linked to Degree Level Expectations are shown on the next three slides
- Illustrations are adapted from submissions to date to the Quality Council for new program approval

# Mapping Learning Outcomes to DLEs - 1

DLEs	Learning Outcome	How the Program Design & Requirement Elements Support the Attainment of Student Learning Outcomes
1. Depth & Breadth of Knowledge	<p>Depth and breadth of knowledge is defined in (program name) as a thorough and up-to-date understanding of the history, and sociocultural practices of (program name).</p> <p>This is reflected in students who are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Apply such knowledge to a synthesized account of how...</li> <li>•Address current issues...</li> </ul>	<p>The program design and requirement elements that ensure these student outcomes for depth and breadth of knowledge are:</p> <p>The student's final degree requirement, the doctoral thesis, will entail...</p>
2. Research & Scholarship	Research and scholarship is defined in (program name)...	The program design...
3. Level of Application of Knowledge	Research and scholarship is defined in (program name)...	The program design...

## Mapping Learning Outcomes to DLEs - 2

	Depth of Knowledge	Research & Scholarship	Level of Application of Knowledge	Professional Capacity / Autonomy	Level of Communication Skills	Awareness of Limits of Knowledge
Learning Outcome 1	√	√	√	√		
Learning Outcome 2 a)	√		√		√	√
Learning Outcome 2 b)	√		√		√	
Learning Outcome 3 a)				√	√	
Learning Outcome 3 b)			√	√	√	√
Learning Outcome 3 c)	√		√	√	√	√
Learning Outcome 4 a)				√	√	
Learning Outcome 4 b)		√	√	√		
Learning Outcome 4 c)	√		√	√		

# Mapping Learning Outcomes to DLEs - 3

## 1. Depth and Breadth of Knowledge.

Depth and breadth of knowledge is defined in XX Program as: a knowledge of the history of the development of, and contemporary approaches to, ..... This is reflected in students who are able to:

- display expertise in ...;
- critically review existing research literatures to identify key areas for research;
- etc.

## 2. Research and Scholarship

Research and Scholarship is defined in XX Program as: the ability to conceptualize, design, and implement research for ... This is reflected in students who are able to:

- review relevant literatures;
- identify original research questions and appropriate methodologies/analytics for addressing these questions;
- etc.

# Evaluation Criteria: New Programs

## 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.

# Evaluation Criteria: New Programs (Continued)

## 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.

# Evaluation Criteria: New Programs (Continued)

## 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.

# Evaluation Criteria: New Programs (Continued)

## 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.

# Evaluation Criteria: New Programs (Continued)

## **2.1.5 Mode of delivery**

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

# Evaluation Criteria: New Programs (Continued)

## 2.1.6 Assessment of teaching and learning

- a) Appropriateness of the proposed methods for the assessment of student achievement of the intended program learning outcomes and Degree Level Expectations.
- 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.

