

## 2018/19 QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS AUDIT THE UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA

*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 Victoria was one of three public post-secondary institutions to undertake the Quality Assurance Process Audit in 2018/19.*

### 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.

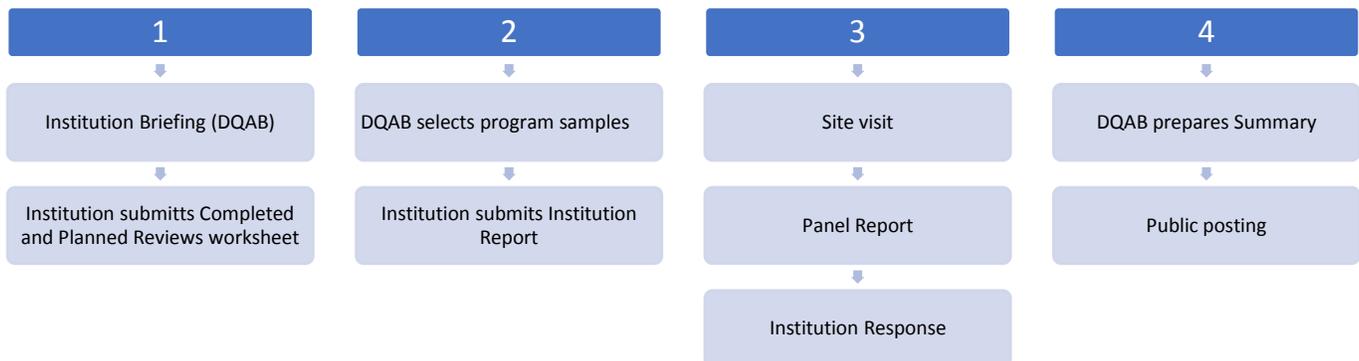
The main objectives of the quality assurance process audit (QAPA) are to ascertain that the institution:

- 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 Victoria – Institutional Context

The University of Victoria (UVic) has its roots in Victoria College, founded in 1903 as an affiliate of McGill University. Since being granted autonomy by the *University Act* in 1963, UVic has become a mid-sized, comprehensive research university. UVic's Strategic Framework identifies key strategies to advance research excellence and intensify dynamic learning. The university offers students a wide range of opportunities for experiential learning that include research-enhanced courses, community-based field schools, internships and practicum placements in professional settings as well as cooperative education work terms. Students in all Faculties can participate in cooperative education programs (co-op).

**Table 1: Student enrollment (2017-2018)**

	<b>Undergraduate</b>	<b>Graduate</b>	<b>Degree Programs</b>	<b>Non-Degree Programs</b>
<b>Full-time equivalent (FTE)</b>	16,172	2,865	18,683	354

UVic offers undergraduate and graduate programs on its campus in Victoria and in off-campus and distance education formats. Programs range from traditional academic programs to professional, accredited programs. Nine Faculties offer academic degree programs, including the Faculties of Business, Education, Engineering, Fine Arts, Human and Social Development, Humanities, Law, Science, and Social Sciences. In addition, the Division of Medical Sciences offers the Island Medical Program and graduate programs in Neuroscience, and the Division of Continuing Studies offers courses to support pathways programs and lifelong learning.

UVic provides an extensive range of opportunities for research-enriched and work-integrated learning. Its educational programs include co-op, internship and practicum opportunities in professional settings in BC and across Canada. Many of UVic's 24 Indigenous-focused programs, such as Certificate and Diploma programs in Indigenous Language Revitalization, are offered in community.

**Table 2: Program offerings (2017-2018)**

<b>Credential Type</b>	<b># of Programs</b>
Baccalaureate	94
Undergraduate Certificate	10
Undergraduate Diploma	17
Undergraduate Professional Specialization Certificate	11
Master's	85
PhD	40
Graduate Certificate	7
Graduate Diploma	4
Graduate Professional Specialization Certificate	2

## **Institution Self-Study**

The UVic QAPA review was initiated with an Institution Briefing on April 9, 2018 at the Victoria campus. The Institution Briefing provides an overview of the QAPA process and the documentation institutions are requested to submit.

