

2021/22 QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS AUDIT THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA OKANAGAN

The Summary was prepared by the Degree Quality Assessment Board Secretariat using the Institutional Report, the Expert Panel Report, and the Response to the Expert Panel Report. The University of British Columbia Okanagan was one of four post-secondary institutions to undertake the Quality Assurance Process Audit in 2021/22.

Introduction

The Terms of Reference for the Degree Quality Assessment Board establish that audits will be based on information provided by public post-secondary institutions to ensure that rigorous, ongoing program and institutional quality assessment processes have been implemented.

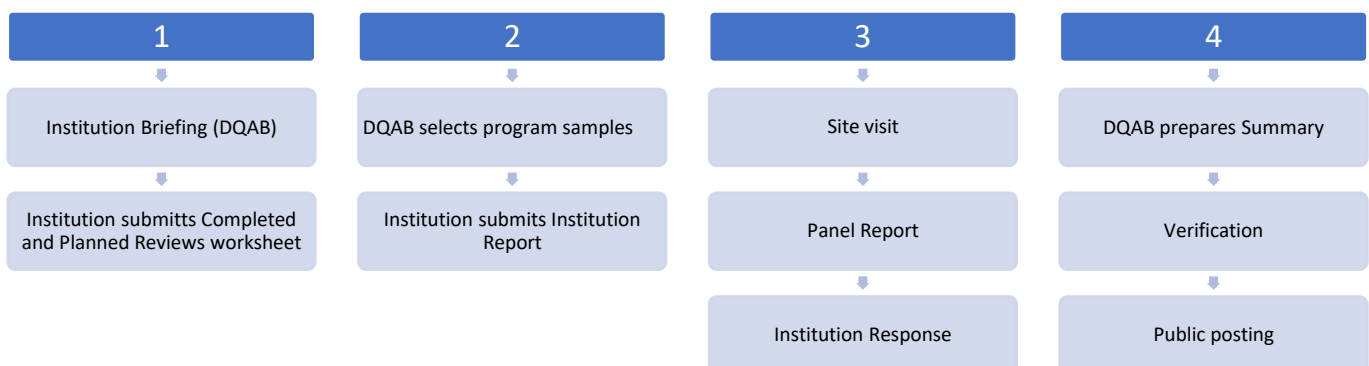
The main objectives of the quality assurance process audit (QAPA) are to ascertain that the institution:

- a) Continues to meet the program review policy requirements outlined in the DQAB's *Exempt Status Criteria and Guidelines* and the *Degree Program Review Criteria and Guidelines*, as applicable to the institution;
- b) Has and continues to meet appropriate program review processes and policies for all credential programs; and
- c) Applies its quality assurance process in relation to those requirements and responds to review findings appropriately.

The QAPA assessment is focused on answering questions in two categories:

1. Overall process
 - a. Does the process reflect the institution's mandate, mission, and values?
 - b. Is the scope of the process appropriate?
 - c. Are the guidelines differentiated and adaptable to respond to the needs and contexts of different units, e.g. faculties or departments or credential level?
 - d. Does the process promote quality improvement?
2. Review findings
 - a. Were the responses to the sample program review findings adequate?
 - b. Does the process inform future decision making?
 - c. Are the review findings appropriately disseminated?

Figure 1: QAPA Process



The University of British Columbia Okanagan – Institutional Context

UBC Okanagan is located on the traditional, ancestral, unceded territory of Syilx Okanagan Nation. Since its inception in 2005, UBC Okanagan has worked together with the Syilx Okanagan Nation to enhance education and support Syilx Okanagan Indigenous culture, history, language, philosophy and knowledge. UBC Okanagan acknowledged in its Institution Report gratitude for this partnership and its dedication to continuing to strengthen and grow the relationship.

Since the Okanagan campus' inception in 2005, the campus has experienced rapid growth, not only in student enrolment—from 3,500 to over 11,000 students— but also in academic program offerings— from 16 to 26— along with services available to students, faculty and staff, as well as substantial infrastructure growth. This has led to continuous and ongoing changes and development of strategic goals and priorities.

