

# Cyclical Academic Program Reviews & Quality Assurance

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# Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance (Quality Council or QC)

- Established by OCAV in 2010
- Operates at arm's length from the provincial government and the public universities
- Supported by an Appraisal Committee and an Audit Committee
- Reviews and approves each new undergraduate and graduate program at every Ontario university
- Monitors the cyclical review of undergraduate and graduate programs which are conducted every 7 years at Waterloo

Source: <http://oucqa.ca/framework/1-2-quality-assurance-in-ontario/>

# Academic Program Reviews

- Every university follows its own Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), which aligns with the Quality Council's Quality Assurance Framework
- UW's IQAP was first approved in 2011, revised in 2016, and being rewritten 2020
- The Vice-President Academic & Provost has authority over UW's IQAP
- Compliance with the IQAP is the responsibility of the AVPA and AVPGSPA with support from the Quality Assurance Office
- Universities are audited by the Quality Council (QC) every 8 years – the University of Waterloo was last audited in March 2018

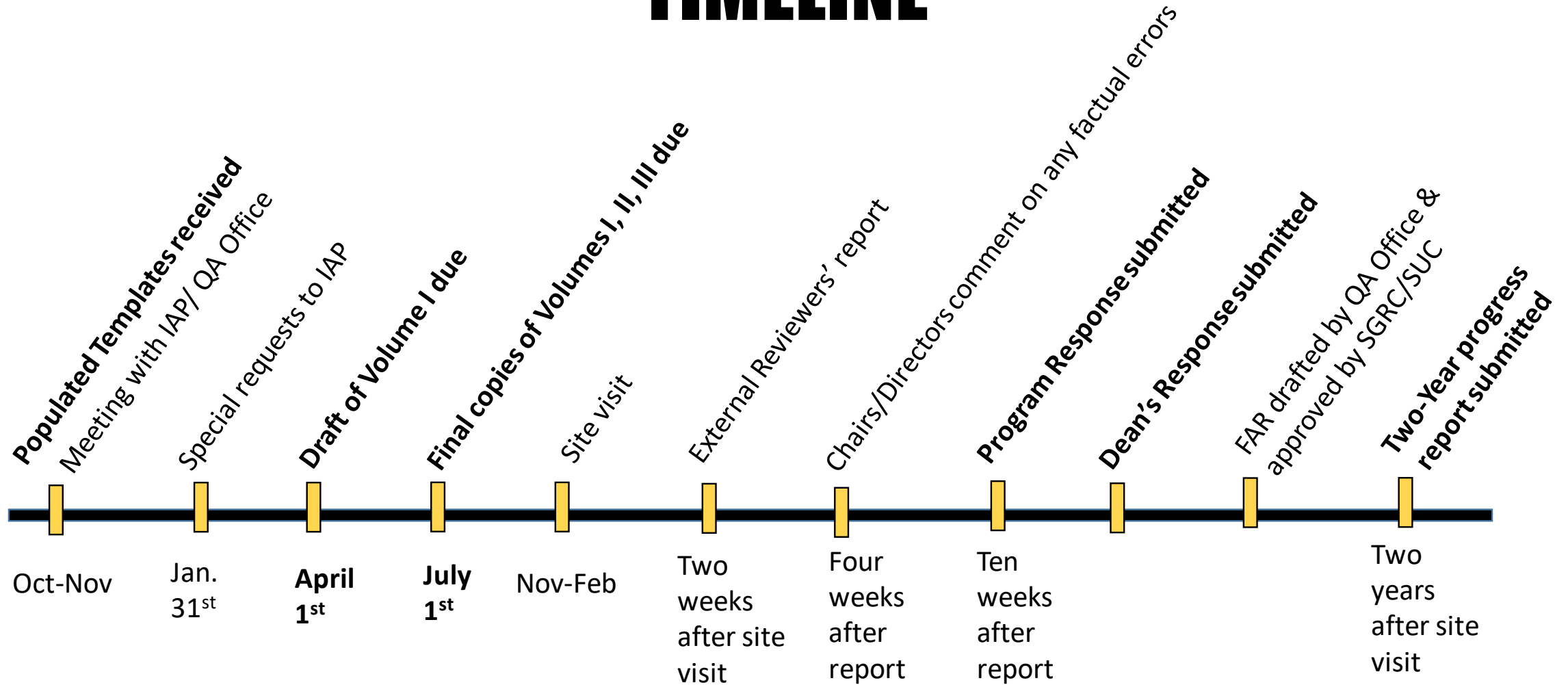
# Why?