At its meeting on June 22, 2018, the Quality Assurance Audit Committee reviewed the Completed and Planned Review worksheet submitted by UVic and selected three reviews for sampling. The selected samples are those that the DQAB considers to be representative of various areas of the institution's educational activities. The reviews selected were: Political Science; Teacher Education; and Bachelor of Commerce. UVic submitted its Institution Report on November 9, 2018.

### *Self-Evaluation Approach*

The evaluation was led by the Office of the Vice-President Academic and Provost. The university's self-evaluation approach focused on policies and procedures related to quality assurance, particularly processes for academic program review, revision and approval, as well as their practice and implementation. Policies and procedures of the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training (AEST) regarding proposing new degree programs for approval as well as policies internal to UVic that address quality assurance of academic programs were reviewed, particularly Senate policies. In addition, the existing database recording the reviews of academic programs, accreditations and reaccreditations from 2005 to 2011 and 2012 to 2018, held in the Provost's office, were reviewed for accuracy and complete documentation.

The self-study was drafted by the Associate Vice President Academic Planning, with input from members of the UVic Quality Assurance Working Group that includes:

- Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
- Executive Director, Academic Resource Planning
- Associate Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
- Acting Executive Director, Cooperative Education and Career Services
- Executive Director, Division of Learning and Teaching Support and Innovation
- Executive Director, Indigenous Academic and Community Engagement.

Evidence for the self-study includes information drawn from:

1. the VPAC Academic Program Review and Accreditation Databases (2005-2011; 2012-2018),
2. the Enhanced Planning Tools Reports that each academic and administrative unit updates as part of the annual academic and resource planning cycle,
3. Institutional Planning and Analysis data and reports, including UVic's annual Institutional Accountability Plan and Report, and
4. Collective Agreement provisions for study leave and professional development.

## Quality Assurance Policy and Practices

UVic's new Strategic Framework (2018-2023) serves as a guide to the future for planning in every academic and administrative area over the coming five years. UVic aims to intensify learning by designing and continually updating curricular and co-curricular programs that positively impact the student experience and support the achievement of educational goals and timely graduation. Quality assurance guides UVic's academic resource planning, including academic program review and approval processes.

Since fall term 2016, UVic's Enhanced Planning Tools (EPT) reporting system has been used to inform annual Academic and Resource Planning (ARP) and Integrated Planning budget processes. The EPT reporting system provides tools for organizational forecasting and decision making for all units, faculties and departments. Data for the reporting system is provided centrally by the Office of Institutional Planning and Analysis. The EPT reporting system uses six broad criteria as measures. The academic criteria are:

- **Quality** to assess the quality of a unit's programs and services through evaluation of faculty / staff personnel levels and evaluation of the outcomes achieved by the unit.
- **Demand** to assess the internal and external demand for academic and research programs offered by the university.
- **Productivity and efficiency** to assess available resources and evaluate the productivity and efficiency of programs and services for academic and research programs.
- **Impact and contributions** to evaluate the impact, benefits and contributions of each academic unit's programs and services towards: 1) the university's mission, core values, strategic initiatives, integrated plans and goals, and 2) the needs of the community, government, agencies and society, as well as the needs of other units on campus.
- **Financial considerations** to determine the unit's overall financial health and its impact on university resources.
- **Context and opportunity** to assess the academic unit's unique context and possible opportunities.

The annual Enhanced Planning processes and reports use these six criteria as a means to assure quality. The EPT reporting system enables UVic to align best practices and available resources to deliver academic programs, and align goals and priorities with the university's approved planning documents, such as the Strategic Framework, Strategic Research Plan, International Plan, Indigenous Plan and Campus Plan.

UVic's annual institutional process for ARP integrates the EPT reports, criteria and measures. All academic and administrative units complete an ARP submission in parallel with their EPT reports each academic year. This requires all units to indicate how resource requests for the coming two years contribute to achieving improvements, including: 1) improving academic and professional programs by implementing the recommendations of an Academic Program Review Committee or a reaccreditation Review Team, and / or 2) maintaining excellence aligned with the criteria of the EPT. Academic resource requests must also indicate how they align with the EPT criteria and will advance the Strategic Framework and associated planning documents, such as the Strategic Research, Indigenous, International, and Campus plans.

