# 2020/21 QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS AUDIT
# UNIVERSITY OF THE FRASER VALLEY

*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. University of the Fraser Valley was the only post-secondary institution to undertake the Quality Assurance Process Audit in 2020/21.*

## 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.
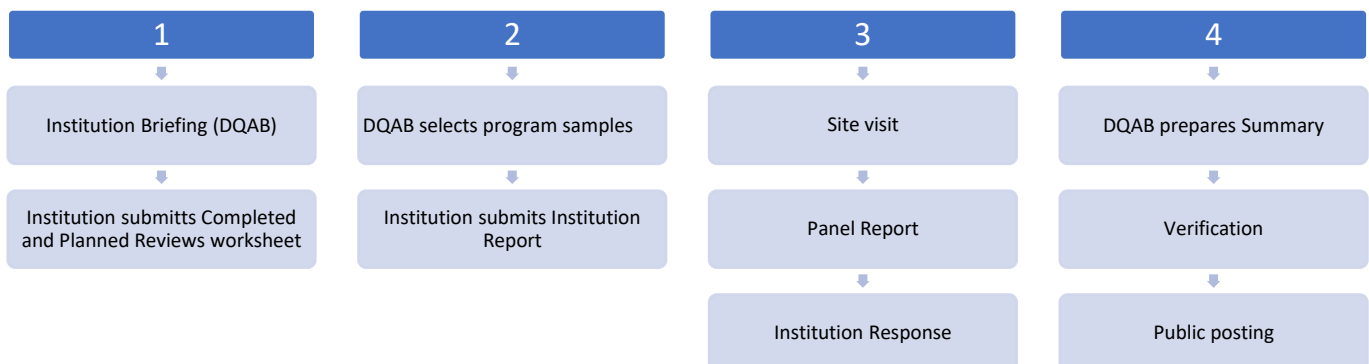
The main objectives of the quality assurance process audit (QAPA) are to ascertain that the institution:
   a) Continues to meet the program review policy requirements outlined in the DQAB's *Exempt Status Criteria and Guidelines* and the *Degree Program Review Criteria and Guidelines,* as applicable 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



| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Institution Briefing (DQAB) | DQAB selects program samples | Site visit | DQAB prepares Summary |
| Institution submitts Completed and Planned Reviews worksheet | Institution submits Institution Report | Panel Report | Verification |
| | | Institution Response | Public posting |

**University of the Fraser Valley – Institutional Context**

Founded as Fraser Valley College in 1974, the University of the Fraser Valley received university status in 2008. Defined as a special purpose, teaching university by the *University Act*, UFV serves the Fraser Valley region, providing academic, career, technical, trade and adult basic education programs leading to certificates, diplomas, and baccalaureate and masters degrees. The mandate includes maintaining applied research and scholarly activities to support UFV's programs. In July 2013, UFV was approved for Exempt Status up to the Baccalaureate level.

The *University Act* established UFV's bicameral governance structure, with the Board of Governors responsible for the property, revenue, and business affairs of the university, and the Senate responsible for policies concerning academic matters. In undertaking responsibility for academic matters and quality assurance, the UFV Senate has established policies on developmental, undergraduate, and graduate curriculum and program development; program suspension and discontinuance; review of academic programs; criteria for awarding credentials; admissions; and academic credentials. These policies take into account the range of UFV's academic programming; reflect the university's regional mandate; and set out the roles of Faculties, Senate and Senate Standing Committees in the university's quality assurance processes and procedures.

UFV is located on the traditional territory of the Halq'eméylem-speaking Stó:lō peoples. It has locations in four Fraser Valley communities, with campuses in Abbotsford, Chilliwack, and Mission, as well as a centre in Hope. The Abbotsford campus is UFV's main campus.