- Foster a culture of continuous improvement to achieve and maintain the highest possible standards of academic excellence in programs
- Systematically reflect on program strengths and weaknesses and determine actions to further enhance program quality
- Assess program quality relative to counterparts in Ontario, Canada and internationally
- Meet public accountability expectations through a credible, transparent and action-oriented review process

# How is program quality assessed?

- **Program curriculum:** does it meet undergraduate (UDLEs) and graduate Degree Level Expectations (GDLEs)?
- **Student data:** does the program attract and retain high quality students? (applications, enrolment, attrition, time-to-completion, final-year achievement, post-graduation outcomes etc.)
- **Faculty data:** are students taught by high quality faculty? (research and scholarly record, qualifications, class sizes, % of classes taught by part-time or temporary instructors etc.)
- **Infrastructure:** is support for the program sufficient to meet requirements? (classrooms, laboratories, research facilities etc.)

# CYCLICAL PROGRAM REVIEW PROCESS TIMELINE



# ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEWS: STEPS

- 1) Self-Study (Volumes I, II, III)
- 2) Site Visit and External Reviewers' Report
- 3) Program Response and Dean's Response
- 4) Final Assessment Report
- 5) Two-Year Progress Report

# **1. SELF-STUDY (VOLUMES I, II, III)**



# Self-Study (Volumes I, II, III)

- Approx. 12 months to compile Volumes (June 2020 - April 2021)
  - Draft deadline April 1, 2021. Final deadline July 1, 2021.
- Templates exist to guide each Volume
- Majority of data provided by IAP (Note: program must compile some data)
- Programs reflect on data and interpret any trends
- Programs **must** include a curriculum map with the UDLEs or GDLEs
- Each program **must** examine their strengths, challenges, weaknesses and opportunities for improvement

# Effective Self-Studies are:

- Reflective, analytical, self-critical and evaluative
- Aimed at quality improvement
- Grounded in work from previous review cycle (self-study, external reviewers' recommendations, implementation plan)
- Based on input from a variety of sources (students, faculty, adjuncts, alumni and employers)

Adapted from: [Quality Assurance Framework: Creating an Effective Self-Study for Program Reviews](#)

# Institutional Analysis and Planning (IAP) will:

- Provide you with data from the last 6 years\*
- Hold a data analysis meeting with each program to review early findings
- Receive special data requests up to January 31, 2021
- Provide existing student survey data for your program (e.g., NSSE, OUGS etc.)
- Provide a survey toolkit that includes common questions programs can use gathering feedback from current students and alumni

**\*Seven year data will be provided in June once convocation has passed –  
this should not hinder your analysis.**

# Additional Reports

- Summaries will be prepared by academic support units: Co-operative and Experiential Education (CEE) and the Library. These reports are to be included in the self-study and are not to be altered

## Library Report

- Available resources (e.g., collections, subscriptions and special support etc.) for the program under review
- Assessment of resources provided to the program
- Strengths of support and opportunities for improvement

## Co-op Report

- Co-op student employment rates for the program
- Geographic areas and sectors in which co-op students are employed
- Co-op student retention rates
- Employer evaluations of co-op students
- Co-op student evaluations of employers

# Additional Supports

## Centre for Teaching Excellence (CTE)

- Curriculum mapping, learning outcomes, UDLEs & GDLEs, curriculum review etc.

## Alumni Relations Officers

- Access to official alumni list, and will facilitate distribution of information such as a survey through the Alumni Relations Office

## Human Rights, Equity and Inclusion Office

- Consultation on indigenous and equity issues, training workshops and materials etc.

## Office of Academic Integrity

- Consultation on academic integrity issues, custom presentations for students, faculty and staff, academic integrity resources, and campus-wide promotion of integrity etc.

# Completing the Self-Study – where to start

## July – August

- Complete Program Information Sheet and return to QA Office.
- Identify writing team, as well as roles and responsibilities.
- Review previous documents (Self-Study, External Reviewers' Report, etc.).
- Conduct visioning exercise and begin consultations (e.g., brainstorming sessions with faculty and staff).
- Encourage faculty to update CVs.

## September – October

- Create or critique program learning outcomes and curriculum map. Update as needed.
- Continue consulting stakeholders (e.g., survey students and alumni, conduct focus groups if needed).
- Begin drafting Self-Study.

# **2. SITE VISIT & EXTERNAL REVIEWERS' REPORT**

# Site Visit

- Two arm's length external reviewers\* and one internal support person\* read self-study and come to campus for a site visit (~2 days)
- The visit typically takes place in Fall or early Winter (November – February)
- Reviewers meet with administration, academic support units, the Chair/Director, current faculty, instructors, staff, students and alumni, and tour program-related facilities

*\* Exceptions exist for minors or options*



# External Reviewers' Report

- External reviewers use a template to write their report
- The reviewers' report is submitted 2 weeks after the site visit
- The Provost, Dean, Associate Dean and the Chair/Director of the program all receive a copy of the report
- The program has 4 weeks to inform the QA Office of any factual errors in the reviewers' report
- QA Office will communicate with the reviewers should any further clarification and/or information be needed

# **3. PROGRAM RESPONSE, IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND DEAN'S RESPONSE**

# Program Response with Detailed Implementation Plan

- Due within 10 weeks of receiving the reviewers' report
  - Responds to each of the recommendations in the report
  - Describes any changes in organization, policy or governance that would be necessary to meet the recommendations
  - Assesses the resources, financial and otherwise, required to support the implementation of selected recommendations and identifies who is responsible for providing these resources
  - Prioritizes and clearly outlines proposed timelines for the implementation of recommendations to be achieved in the next 2 years vs. those that will take longer
  - Clearly identifies who is responsible for acting on each of the selected recommendations
- QA Office reviews the program response and will communicate with the program should any further clarification and/or information be needed

# Dean's Response

- The program response is shared with the Dean, who will complete their response to plans outlined in the self-study, the external reviewers recommendations, and the programs response as required by the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF 4.2.4 g).

