Academic Program Reviews & Quality Assurance

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

- Was established by OCAV in 2010
- Operates at arm’s length from the provincial government and the public universities
- QC is supported by an Appraisal Committee and an Audit Committee

Academic Program Reviews

- Quality Council (QC) reviews and approves each new undergraduate and graduate program at every Ontario university.

- QC monitors the cyclical review of undergraduate and graduate programs which are conducted every 7 years at Waterloo.

- Some programs are reviewed more frequently (e.g., 5 years) to align with accreditation reviews by external agencies.
Academic Program Reviews

- Every university follows its own Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP)

- Waterloo’s IQAP was first approved in 2011 and was most recently revised in 2016

- Compliance is the responsibility of the AVPA and AVPGSPA with support from the Quality Assurance Office

- Universities are audited by the QC every 8 years – University of Waterloo was audited in March 2018
How is program quality assessed?

- **Program curriculum:** *does it meet UDLEs or GDLEs?*

- **Student data:** *does 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 size, % of classes taught by part-time or temporary instructors, etc.)

- **Infrastructure:** *is support for program sufficient to meet requirements?* (classrooms, laboratories, research facilities, etc.)

Source: [http://oucqa.ca](http://oucqa.ca)
Why Bother?

• 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.
Cyclical Program Review Process Timeline

- Sept-Nov: Receive templates with data from QA Office
- Jan. 31st: Meeting with IAP/QA Office
- Apr. 1st: Special requests to IAP
- Jul. 1st: Draft of Volume I due
- Nov-Feb: Final copies of Volumes I, II, III due
- Two weeks after site visit: Site visit
- Four weeks after report: Reviewers' report
- Ten weeks after report: Chairs/Directors comment on factual errors
- Four weeks later: Program response submitted
- Two years after site visit: FAR submitted to SGRC/SUC
- Two years after site visit: Two-Year progress report submitted
Academic Program Reviews in 5 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)

- Approx. 12 months to compile volumes (May - April)
- 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, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges
Effective Self-Studies Are:

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

Adapted from: Quality Assurance Framework: Creating an Effective Self-Study for Program Reviews.
Institutional Analysis & Planning (IAP)

Will:

• Provide you with data from the last 6 years*

• Receive special data requests up to **January 2019**

• Hold a data analysis meeting with each program to review early findings

• Provide a **survey toolkit** that includes common questions programs can use for gathering feedback from former and current 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-studies

• 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 (CEE) 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 Affairs Officers
Have access to the official alumni list and will facilitate distribution of information such as a survey through the Alumni Affairs 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

- Two external reviewers* and one internal reviewer* read self-study and come to campus for a site visit (~2 days)

- Visit typically takes place in Fall or early Winter (Nov. - Feb.)

- Reviewers meet with current faculty, instructors, students and alumni and tour program-related facilities

*Exceptions exist for minors or options
• External reviewers use a template to write their report

• The reviewers’ report is submitted 2 weeks after their 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 with detailed implementation plan**

- Due within 10 weeks of receiving the reviewers’ report.

- 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 (FAR)

- A review synopsis is prepared by the Quality Assurance Office and is approved by the AVPA and/or AVPGSPA.

- FAR includes program response to 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

- Program prepares a Progress Report
  - due 2 years from the date of 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
Overview of Process

- Self-study (Volume I, II, III)
- Site visit (~ 2 days)
- External Reviewers’ Report
- Program Response with implementation plan
- FAR brought to Senate Undergraduate Council or Senate Graduate & Research Council
- FAR 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 of programs

The Quality Council closely evaluates each submission.
Best Practices

- Use a team approach – delegate parts of the review to faculty, students and staff. 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

Thursday June 7, 2018
2:30 – 4:00 p.m. NH 3318
“Data and Analysis”
by Institutional Analysis & Planning (IAP)

Thursday June 14, 2018
2:30 – 4:00 p.m. NH 3318
“Learning Outcomes and Curriculum Maps”
by Centre for Teaching Excellence (CTE)

Monday June 18, 2018
2:00 – 3:30 p.m. NH 3318
“Standard reports and inclusions for Self-studies”
by the Quality Assurance Office, CEE, Library, Alumni Affairs, Equity Office and Office of Academic Integrity
Question & Answer Period
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

• We don’t have the self-study template yet. Can we get started?  Yes!

• 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 will 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 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
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Kerry Tolson (GRAD Program data)
Rohem Adagbon (Survey data)

https://uwaterloo.ca/academic-reviews/