**Table 1: Student enrollment**

|  | **Undergraduate** | **Graduate** | **Degree Programs** | **Non-Degree Programs** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Full-time equivalent (FTE)** | 9,354 | 90 | 4,576 | 4,868 |

**Table 2: Program offerings**

| Credential Type | # of Programs |
|---|---|
| Master's Degree | 3 |
| Graduate Diploma | 1 |
| Graduate Certificate | 4 |
| Post-degree Certificate | 1 |
| Baccalaureate Degree | 19 |
| Associate Degree | 2 |
| Post-diploma Certificate | 1 |
| Diploma | 19 |
| Certificate | 65 |
| Apprenticeship | 6 |
| Short Certificate | 8 |
| Developmental Credential | 8 |

**Institution Self-Study**

The UFV QAPA review was initiated with an institution briefing on June 4, 2020. Due to the public health order in place to limit the spread of CO-VID19, 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 September 30, 2020, the Quality Assurance Audit Committee reviewed the Completed and Planned Review worksheet submitted by UFV and selected three program reviews for sampling. The program reviews selected were: Criminology/Criminal Justice: Graduate & Undergraduate Programs; Physics; and Kinesiology.

*Self-Evaluation Approach*
The University of the Fraser Valley created two groups to oversee and coordinate the QAPA:
- The Way-Finders: an advisory committee made up of senior administrators and faculty who have roles and responsibilities related to quality assurance; and
- The Paddlers: a working group composed of administrators and staff directly responsible for supporting and facilitating UFV's quality assurance processes for program review and new program development.

The naming of the two groups was proposed by UFV's Senior Advisor on Indigenous Affairs as a way to encourage Indigenous perspectives in UFV's approach to the audit. The membership was proposed by the Associate Director, Program Development and Quality Assurance, and decided in consultation with the Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President, Academic, and UFV's Senior Academic Leadership Team.

The Way-Finders included:
- Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President, Academic
- Associate Director, Program Development and Quality Assurance
- Senior Advisor, Indigenous Affairs
- University Secretary
- Associate Vice-President, Teaching and Learning
- Associate Vice-President, Research, Engagement and Graduate Studies
- Associate Vice-President, Institutional Research and Integrated Planning
- Associate Dean, College of Arts
- Associate Dean, Faculty of Professional Studies
- Chair, Undergraduate Education Committee
- Chair, Graduate Studies Committee
- Vice-Chair, Academic Planning and Priorities Committee
- Facilitator, Program Review
- Sumitra Robertson, Assistant, Program Development and Quality Assurance

The Paddlers included:
- Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President, Academic
- Associate Director, Program Development and Quality Assurance
- Associate Dean, College of Arts
- Associate Vice-President, Institutional Research and Integrated Planning

- Enrolment Planning Manager, Institutional Research and Integrated Planning
- Facilitator, Program Review
- Assistant, Program Review
- Assistant, Program Development and Quality Assurance

The Program Development and Quality Assurance office (PDQA) developed plans and timelines in 2019 in preparation for the audit, and convened an initial meeting of the Way-Finders in August 2019 to review the plans. Following the institution briefing in June 2020, PDQA created a detailed action plan for the preparation of the Institution Report (self-study). The self-evaluation of the institution's quality assurance processes focused on the effectiveness of program review and program development procedures to:

      a) enhance the learning environment and opportunities for students;
      b) support the teaching and learning activities of academic units; and
      c) address the university's strategic plans and initiatives.

The development of the report was coordinated by the Associate Director, Program Development and Quality Assurance, with tasks distributed to all members of the Paddlers working group. Institutional documents were consulted in the preparation of the report to ensure that the program review process reflects and supports UFV planning.

A final draft of the Institution Report was circulated to all members of the Way-Finders advisory committee for consultation and feedback. The report was also submitted for review and feedback to Senate standing committees with responsibility for quality assurance processes and procedures, including the Undergraduate Education Committee, the Graduate Studies Committee, the Academic Planning and Priorities Committee (APPC), and the UFV Senate.

