Cyclical Academic Program Reviews & Quality Assurance

5/23/2019

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Quality Assurance Office
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

Academic Program Reviews

- Every university follows its own Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), which aligns with the QC’s Quality Assurance Framework.
- Waterloo’s IQAP was first approved in 2011 and most recently revised in 2016.
- Compliance with the IQAP is the responsibility of the AVPA and AVPGSPA with support from the Quality Assurance Office.
- Universities are audited by the QC every 8 years – the University of Waterloo was 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 UDLEs or 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

Cyclical Program Review Orientation
ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEWS: STEPS

1) Self-Study (Volumes I, II, III)
2) Site Visit and External Reviewers’ Report
3) Program 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 (May 2019-April 2020)
- Templates exist to guide each Volume
- Majority of data provided by IAP
- Some data must be compiled by each program
- Programs reflect on data and interpret any trends
- 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, 2020
- Provide a survey toolkit that includes common questions programs can use gathering feedback from current and former students

*Seven year data will be provided in June once count data is finalized – 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
- These reports are not to be altered
Library Report includes:

- 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-operative and Experiential Education Report includes:

- 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, 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

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

Office of Academic Integrity
- Consultation on academic integrity issues, custom presentations for students, faculty and staff, and campus-wide promotion of integrity, etc.
2. SITE VISIT & EXTERNAL REVIEWERS’ REPORT
Site Visit

- Two external reviewers* and one internal support person* read self-study and come to campus for a site visit (~2 days)
- Visit typically takes place in Fall or early Winter (November – February)
- Reviewers meet with 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 AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
Program Response with Detailed Implementation Plan

- Due within 10 weeks of receiving the reviewers’ report
- Contains response to each of the reviewers’ recommendations
  - Implementation plan includes actions, responsibility for implementation and timeline
- Plans must be endorsed by the Dean or AFIW equivalent by way of a signed letter or email sent to the QA Office
- QA Office reviews the program response and will communicate with the program should any further clarification and/or information be needed
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 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
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
Summary of Process

- Self-Study (Volume I, II, III)
- Site Visit (~ 2 days)
- External Reviewers’ Report
- Program Response with implementation plan
- FAR approved by SUC or SGRC; brought to Senate for information
- Two-Year Progress Report
Reporting to Quality Council

Each July, Waterloo reports to Quality Council:

- All approved **Final Assessment Reports (FARs)**
- All approved **Major Modifications** to existing programs

The Quality Council closely evaluates each submission.
Best Practices

- Use a team approach – delegate parts of the review to faculty, staff and students. Student perspectives **must** be included.

- Avoid modifying the template – please discuss any desired modifications to the template with the QA Office

- Use surveys and focus groups to get feedback from current and former students

- Regularly meet with your team about progress

- Use bookmarks/hyperlinks and be consistent with format, font, tables, etc.

**Start now!**
## Workshops

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<tr>
<th>Workshop</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Standard Reports and Inclusions for Self-Studies</strong></td>
<td>Thursday May 30, 2019</td>
<td>2:00-3:30pm</td>
<td>NH 3318</td>
<td>QA Office, CEE, Library, Equity Office and Office of Academic Integrity</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Surveying and Student/Alumni Engagement</strong></td>
<td>Friday June 7, 2019</td>
<td>10:00-11:30am</td>
<td>NH 3318</td>
<td>QA Office, IAP and Alumni Relations</td>
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<td><strong>Learning Outcomes and Curriculum Mapping</strong></td>
<td>Thursday June 6, 2019</td>
<td>2:00-3:30pm</td>
<td>NH 3318</td>
<td>Centre for Teaching Excellence (CTE)</td>
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<td><strong>Data and Analysis</strong></td>
<td>Thursday June 13, 2019</td>
<td>2:30-4:00pm</td>
<td>NH 3318</td>
<td>Institutional Analysis and Planning</td>
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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

We don’t have the self-study template yet. Can we get started? Yes! There are 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? **Common CV format or any format, as long as the format is consistent.**

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

Quality Assurance Office
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- Alyssa Voigt – alyssa.voigt@uwaterloo.ca

Institutional Analysis and Planning
- Blair Clarance (UG program data) – bclarance@uwaterloo.ca
- Kerry Tolson (Grad program data) – ktolson@uwaterloo.ca
- Rohem Adagbon (Survey data) – rohem.adagbon@uwaterloo.ca

Office of Academic Integrity
- academic.integrity@uwaterloo.ca
CONTACTS

Centre for Teaching Excellence

- Veronica Brown – veronica.brown@uwaterloo.ca
- Faculty Liaisons – https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/people-profiles

Alumni Relations

- Alison Boyd – alison.boyd@uwaterloo.ca
- Faculty Alumni Officers – https://uwaterloo.ca/alumni/about/people

Equity Office

- Gina Hickman – gina.hickman@uwaterloo.ca
CONTACTS

Co-operative and Experiential Education

- Janice Bruin (AHS, Science, Pharmacy) – jbruin@uwaterloo.ca
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- Phil Bezaire (Engineering and Architecture) – pljbezai@uwaterloo.ca
- Jeremy Steffler (Mathematics) – jeremy.steffler@uwaterloo.ca

Library

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