The Mandate Letter to UBC (2020) indicates two priorities for UBC Okanagan: reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples and taking action towards a low-carbon economy. The letter outlines that UBC Okanagan commits to:

1. Support lasting reconciliation with Indigenous peoples through initiatives that increase the participation and success of Indigenous learners and implementation of the education-related Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action.
2. Contribute to an accessible and relevant post-secondary system.
3. Develop and recognize flexible learning pathways for students to access post-secondary education and skills training.
4. Strengthen workforce connections for student and worker transitions.

These priorities and commitments are also articulated in UBC Okanagan's strategic planning documents: *Shaping UBC's Next Century* and *UBC Okanagan 2040 Outlook*. Several initiatives are underway to support these commitments and enhance the quality of academic programming across the institution for all.

UBC Okanagan's processes for academic reviews and program proposals reflect a priority to ensure academic programs are accessible and effectively prepare students for post-graduate employment. Newly developed and revised programs have adopted increased work-integrated learning, seizing the advantages of a centralized campus co-op program. Initiatives are also underway to support the development of both credit and non-credit opportunities to help students develop skills-based competencies and increase accessible and flexible learning pathways for the broader community. Finally, units across UBC Okanagan participate in discipline-specific, annual provincial articulation meetings to support and increase student mobility through the BC Council's Transfer and Articulation program (BCCAT).

Table 1: Student enrollment

	Undergraduate	Graduate	Degree Programs	Non-Degree Programs
Full-time equivalent (FTE)	9,213	960	10,128	45

Table 2: Program offerings

Credential Type	# of Programs
Bachelor Degrees	11
Masters Degrees	10
Doctoral Degrees	1
Certificate	3
Diploma	2

Institution Self-Study

The UBCO QAPA review was initiated with an institution briefing on April 20, 2021. Due to the public health order in place to limit the spread of COVID-19, the briefing was conducted virtually by video conference. The briefing provides an overview of the QAPA process and the documentation institutions are requested to submit.

At its meeting on August 23, 2021, the Quality Assurance Audit Committee reviewed the Completed and Planned Review worksheet submitted by UBC Okanagan and selected the following for sampling: School of Engineering; Department of Languages and World Literatures; and Department of Computer Science, Mathematics, Physics and Statistics.

Self-Evaluation Approach

The Provost's Office supported the writing of the Institution Report through a working group comprised of:

- Interim Academic Lead, Centre for Teaching and Learning (chair)
- Chief Institutional Research Officer, Planning and Institutional Research
- Associate Dean, Teaching, Learning and Curriculum, Irving K. Barber Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
- Associate Dean, Undergraduate Studies, Faculty of Creative and Critical Studies
- Associate Director, School of Nursing
- Dean, Faculty of Health and Social Development and member of the Senate Academic Policy committee
- Academic Initiatives Manager, Provost and Vice-President Academic Office

The working group members provided guidance to answer all sections of the Institution Report using knowledge from their disciplines and units as well as the UBC Vancouver campus' QAPA report as a guide.

The Chief Institutional Research Officer played an integral role, ensuring the most up-to-date data and evidence was woven throughout this document. Data used for the Institution Report stemmed from published institutional reports, many of which are used for annual reporting to the Senate, Board of Governors and Ministry. Additionally, campus stakeholders were consulted throughout the preparation of the report to ensure accuracy of information and to strike balance between the depth and breadth offered in the report. Campus stakeholders included deans, members of the Student Academic Success Committee, the Director of Faculty Affairs, and the Senior Advisor to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor on Indigenous Affairs.

The report was reviewed by the Senate Academic Policy and Curriculum committees before being reviewed by the UBC Okanagan Senate in May 2021. Throughout the process, feedback and advice was gathered by the working group to inform the report in an iterative manner. Not surprisingly, working on the report was difficult within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. In-person conversations and reflections were missed.

The report served as a primer for the establishment of the first Associate Provost, Academic Programs, Teaching and Learning position, which was filled in May 2021. Together with the report, this new role will be a catalyst for further initiatives and work around quality assurance and enhancement on our campus.

Quality Assurance Policy and Practices

UBC Okanagan has numerous policies and practices that support and enhance the quality of teaching and learning, many of which are shared with the Vancouver campus. Although the Okanagan campus has its own Senate, the Board of Governors oversees both campuses, bearing responsibility for the management, administration and control of the property, revenue, business and affairs of the University, as conferred by the BC *University Act*.