## Quality Assurance Policy and Practices

The Program Development and Quality Assurance office (PDQA), housed within the Office of the Vice-Provost, supports and guides faculty engaged in the development of new programs. The Programs Review office, a component of the PDQA, facilitates and supports academic units in the program review process. Detailed information on the processes and procedures are provided on the PDQA website.

Program Development
The process for program development involves a series of structured consultations, reviews, and approvals that give the UFV community an opportunity to examine the proposed program in terms of the quality of the curriculum, consistency of standards, attention to student needs, demand for the program, and adherence to UFV's mandate, strategic goals, priorities, and Institutional Learning Outcomes. Degree programs at both undergraduate and graduate levels must also demonstrate how the proposal meets the degree level standards established by the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training, as well as the standards and criteria for institutional mandate/capacity, social and economic benefit, system coordination/program duplication, and student demand and outcomes, as set forth in the Ministry's Stage 1 Review for New Degree Proposals.

The development of new programs at UFV is governed by the Undergraduate Course and Program Approval policy and the Graduate Course and Program Approval policy, and is also

guided by the framework provided in UFV's Credentials policy. The policies were created through extensive university-wide consultation, with review by relevant Senate standing committees, including final review by UFV's Senate Governance Committee and Senate. The policies are reviewed every five years.

Procedures in support of undergraduate program development are administered by the University Education Committee. For graduate programs, procedures for new programs are administered by the Graduate Studies Committee. Both processes require approval of a concept paper prior to proceeding with full program development, with the procedures for concept papers being administered by the APPC. UFV also has an expedited program development process at the undergraduate level, which is contingent on a program meeting specific criteria as set forth in the policy regulations. APPC administers the procedures for expedited program development.

For all programs, the first step in the process involves the formation of a program working group comprised of faculty members with teaching or research expertise in the subject area of the proposed program. The working group develops a concept paper that provides a summary of the program's goals, learning outcomes, and proposed curriculum, and also outlines how the program addresses needs and feasibility criteria. Concept papers are reviewed and recommended by the Faculty Council and Dean for the academic area, by the Provost in consultation with UFV's Senior Academic Leadership Team, and by the APPC, with final approval resting with Senate and the Board of Governors.

Following concept paper approval, program development follows one of two paths. Degree programs must complete both a Stage 1 and Stage 2 assessment, which involves both internal and external review and approval. Non-degree programs generally require internal review and approval only, although in some cases they may also need to be posted externally to the Ministry's Post-Secondary Institution Proposal System (PSIPS) for peer review. In both cases, proposals must demonstrate how the program addresses UFV's quality curriculum principles, including alignment of program learning outcomes with course outcomes, learning activities, and learning assessments. Degree programs must also show how the program meets degree level standards at the undergraduate or graduate level, as applicable, established by the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, and set forth in the Degree Program Review guidelines published by the Ministry's Degree Quality Assessment Board.

Program proposals are reviewed by the Faculty Curriculum Committee and, in some cases, Faculty Council. If recommended to move forward, proposals are posted for Campus Wide Consultation, which provides an opportunity for university-wide feedback. Degree program proposals are also sent out for external desk reviews by academics at other post-secondary institutions who have expertise in the program's subject area. Working groups respond to all the feedback received, making revisions to proposals as needed.

The following Senate Standing Committees review proposals, with each focusing on specific aspects according to their approved terms of reference:
- Undergraduate Education Committee, or Graduate Studies Committee
- Senate Budget Committee
- Academic Planning and Priorities Committee

Senate receives the program proposal and the recommendations from the above committees, ensures all expected standards and criteria applicable to the program have been met, and moves it forward for either implementation (in the case of programs needing internal approval only), or external review by the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training. Once approved, new programs are implemented in accordance with a standard checklist that ensures all components required for a successful launch of the program are in place prior to the start date agreed to by the academic unit, Dean, and Provost.