# **4. FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT**

# Final Assessment Report (FAR)

- A review synopsis is prepared by the Quality Assurance Office and is approved by the AVPA and/or AVPGSPA
- FAR includes the Program Response to the External Reviewers' Report, Dean's Response, and an implementation plan to address identified issues
- FAR is brought to Senate Undergraduate Council (SUC) or Senate Graduate and Research Council (SGRC) for internal review and approval
- FAR is then brought to Senate for information
- Each July, all approved FARs are submitted to the Quality Council

# **5. TWO-YEAR PROGRESS REPORT**

# Two-Year Progress Report

- Program prepares a Progress Report
  - Due 2 years from the date of the site visit
- Report is based on a template and includes:
  - Progress to date and its impact
  - Changes to implementation plan
  - Responsibility for actions
  - Resource issues
  - Any other significant developments since the program review process started
- Report is submitted to the QA Office for review, brought to SUC or SGRC for approval and then to Senate for information



# Best Practices

- Use a team approach – delegate parts of the review to faculty, staff and students. Student perspectives **must** be included.
- Regularly meet with your team about progress
- Use surveys and focus groups to get feedback from current and former students
- Avoid modifying the template – please discuss any desired modifications to the template with the QA Office
- Use bookmarks/hyperlinks and be consistent with format, font, tables, etc.

**Start now!**

# Upcoming Workshops

Thursday, September 24<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 – 4:00 pm

- **Learning Outcomes and Curriculum Mapping** hosted by Centre for Teaching Excellence
- **Surveying and Student/Alumni Engagement in Program Reviews** hosted by QA Office, Institutional Analysis and Planning, Student Success Office and Alumni Relations
- **Getting Started: The Self-Study**, hosted by the QA Office, Institutional Analysis and Planning, Co-operative and Experiential Education, Library, Office of Academic Integrity, Human Rights Equity and Inclusion

# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

**We don't have the self-study template yet. Can we get started?** Yes! There is plenty of preparatory work (e.g., surveys) that will be incorporated in the Self-Study and many sections of the Self-Study that can be completed without data (e.g., Sections 1, 2, 4, etc.).

**What format should the CVs be in?** Any format, but must be up-to-date. CVs should be available by hyperlink (e.g., uploaded behind your website).

**When will we get the template?** Early Fall. QA Office will populate the template with data provided by IAP and then share the template with the program.

# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

**How is the site visit different for minors and options?** It is one day long and the reviewers are from the University of Waterloo.

**What constitutes arm's length?** Reviewers should not be close friends, current or recent collaborators, a former supervisor, advisor, or colleague. See our [website](#) for more examples.

# CONTACTS

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- Alyssa Voigt – [alyssa.voigt@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:alyssa.voigt@uwaterloo.ca)

## Institutional Analysis and Planning

- Blair Clarence (UG program data) – [bclarence@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:bclarence@uwaterloo.ca)
- Kerry Tolson (Grad program data) – [ktolson@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:ktolson@uwaterloo.ca)
- Rohem Adagbon (Survey data) – [rohem.adagbon@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:rohem.adagbon@uwaterloo.ca)

## Office of Academic Integrity

- Erin Nearing – [academic.integrity@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:academic.integrity@uwaterloo.ca)

# CONTACTS

## Centre for Teaching Excellence

- Veronica Brown – [veronica.brown@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:veronica.brown@uwaterloo.ca)
- David Thiessen – [david.thiessen@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:david.thiessen@uwaterloo.ca)
- Faculty Liaisons – <https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/people-profiles>

## Alumni Relations

- Emily Huxley Osborne – [echuxley@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:echuxley@uwaterloo.ca)
- Faculty Alumni Officers – <https://uwaterloo.ca/alumni/about/people>

## Human Rights, Equity and Inclusion Office

- Tamara Zur – [equity@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:equity@uwaterloo.ca)

# CONTACTS

## Co-operative and Experiential Education

- Janice Bruin (AHS) – [jbruin@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:jbruin@uwaterloo.ca)
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- Justin Kieffer (Science and Pharmacy) – [jkieffer@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:jkieffer@uwaterloo.ca)

## Library

- Liaison Librarians - <https://uwaterloo.ca/library/services/librarians-subject>

# UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO



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