The academic resource planning process involves submissions made by academic units, such as a school or department, to the Dean of its Faculty who prioritizes them within a Faculty-level resource request submitted to the Provost. The resource request information collated from all academic units' submissions is presented to the Integrated Planning Committee. After the priorities of all Vice Presidents' portfolios are reviewed by the Integrated Planning Committee, a Planning and Budget Framework is prepared and reviewed with the President. The Senate Committee on the University Budget (SCUB) is also kept up-to-date throughout the development of the Planning and Budget Framework. The Framework is reviewed by the SCUB at two points for discussion before its presentation to the Board of Governors for their final approval each year.

In May 2014, UVic's university-wide learning outcomes, originally developed in 2006, were reviewed and revised by Senate. The learning outcomes include a broad range of high level skills relevant across disciplines. They provide guidance about the skills and capacities students can expect to achieve through their education. Faculties, units (i.e., departments and schools) and academic programs are encouraged to interpret the learning outcomes in discipline-specific ways. The university-wide learning outcomes allow for program-specific and course-specific learning outcomes appropriate to standards of specific fields of study. Many professional programs at UVic also adhere to learning outcomes identified through accreditation and/or regulatory approval processes.

As part of its ongoing processes for quality assurance, the university in the 2016/17 academic year initiated a new learning outcomes project to further explicate the relationship of the institution learning outcomes to program-level learning outcomes for all undergraduate and graduate programs. Under the leadership of the Executive Director, Division of Learning and Teaching Support and Innovation, the project will move from the pilot stage, involving a Working Group that reported to the Senate Committee on Learning and Teaching in 2017/18, towards university-wide engagement in 2019/20. The project aims to build capacity within academic Faculties to develop program-level intended learning outcomes.

The following also support quality assurance and practice:

- faculty scholarship and research; and
- student assessment and progression.

### *Program Development*

The new program approval processes as well as procedures for revision of established programs are addressed in Senate Policy AC 1120 Calendar Submissions. Senate Policy AC 1135 specifically addresses the academic quality expected of non-degree Certificate and Diploma programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels. In accordance with Senate Policy AC 1120, proposals involving the following must be approved by the Senate Committee on Planning:

- New undergraduate and graduate programs and degrees, including minor programs and general degrees;
- New certificates, professional certificates and diplomas (undergraduate and graduate);
- Double or dual degree programs (including programs involving existing degrees); and
- Programs involving partnerships or agreements with other institutions.

Curriculum Submissions, such as course descriptions that require approval, may be submitted to the Senate Curriculum Committee concurrently with, or subsequent to, a program proposal's submission to the Senate Committee on Planning. Approval of Curriculum Submissions for new or changed programs is contingent upon approval by the Faculty of Graduate Studies, when a graduate program is involved, the Senate Committee on Planning, Senate, the Board of Governors, and AEST, as required.

UVic's procedures for new programs are set out in detailed guidelines and templates on the website of the Provost. Procedures and levels of approval for new program proposals specified in these guidelines and templates are based on the requirements of AEST. The procedures for new program approval include the following steps:

1. The academic unit prepares a viability index for the proposed program for submission to the Dean of the academic Faculty who determines if there is evidence, for example, of sufficient demand and existing resources, particularly the number of faculty members with relevant disciplinary expertise, to offer the program.
2. The Chair of the academic unit or of the Faculty's Curriculum Committee consults with the Provost's Office for guidance about procedures to prepare a program proposal and, if appropriate, a template to propose non-standard tuition for the new program.
3. The academic unit prepares program documentation based on a required internal UVic template. After consultation within the unit, the proposal is submitted for review and approval to the Faculty Curriculum Committee with evidence of necessary consultation with internal and external experts.
4. When a graduate program is proposed, the Graduate Executive Committee (GEC) and subsequently the Faculty of Graduate Studies Council will evaluate and approve the proposed program on the basis of the quality of the curriculum in relation to degree level standards as well as adequate resources, such as funding for graduate fellowships and stipends.
5. The proposed program is then forwarded to the Senate Committee on Planning.
6. A Faculty delegation presents the program proposal at a meeting of the Senate Committee on Planning to address questions about the curriculum and its appropriateness for the degree level (i.e., Baccalaureate, Master's or PhD) as well as demand for the program. The Senate Committee on Planning votes on a motion to approve the proposal and to recommend to Senate that it approve and recommend the proposal to the Board of Governors for approval.
7. The academic unit proposing the new program prepares the template required by AEST and forwards it to the Provost's Office for review.
8. After Senate approves the proposed program, a) the Tuition Committee reviews and recommends the proposal for non-standard tuition to the Board of Governors for review and approval, and b) the new program proposal is included in the agenda of the Board of Governors for review and approval of the proposed resource plan.
9. After the Board of Governors approves the program, the Provost's Office reviews and finalizes all documentation required for the new program proposal to be submitted to the PSIPS website for review and approval by AEST. As UVic has exempt status, its new degree program proposals go through an expediated review process.
10. After the proposed program is approved by AEST, the Senate Committee on the Curriculum includes course and program information in the upcoming Calendar Cycle.