# Evaluation Criteria: New Programs (Continued)

## 2.1.7 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.

# Evaluation Criteria: New Programs (Continued)

## 2.1.8 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.

# Evaluation Criteria: New Programs (Continued)

## **2.1.9 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.

# Evaluation Criteria: New Programs (Continued)

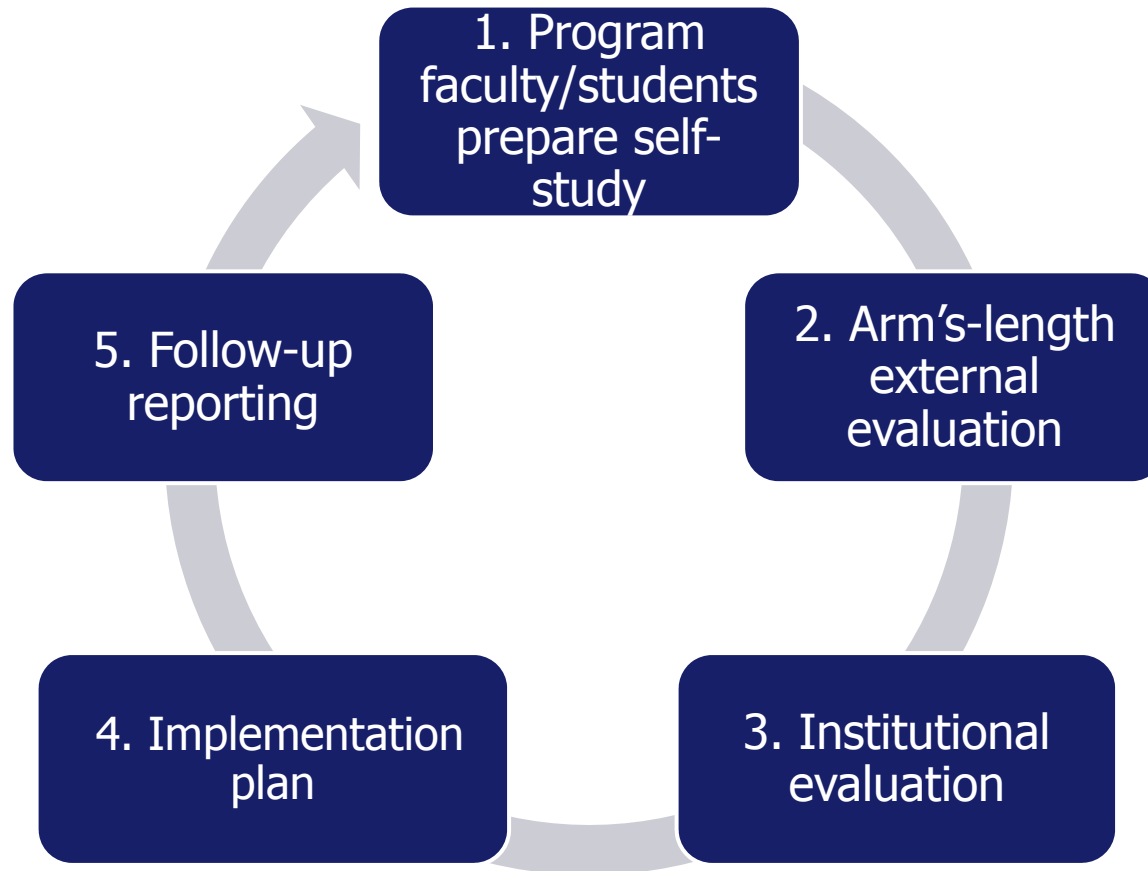
## 2.1.10 Quality and other indicators

- 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.

# Protocol for Expedited Approvals

- Can be used for some new program proposals as specified in the QAF: new field in graduate program; new collaborative program; new for-credit graduate diploma; or when an institution requests it, there are major modifications to existing programs or programs of specialization
- Quality Council does not require the use of external reviewers
- Reduced processes by Quality Council

# Cyclical Review of Existing Programs: Five Principal Components



# Evaluation Criteria: Cyclical Reviews

## 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.

# Evaluation Criteria: Cyclical Reviews (continued)

## 4.3.2 Admission requirements

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

# Evaluation Criteria: Cyclical Reviews (continued)

## 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.

# Evaluation Criteria: Cyclical Reviews (continued)

## 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.

# Examples of Assessment of LOs

- Traditional methods of assessing knowledge and skills including examinations, written and oral presentations, assignments, etc.
- Learning portfolios (including e-portfolios) that document curricular and co-curricular learning during and at completion of the program
- Specific skills demonstration in classroom/workplace/community/laboratory/simulations
- Documentation of solutions/products/processes that result from learning activities

# Evaluation Criteria: Cyclical Reviews (continued)

## 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.

# Evaluation Criteria: Cyclical Reviews (continued)

## 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.

# Evaluation Criteria: Cyclical Reviews (continued)

## 4.3.6 Quality indicators

- 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.

# Evaluation Criteria: Cyclical Reviews (continued)

## **4.3.7 Quality enhancement**

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

# The Audit Process

- Conducted on an 8-year cycle through a panel of auditors that reports to the Audit Committee of the Quality Council
- Audit panel made up of past and present senior academics selected for their strength in developing academic programs
- The panel examines each institution's compliance with its Institutional Quality Assurance Process
- The Quality Council has the authority to approve or not approve the auditors' report

## Summary: Quality Assurance for Ontario Universities

- Processes designed to encourage high standards, quality and innovation while being efficient
- Processes support the creation of a “culture of quality” in the universities
- Learning outcomes are front and centre at all degree levels, programs and courses
- New system is more transparent and facilitates accountability to key stakeholders: students, their parents, university community, governments

# For More Information:

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See the Quality Assurance Framework and Guide  
at:

<http://www.cou.on.ca/related-sites/the-ontario-universities-council-on-quality-assura.aspx>

# Questions?