Program Review
UFV's Academic Program Review policy governs the program review process and procedures. The policy was created through extensive university-wide consultation, with review by relevant Senate standing committees, including final review by UFV's Senate Governance Committee and Senate. The policy is reviewed every five years. An extensive review was completed in 2016, and included university-wide feedback involving department heads, deans, and Senate standing committees. Procedures in support of the policy are authorized by the Provost and Vice-President, Academic, in consultation with the Academic Planning and Priorities Committee (APPC).

The published standards and procedures for program review are set forth in the following documents, and are available on the UFV website:
- Academic Program Review Unit Handbook
- Guiding Principles for Quality Curriculum
- Developing Learning Outcomes: A Guide for the University of the Fraser Valley
- Guidelines and Procedures for Deans' Summary Reports of Program Review
- Procedure for Submission of Program Review Progress Reports

Cyclical program review ensures that UFV's programs continue to meet the needs of its students and community, and are of the highest quality and standards. All program reviews follow the same process. UFV's policy requires regular and systematic review of the objectives and delivery of all academic programs and programming, and of the academic units that are responsible for, or contribute to, their delivery. All programs are normally reviewed every seven to eight years in accordance with an institutional multi-year schedule. The Program Review office developed and maintains UFV's ten-year Schedule of Program Reviews, informed by regular consultation with deans and academic units. The schedule is updated annually and is available on UFV's Program Review website. Under exceptional circumstances, a Dean or the Provost may also request a review of a particular program or programming.

UFV sees Program Review as a central moment in an ongoing process of program monitoring and enhancement aimed at strengthening a culture of continuous improvement throughout the institution. The process involves a formative assessment of programs and programming based on quantitative and qualitative evidence, with the purpose of:
- fostering ongoing improvement of their quality;
- enhancing their contribution to the university's strategic goals, vision, mission, plans and values;
- assessing and improving alignment of program learning outcomes and curriculum with UFV's Institutional Learning Outcomes;
- achieving and maintaining high professional standards, as recognized by disciplinary and/or accrediting bodies;

- achieving and maintaining high standards of educational practices; and
- ensuring an adequate and effective utilization of resources.

The main components of the program review process are:
1. a scope letter developed by the Dean in consultation with the academic unit that outlines the parameters of the review and identifies program or unit specific questions to be addressed;
2. a self-study by the unit delivering the program;
3. a site visit and assessment report submitted by an external review committee;
4. a report and action plan prepared by the unit and the Dean in response to the external assessment, and submitted within three months of receipt of the external report;
5. a summary of the review for public distribution;
6. a progress report on the action plan submitted by the Dean to the Provost within 12-18 months of the review.

The timelines for the process normally require 12 months from initiation of the review to submission of the external report, and a further 4 to 6 months to Senate acceptance of the review, and publication of the review's summary report and action plan on UFV's Program Reviews website. A progress report follows within 12 to 18 months of Senate acceptance.

*Self-study*
The self-study by the academic unit provides for a structured, evidence-based assessment of strengths and weaknesses that focuses primarily on the design and delivery of program curriculum, and on whether learning outcomes are effectively assessed and achieved, with the overall objective of determining areas for improvement and future directions. To facilitate this assessment and ensure it's informed by sound evidence, UFV's Institutional Research office generates a detailed data book for the unit that outlines a range of performance indicators. In addition, internal surveys are conducted, and Student Outcomes surveys from BCStats are consulted, to gather information on students' satisfaction with the program and their observations on program strengths, areas for improvement, and future directions.

A central component of the self-study involves a process of curriculum mapping, facilitated by UFV's Teaching and Learning Centre, which thoroughly investigates the alignment of program learning outcomes with course outcomes, learning activities, and learning assessments. The self-study also examines the methods used to achieve and maintain high standards of educational practice through careful review of how programs and courses meet the criteria set forth in UFV's Quality Curriculum Principles.