### *Program Review*

UVic's Academic Program Review policy and processes sit within the context of the university's annual Academic and Resource Planning cycle (ARP) that supports annual evaluation of the effectiveness of educational programs and services, and their responsiveness

to student, labour market and social needs. The annual cycle for academic and resource planning is part of an integrated planning process that contributes to the continuous improvement of the university.

Academic program reviews are implemented on a cycle of five to seven years for all programs in an academic unit, i.e., either a non-departmentalized Faculty or an individual academic department or school within departmentalized Faculties. The Dean of an academic unit may request to initiate a review outside the cycle to address specified circumstances. Approximately eight to ten academic units will participate in a review each academic year. The Provost's Office manages the annual planning process to schedule academic program reviews. Accreditations and reaccreditations are managed by administrative units within each Faculty, and monitored and recorded by the Provost's Office.

In order to accommodate differentiation among academic and accredited professional programs, accreditation and reaccreditation of professional schools or programs, at the discretion of the Provost, may be substituted for an Academic Program Review (APR) when the processes are commensurate, that is, the reaccreditation process has equal or greater scope in terms of the criteria specified in Senate Policy AC 1145. However, both the academic program review and accreditation processes are implemented when an academic unit has both unaccredited and accredited programs. In addition, provision is made in the policy to enable a Dean, with the approval of the Provost's Office, to set goals for the APR to address "particular areas of concern or interest" and to request the Review Committee to address them. The Review Committee is comprised of two members external to UVic and one UVic faculty member external to the Faculty whose programs are to be reviewed.

The key components of the review are:

- the Self-Study prepared by the academic unit using data from EPT report and other data supplied by the Office of Institutional Planning and Analysis.
- the Dean's review of the accuracy of the content of the Self-Study, and the Provost Office's review of its compliance with Senate Policy AC 1145 before distributing the Self-Study to the Review Committee in advance of their site visit.
- the 2 day site visit of the Academic Program Review Committee.
- the Academic Program Review Committee's written Report and recommendations that is distributed to: 1) the Provost, Vice President Research, Deans of the academic Faculty and the Faculty of Graduate Studies, and 2) the Dean of the academic Faculty, the Chair or Director of the academic unit, and the faculty.
- the written responses to the Review Committee's Report by the academic unit and the Dean, submitted to the Provost's Office.
- two meetings to discuss the Review Committee Report and its recommendations: the first, with the Provost's Office, the Deans of the academic Faculty and the Faculty of Graduate Studies, and the academic unit's Chair or Director, to review and approve an Action Plan that specifies the milestones and timeline for the academic unit to implement responses to the Committee's report, and the second, approximately one year after the first, to review the academic unit's progress implementing the Action Plan. Thereafter, updates on implementation plans are included in the unit's annual Enhanced Planning Tools Report.

- an Executive Summary of the Academic Program Review's Report and Recommendations published on the Provost Office website. Similarly, the outcome of an accreditation is posted on the website of the relevant Faculty.
- a written report that identifies all academic program reviews completed in the previous academic year and those planned for the current academic year submitted to Senate by the Provost's Office. This report also includes information about revision and approval of academic programs in the previous academic year.

## **QAPA Review**

The QAPA panel conducting the assessment were Dr. Ross Paul, panel chair, and panel members Dr. Ronald Bond and Dr. Brenda Brouwer. The site visit was held on December 11 and 12, 2018. In addition to the panel, Ms. Dao Luu, a member of the DQAB Secretariat, also attended the site visit.