The Senate is currently deliberating, enhancing, and updating policies and practices that contribute to quality teaching and learning, an exercise informed by the recent QAPA audit of UBC's Vancouver campus. Specifically, this effort is considering policies, guidelines and practices related to academic reviews. Such efforts are also informed by the current campus strategic vision document, *2040 Outlook* and *Shaping UBC's Next Century*, UBC's current strategic planning document. This work is also supported by the newly created position of Associate Provost, Academic Programs, Teaching and Learning role in the Office of the Provost and Vice-President Academic Okanagan (Provost's Office).

Learning Outcomes and Assessment

UBC Okanagan is committed to identifying learning outcomes at the course and program levels, as reflected in its current institutional Strategic Plan. Specifically, UBC aims to reframe the design of undergraduate academic programs in terms of learning outcomes and competencies. For example, the recently revised Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Human Kinetics programs are structured around competency-based and program learning outcomes.

UBC Okanagan's Senate Curriculum Committee is guided by its Curriculum Guidelines, which are reviewed by the committee at the end of every academic year. The Guidelines require new courses and programs to clearly articulate their intended learning outcomes. The Senate Curriculum Committee's approval is also necessary for current courses to significantly change their learning outcomes, which ensures they are also updated in the Academic Calendar. The syllabus template in the Guidelines ensures this process is followed for all courses at UBC Okanagan, which is key for students' learning and academic success.

The Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) offers support and resources to help instructors identify course or program learning outcomes, through guidance from an educational consultant and/or instructional designer. Further support is currently underway through a UBC-designed web application—the Curriculum Mapping Tool—that will soon allow instructors to engage in curriculum mapping from a backward-design perspective by focusing on learning

outcomes, teaching and learning activities, as well as assessment methods. This same tool will allow program coordinators to visualize their academic programs, in turn helping them gather pedagogical evidence to re-design programs towards an enhanced student learning experience and higher relevancy to the workforce after graduation via career-related competencies and alignment to high-demand occupations in the province.

The Senate recognizes the importance of having units and faculty members increasingly align assessment activities and course learning outcomes. Although it is recognized that types of assessments within a particular course are influenced by a number of factors, including the learning outcomes, the level of the course, the discipline and the instructor, academic units across UBC Okanagan have developed curriculum committees to provide a coordinated effort and oversight to ensure assessment methods remain appropriate and assess the course learning outcomes. In addition, there is work underway to understand how the integration of different learning technologies can support more creative assessments (e.g. peer and group-based assessment activities), as well as overall course design and delivery.

Some units have Indigenous engagement committees and community advisory committees who work with the unit's curriculum committees towards ongoing development and updating of curricula. Further, units with a strong experiential learning component, such as the Bachelor of Human Kinetics, Bachelor of Management, Bachelor of Science in Nursing and Masters of Social Work, among others, have dedicated staff to support both students and key relationships with employers/industry partners to inform academic programming.

Excellence Funds

Since 2016, the Provost's Office has allocated a portion of the campus' annual revenue to advance and strengthen academic excellence through the Excellence Fund. The Excellence Fund supports ambitious research initiatives that provide significant transformative learning opportunities and contribute to the campus' Outlook 2040 goals.

Faculty Professional Development

UBC Okanagan has also established a number of resources and funding opportunities to support professional development. The two main supporting units are the Office of Research Services (ORS) and the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL). ORS has a number of research development officers who offer workshops and one-on-one support to faculty members as they develop their research programs. There are also a number of internal funding opportunities and awards to recognize the research accomplishments of faculty. Similarly, the CTL has educational consultants who organize workshops, communities of practice and one-on-one support to help faculty enhance their pedagogical practice and educational leadership activities. Finally, the Provost's Office has established funding opportunities such as the Aspire-2040 Learning Transformations Fund and Open Educational Resources Grant Program to support curriculum development and pedagogical innovation. Additional financial support is provided to staff and faculty to support participation in external professional development opportunities, such as attending conferences and/or workshops, membership fees for professional organizations and fees and subscriptions for journals and books.