*External assessment*
UFV's Academic Program Review policy requires all programs to undergo an assessment by an external review panel. The external review includes a site visit, usually two days in duration, and provision of a confidential External Review Report. The external panel normally consists of two faculty members from outside UFV who have expertise in the area, and one faculty member internal to UFV, but outside of the academic unit being reviewed. During the site visit, the external reviewers will meet with the Dean, senior administrators, members of the academic unit, current students, program graduates, employers, industry representatives, advisory committees, community members, and others.

Following the site visit, the external panel completes the External Review Report providing their observations based on their interviews and reading of documents, and makes informed recommendations on ways to improve the quality of programs.

*Action plan*
The academic unit reviews the External Review Report and recommendations, and then prepares a response in consultation with the Dean, including a proposed plan of action for addressing the recommendations of the report. The action plan outlines the unit's goals, strategies, and timelines for implementation. Upon completion of the external assessment process, the Dean reviews the unit's response and proposed action plan, and after further consultation with the academic unit, produces a summary report with his/her comments and approval of the action plan. Once accepted by APPC and Senate, the summary report and action plan are posted publicly on UFV's Program Review website.

At the institutional level, the program review process and accompanying recommendations inform several planning processes. Institution-wide plans that incorporate program reviews include the Enrolment Plan that sets targets for FTEs by department, and by fee type; the five-year Capital Plan that includes space planning for programs; and the Budget Plan that determines annual budgets for departments and faculties. Other plans that also reflect on program reviews are the Indigenization Plan and the Internationalization Plan.

*Progress report*
Academic units submit a progress report to their Dean within 12 to 15 months of Senate acceptance of the review action plan. The progress report speaks to each item in the unit's action plan, identifies specific progress completed to date, and outlines the plans for addressing items going forward. The Dean reviews the progress report, consults with the academic unit as needed, and then submits to the Provost within 15 to 17 months from Senate acceptance. The Provost reviews, consults with the Dean and academic unit as needed, and then submits the progress report for information to the APPC and to Senate. Once this process has completed, the progress report is posted publicly on the Program Review website.

*Programs requiring external accreditation*
For programs that require accreditation from an external body, the PDQA office, in consultation with the academic unit and dean, compares the external criteria and processes with UFV's, and seeks to coordinate both external and internal components of the review to run concurrently. In most cases, the external accreditation site visit will serve for UFV's external review as well. The unit's action plan in response to the external accreditation recommendations and the Dean's summary report are submitted to APPC and Senate for review and acceptance, with a progress report on the implementation of the action plan following within 12 to 18 months of Senate acceptance.

## QAPA Review

The QAPA panel conducting the assessment were Dr. Carol Stuart, panel chair, and panel members Dr. Stephen Grundy and Dr. Carolyn Watters.  The site visit, held virtually using Zoom video conferencing, occurred on December 14-16, 2020.  A member of the DQAB Secretariat, Ms. Dao Luu, also attended the site visit.

The QAPA panel submitted its report on December 22, 2020.  The panel report provided commendations, affirmations and recommendations.

Commendations are areas where the institution has shown exemplary practice. Areas of exemplary practice:
- UFV committed itself to quality assurance and quality enhancement in the 2015 Education Plan, approved by the Board of Governors and this enabled them to create an Office of Program Development and Quality Assurance. The orientation to program review, data packs, and program review guide developed by the office all ensure a consistent approach to the reviews resulting in consistent application of the stated policy and process.
- The process for program development is extensive, requiring a concept paper, approved by the Senate and the Board of Governors prior to engaging in the detailed proposal required by DQAB. The Teaching and Learning Centre provides good support to faculty teams for developing program learning outcomes and mapping curriculum and outcomes to Institutional Learning Outcomes.
- Policy and the accompanying guides for procedures related to quality assurance are updated routinely (every 5 years).
- The importance of quality curriculum and the role of Institutional and Program Learning Outcomes in quality enhancement has been socialized throughout the institution through efforts such as the Principles of Quality Curriculum and Institutional Learning Outcomes. The Principles of Quality Curriculum provide guiding questions for assessing curriculum that are used in program reviews, and program development.
- When the Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) were established, all programs were required to identify Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) and map the ILOs to PLOs and to courses and course objectives.
- The department exemplars and the meetings the Panel attended clearly indicated that departments followed the policy, process and procedure and were committed to improving their programs.