The QAPA panel submitted its report on December 28, 2018. The panel noted it was impressed with the scope and substance of the University of Victoria's commitment to effective quality assurance across the institution. The panel report provided commendations, affirmations and recommendations. UVic provided a response on April 12, 2019.

Commendations are areas where the institution has shown exemplary practice:

- The university's Enhanced Planning Tools (EPT) contribute substantially to the UVic quality assurance processes by encouraging data-driven decision-making, the development of appropriate matrices, and the use of templates while providing useful data to each department. The EPT reports save faculty time and render the QA process more efficient.
- Another custom-made UVic tool, the Viability Index, greatly facilitates consideration of program proposals by serving as an important early check on their suitability for further development. Other post-secondary institutions could benefit significantly by developing instruments similar to the EPT and Viability Index for their own quality assurance purposes.
- The department of Political Science is to be commended for its embracing of experiential learning and its efforts to improve the scholarly recognition of faculty research.
- The Teacher Education Program is saluted for its regular celebration events around practice teaching and community liaison. Its TRUVic initiative, which encourages teacher education students to reflect on their application of theory to practice in the schools, is particularly noteworthy and should be expanded.
- The School of Business, through its AACSB and EQUIS accreditations, has systematically developed a quality assurance culture that is a model for the rest of the institution.

Affirmations are areas where the institution has identified weaknesses and intends to correct it:

- The University is in the process of revising and developing new learning outcomes for each program. There are institution-wide learning outcomes and, in many cases, program specific learning outcomes. This is a work in progress which needs to be better integrated within the institution but the direction is the right one. The process should differentiate outcomes at the undergraduate program level from those at the Master's level and, in turn, at the doctoral level.

- At the time of the review and after broad-based consultation, the University was about to launch a Strategic Enrolment Planning initiative which has the promise of contributing significantly to the integration of all of the elements of quality assurance into institutional planning and implementation.
- Led by the School of Business, the University is developing a culture of sharing best practices in quality assurance across the institution.
- The University has an ambitious Indigenous Plan which needs to be widely considered and integrated into all components of the institution.
- The Faculty of Education has introduced “double mentoring” for research and scholarship whereby new scholars are mentored by experienced faculty members both in research and in subject-matter expertise.

Recommendations are areas the panel identified for improvement:

- UVic should consider creating a “Quality Assurance” (QA) website. This would address the panel’s concerns about a lack of transparency around QA in a number of ways:
  - Public accountability for how every recommendation in external reviews is handled by the relevant unit.
  - Providing an opportunity to showcase what UVic does well in QA.
  - Encouraging an open and proactive approach to challenges and shortfalls, the acknowledgement of which is central to an effective QA process.
  - Ensuring that programs are following through on external review recommendations by publicizing the status of each one (i.e., “implemented”, “in process”, “on hold”, “rejected”), including the rationale for whatever action is taken.
- A systematic and public follow-through on each recommendation from an external review after appropriate intervals (normally 12 months, 3 years and 5 years, assuming 7-8 year review cycles). This will ensure ongoing monitoring of action plans and their impact and greatly facilitate subsequent academic program reviews and continuous improvement.
- That there be a concerted effort to involve more students and other stakeholders in program review processes. The practice is uneven across disciplines and students can not only contribute significantly to the review but may also learn a lot in the process (see the Ontario Guide to the Quality Assurance Framework for useful advice in this area).
- That the program review process should be more prescriptive than it has been, notably in requiring all units to use the Enhanced Planning Tools reports at the centre of their processes so that there is less unevenness across the institution.
- The program review process would benefit from a more concerted effort at meeting the challenge of determining the extent to which university teaching is informed by research, scholarship and creative activity.
- That all programs complete the specification of measurable learning outcomes within the broader rubric of those defined more generally for the University. The panel recommends as a useful guide for consideration in the UVic process, the Queen’s University comprehensive approach to both undergraduate and graduate learning outcomes. Another useful resource tool is the Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework.

UVic acknowledged the recommendations in its response to the panel’s report and provided an action plan addressing each of the recommendations.