Program Development

The process for new program approval was created when the Okanagan Senate was formed in 2005 and was based on the existing Vancouver campus practices. The development of new

programs is guided by the Senate-approved Guide to Curriculum Submissions (GCS) for UBC Okanagan, which is reviewed and updated at the end of every academic year by the Senate Curriculum Committee. This document stipulates the formal processes and procedures to make any curricular changes in the institution before they can be implemented.

In 2017, the Provost's Office developed a complementary process to propose new programs preceding the Senate-required steps delineated by the GCS. This process was created in consultation with academic units and the Senate Secretariat to ensure clarity and streamlining, and most importantly, to support program proponents from the outset in developing a strong and successful application to Degree Quality Assessment Board when required. In this instance, the Provost's Office works with the program proponent to ensure early and meaningful consultation with peers in the province, potential employers, students and community members.

These two processes have proven to work well for the approval of one new program and the re-design of one existing program to date. Faculty members currently working on new academic program proposals have also provided feedback on its usefulness. Thus, the Senate Curriculum Committee formalized the Provost's Office's suggested steps in the GCS in April 2021. As a result, all proposals are now required, by Senate, to meaningfully engage with peers and community members prior to submitting the complete proposal to Senate for their review and approval. These changes also require proponents to identify jobs in BC for which program graduates would qualify for upon successfully completing the program. Over time, the required Concept Paper for a new program (or re-design of an existing program), which triggers the entire process of approval, will be adapted to emphasize key areas identified by UBC's strategic plans and/or mandated by the Ministry.

The process for new program approval, including both the Provost's Office process and the GCS process, is as follows:

1. An academic unit starts to develop a new degree program or a major change to an existing program.
2. The champions of the emerging new program are the proponents. The proponents advise their department's head (or director as appropriate) and dean's office that work is starting on the development of an idea for a new program. The proponents should provide preliminary materials (concept paper and preliminary Viability of Program Assessment) to the dean.
3. Following the dean's support, the proponents advise both the Senate Secretariat and the Provost's Office that a proposal for a new program is under development.
4. In preparation for ministerial approval (if applicable), the Provost's Office will work with the proponents to provide further strategic direction and start completing the Stage 1 Application Form (or other Ministry required forms). Submission to Ministry is done by the Provost's Office once the Senate and the Board of Governors have approved the new program or changes to an existing program.
5. Proponents continue to work with their Faculty financial manager to revise the Viability of Program Assessment Tool and the Concept Paper.
6. If the program is already offered at the Vancouver campus, Ministry approval may not be required. Instead, a learning outcomes map that compares and contrasts the two programs will be required. A template and support for this comparison is available through the Provost's Office.

7. The proponents work closely with their Faculty to follow internal processes towards department and formal Faculty approval, considering feedback received thus far. Proponents are strongly encouraged to seek support from the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) in the development of curriculum and Enrolment Services/College of Graduate Studies (as appropriate) to plan for loan eligibility, admissions and scholarship details.
8. The proponents then complete required formal consultations with departments and Faculties across campus offering related programs and with any units or individuals expected to contribute to, support, or be impacted by the new program. If the proposed program is a graduate-level program, this includes the Graduate Program and Curriculum Committee.
9. A final Viability of Program Assessment is completed by considering all consultations. The assessment is reviewed and approved by the dean and further supported by the Provost's Office.

Following Faculty approval, the proposal can move through the required Senate committees.

10. The Senate Secretariat can assist with ensuring the proposal is reviewed by the relevant committees (including the Senate Admissions Committee and the Senate Curriculum Committee).

Simultaneously, proponents:

11. Start working with AVP Students to begin the student tuition consultation. The consultation must be open for at least one month and the Faculty must respond, in writing, to any significant issues raised in the resulting Student Consultation. This entire process may take up to three months. Thus, it is important to start planning for student consultation as soon as Faculty Council has approved the proposal. It is also encouraged that proponents start working with the recruitment and marketing teams to plan for program promotion.
12. Following Senate approval, the Senate will forward the proposal for Board of Governors for approval. The student consultation and Faculty response (if needed) must be added to the Board documents. Certificates or diplomas do not require Ministry approval. Thus, these may be implemented upon Board of Governors approval.
13. Upon the Board of Governors approval, the Provost's Office makes final edits to the Stage 1 Form (or any other required form) and forwards the proposal to the Ministry of Advanced Education for approval. The Provost's Office will advise proponents of ministerial approval once it has been granted.