Affirmations are areas where the institution has identified weaknesses and intends to correct it. Areas the institution identified for improvement:
- UFV has just instituted a new role for students in both program development and program review. The Student Voices Coordinator will assist programs with student led focus groups. The Panel believes that this new role will enhance the student voice and lead to new insights regarding the student experience that will enhance quality.
- UFV continues to work on definitions and guidelines and incorporate further work on micro-credentials. In addition, they may want to consider some standardized entrance requirements to match to credential definitions.
- The program self-study framework includes sections that ask the program to consider areas that are important to the mission and vision of the institution such as Indigenization, Internationalization, and the Principles for Quality Curriculum. However, the peer review team template does not include alignment with Internationalization and Indigenization. UFV may want to additionally consider how to ensure these important strategic aspects of the vision are addressed in recommendations.
- The self-study states that UFV is considering a sub-committee of Academic Planning and Priorities Committee to provide a comprehensive and detailed consideration of the program reviews. The Panel supports this. Such a sub-committee could also assist with reviewing

action plans, requesting modifications if institutional constraints require them, and monitoring progress on the changes required as a result of the recommendations.

- The Panel agrees with the recognition that the program development process was not well aligned with the current DQAB submission process and that UFV was working to refine the procedure. Additionally, the Panel supports the efforts to create a shorter timeline.
- UFV has identified the need to develop a tailored program review process for Trades and developmental programs, as well as programs with professional accreditation.
- With the advent of micro-credentials, stackable, and transferable courses and credentials this will be an important recommendation to act upon, as it facilitates student mobility and career transitions and ensures quality programming is linked through a variety of credentials.

Recommendations are areas needing improvement. The panel identified the following areas:
- Create a process to ensure that action plans are revised and approved in line with available institutional resources and priorities. The new progress review report will enhance accountability for enacting change. In addition, the Panel noted that there was no mechanism for revising recommendations in line with the resources and priorities of the institution if Senate or the BOG felt that the recommendation and action plan of the program could not be achieved. This results in a phenomenon that was evident in some reviews where the recommendations of the previous review appear in the next review.
- A concrete plan to gather the input of all stakeholders including employers and community groups. While the creation of a student voices role will enhance the input of students as stakeholders, the Panel did not find evidence of active advisory committees or employer input within the program reviews. Consider strategies such as employer surveys or the creation of an employer advisory group for ongoing input to program relevance and quality.
- Link policy and procedure on discontinuation of programs to a quality assurance process.
- Program development and program review be linked in policy with a mid-cycle review. Programs that are developed and implemented would not be reviewed until the 1st round of review (7-8 years out) and might benefit from an earlier, formative review with a focus on unanticipated issues that need to be addressed.
- The review cycle should match the DQAB requirements for a review every 5-7 years.
- The Panel notes that the new policy does not address accountability for implementation. The samples reviewed tended to repeat the same recommendations over more than 1 review. While the Panel did not see a progress report (due to the timing of the new policy), the Panel believes this is an important step to accountability and additionally, there is a need to follow up if progress has not occurred.
- The Panel noted that UFV Board Policy Directive 202 outlining the Board's responsibility for quality assurance in program review and program development was to be reviewed in 2019. In the review, the Panel suggests that attention be paid to clarity on how accountability for quality assurance is differentiated between the Senate and BOG.

UFV provided a response on April 26, 2021 that included an action plan to addressed each of the recommendations.