Program Review

At UBC Okanagan, programs are reviewed within the context of their academic units. A unit is defined as a faculty, school, institute, centre, department or other administrative unit within the University. This process is guided by the Senate policy on *Reviews of Administrative Units*, Board of Governors policy on the *Extension of Dean* and a set of Principles, Procedures and Guidelines (PPG), which were formalized by the Provost's Office in 2014 and mirror UBC Vancouver's approach. Additionally, the Provost's Office has developed web-based accompanying resource packages and information to support units. The Okanagan Planning and Institutional Research Office (OPAIR) also plays a key role in supporting units preparing for external reviews.

Additionally, the Senate approves any further academic review guidelines for a particular Faculty. For example, the campus' two largest Faculties— the Irving K. Barber Faculty of Arts

and Social Sciences and the Irving K. Barber Faculty of Science— have used this mechanism to develop procedures for academic reviews that best serve their specific context and disciplines.

While the timing of the reviews is not strictly enforced by the current Senate policy, the PPG stipulates that “reviews are normally conducted every five years and the time interval between reviews must not exceed ten years.” In addition, an external review may also be initiated by the head, dean, provost, senate or, by other circumstances, such as accreditation requirements, revision of curriculum, joint initiatives with other units and/or a re-deployment of resources. The Board of Governors policy calls for a review of Faculties when the dean’s appointment is approaching expiration and there is consideration of extending the appointment for more than one year. Similarly, the appointment and extension of department heads is also informed by the most recently completed review of their academic unit, as per Board of Governors policy.

An external review begins with a conversation among the leadership of the academic unit, including the Office of the Dean and senior administration of the university, as applicable. This allows for the selection and refinement of the terms of reference that will guide the purpose and focus of the academic review. A memo is sent to all unit members to inform them of the upcoming review, reviewers and site-visit dates.

The Terms of Reference (TOR) provided by the Provost's Office offer flexibility for the unit under review to ensure relevance to their context and discipline. The TOR may also be adapted to a unit’s specific areas of concern or focus for peer review.

The self-study of units under review is guided by the terms of reference chosen by the unit’s leadership. A template for the self-study is included in the PPG in a modular manner so it can adapt to the needs of the unit.

Self-study outline:

1. Executive summary
2. Overview of the unit
3. Undergraduate instruction and learning module
 - a. Overview
 - b. Enrolment and recruitment
 - c. Curriculum review
 - d. Instructional models, assessment of learning
 - e. Teaching and learning evaluation and effectiveness
 - f. Student advising and development
4. Graduate and postdoctoral studies module
 - a. Graduate programs
 - i. Overview
 - ii. Recruitment, enrolment and completion
 - iii. Structure, curriculum/pedagogy and assessment
 - iv. Research mentoring (for programs with significant research component)
 - v. Environment resources
 - vi. Student finances

- vii. Graduate student research productivity
- viii. Post-graduation outcomes
- ix. Graduate student report
- b. Post-doctoral fellows
- 5. Research, scholarly and professional activity module
 - a. Faculty awards and distinctions
 - b. Research intensiveness and dissemination
- 6. Service and community partnerships
- 7. Aboriginal engagement
- 8. People and outstanding work environment
- 9. Resources, administration, and governance module
- 10. Response/follow-up on previous review
 - a. Head's summary

OPAIR supports the collection of relevant data for the self-study. The PPG outlines the below metrics to be included:

- Enrolment and recruitment statistics
- Teaching and learning evaluation and effectiveness
- Research intensiveness and dissemination
- Resources, administration and governance metrics

The list of available metrics from OPAIR is continuously updated and made available to units via the Provost's Office's website to support unit reviews.

The PPG requires at least two external reviewers. In practice, departments often select two external reviewers, while Faculty reviews often have three external reviewers. Similarly, required site-visits tend to take place over two days for departments and over three days for faculties. A list of suggested reviewers is provided to the Provost, who makes the final selection of reviewers in conversation with the unit's leadership.

In the case of Faculty reviews, once the Provost approves the reviewers, a memo is sent out to unit members, including the dates of the site-visit and an invitation to submit anonymous feedback via the Provost's Office. The Provost's Office will then redact the feedback, as needed, to ensure anonymity and append it to the self-study in advance of the site-visit (normally, at least one month ahead of the site-visit).

Once a review is complete, units are asked to respond to the reviewers' report through an action plan that consolidates the strengths and weaknesses of the unit and its programs. Two years later, a report on the implementation of such actions must be filed with the dean or president, as appropriate, and the Senate Secretariat. On an annual basis, the Provost's Office reports to the Senate on the previous year's academic reviews via a summary of the reviewers' reports and the unit's responses.

The Provost's Office supports the reviews of units by making data available, offering templates and sharing resources, such as ways to provide the provincial context to those reviewers coming from outside British Columbia. The Provost Office makes resources available through its website.

QAPA Review

The QAPA panel conducting the assessment were Dr. Carolyn Watters, panel chair, and panel members Dr. Airini and Dr. Jonathan Driver. The site visit, held virtually using video conferencing, occurred on November 29-30, 2021. A member of the DQAB Secretariat, Ms. Dao Luu, also attended the site visit.

The QAPA panel submitted its report on December 17, 2021. The panel report provided commendations, affirmations and recommendations.

Commendations are areas where the institution has shown exemplary practice. Areas of exemplary practice:

- UBCO is commended on their deep commitment to program quality assurance and improvement both at the university and program level.
- The Provost's Office has provided a high level of support to the units that enables the effective implementation of program reviews and program improvement, including providing guidelines for the development of external reports and use of the Excellence Fund enabling university commitments to improvement.
- UBCO is commended for its commitment to deeper engagement with Indigenous Peoples through an innovative model of relationship building developed with the Elders and communities to enhance curriculum development, faculty and student experience, and program reviews.
- The central development of university-wide curriculum mapping software, MAP, now in Pilot phase, provides a strategic tool for university-wide input of learning outcomes and has potential to enable the connection of learning outcomes with measurement of student success in the future.
- The university OPAIR has developed an initial data set that provides core accountability data for program reviews and program effectiveness.

Affirmations are areas where the institution has identified weaknesses and intends to correct it. Areas the institution identified for improvement:

- The need for university-wide program level learning outcome mappings that are linked to strategic planning and quality assessment and for use in measurement of student learning success. The university and program units clearly understand and are committed to the concept yet progress in non-accredited programs varies at the depth required to be meaningful. The university has taken this on as a priority and plans to engage in a wider rollout of the MAP tool.
- The need for a review of current policies and review processes for program quality assurance to ensure that they encompass a more current and broader interpretation of equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI). UBCO has recognized the need to operationalize and expand their commitment to EDI and Indigenization in the program review process.
- The university acknowledges that the program review process should include more explicit input from external stakeholders, including community and employers. The university is continuously engaged in building meaningful relationships with Indigenous communities, however, further engagement with these communities in the external review processes should be included in the processes.

- The university review cycle is vague and inconsistent in its guidelines and requirements for student participation. The current policy review should include updates that clearly articulate requirements for student participation in quality assurance and improvement processes.
- The university has a mandate for robust and meaningful institutional data collection. Gaps are recognized with respect to achieving the quality assurance and improvement goals of the university, specifically including fuller EDI data and a more systematic approach to tracking learning outcomes and student success, particularly in non-accredited programs.

Recommendations are areas needing improvement. The panel identified the following areas:

- The university should explore further standardization, through broad consultation, of a core data set and process templates to enable reasonable comparisons across units and to support a university level profile.
- The university should ensure that each review process is followed and documented for the entire cycle and participants kept fully informed throughout the cycle. This would enable a roll-forward of continuous improvement results over the succession of reviews.
- The university should clearly encapsulate requirements for student participation and engagement with review processes and with quality assurance policy development.
- The university should embed a requirement in the review process for clear articulation of the linkage of the review outcomes with unit and university strategic plans.
- The university should develop policies and processes to ensure that learning outcomes, quantitative and qualitative, become the required practice across the university for the purposes of program quality assurance and improvements.
- The standardized data packaged produced by OPAIR should be provided to the external review team as well as to the academic unit.

UBC Okanagan provided a response on April 8, 2022 that included an action plan to address the recommendations.