

Quality Assurance Process Audit: Vancouver Island University

Response to the Assessors' Final Report

October 15, 2017

Reviewed and Approved at Senate November 2, 2017

The QAPA Assessors' Report to VIU (the report) comments on three areas: a) Commendations: Areas of Quality Assurance that VIU is addressing well and has continued to enhance. b) Affirmations of issues where improvement is required and VIU has already begun an Action Plan. And c) Recommendations for issues that need to be addressed. This response to the Assessors' Report is organized around these three areas, to describe the Action Plans in response to the assessors' observations and recommendations. The response has been prepared by the Program Review Oversight Committee (PROC) and reviewed and discussed by Senate, including the Senate subcommittees that offer oversight on the Quality Assurance Processes.

Commendations

VIU was commended for the breadth of offerings and our commitment to student success and excellence in teaching and learning.

Action: VIU will continue as an open access university, serving regional needs with a diversity of programming from upgrading to trades to undergraduate and graduate degrees. The *Centre for Innovation and Excellence in Learning* (CIEL) will continue to be involved in promoting leading edge, best practice pedagogy and to undertake the quality assurance processes outlined by policy in response to DQAB requirements. (CIEL; OUPA; PROC)

VIU was commended for commitment to quality assurance, as it links to the student educational experience.

VIU was also commended for developing an additional review process-Summative Program Assessment (SPA) - linked to program prioritization.

VIU was commended for creating and implementing templates and guidelines for program review and program development processes.

Action: VIU will continue to refine the elements of the quality assurance continuum and articulate, to faculty and program leadership, the relationship between the various elements such as curriculum development, learning outcomes, graduate attributes, and program evaluation including both Program Review and Summative Program Assessment. (OUPA; PROC; Planning and Priorities Committee)

VIU was commended for our commitment to Indigenous students and communities and for our approach to collaborative program development with First Nations communities.

Action: VIU will continue to work with [Hwulmuxw Mustimuxw Siem](#) (HMS); Community Program Advisory Committees and Elders to meet the educational needs of Indigenous Students. (OAEE; Provost Office; Curriculum Committee)

Affirmations

VIU has identified a need for ongoing performance review of faculty members which includes regular feedback from students. .

Action Plan: A joint committee with representation from the Faculty Association (VIUFA), Management, and the CIEL has been formed to develop and guide the implementation of a self-directed faculty evaluation process linked to scholarly and professional development. Additionally, a review and revision of faculty/course evaluation surveys completed by students has been undertaken. Discussion is ongoing about incorporating this tool into the faculty self-directed evaluation as a mechanism to enhance already strong quality educational programs and experiences for students. (AVPA; VIUFA; BCGEU; CIEL)

VIU is committed to continuous quality improvement and has recently updated and revised policies on program development and program review to incorporate recent DQAB changes.

Action Plan: These revised policies have been forwarded to Senate and the Board of Governors for their review and approval. Once approved, additional work to revise the handbooks to accompany the policies will be undertaken and regular review, as is current practice, of both will occur. (OUPA)

The assessors affirmed the difficulty with aligning the mandate of a regional university; the rigorous VIU quality assurance process on new degrees; and the requirement for final Ministerial approval for proposed degree programs.

Action Plan: VIU will continue to engage in a rigorous new program development process and will request specific clarification from the Minister for proposals that are not allowed to proceed. (OUPA; Provost)

Recommendations

The assessors recommended that VIU undertake program review for both degree and non-degree programs, recognizing that the program review process is only required for degree programs and is mandated by DQAB. A consideration of alternative formats was recommended.

Action Plan: VIU notes that limiting the program review process to degree programs was a decision that occurred within financial and workload constraints. There are, however, many other circumstances under which program review already occurs for certificates and diplomas. Many programs are credentials that occur “within” a degree and therefore undergo curriculum review when the degree program is reviewed. Other programs are accredited, which ensures regular review. All programs participate in SPA once every 5 years whereby a comprehensive review of all programs is undertaken using common institutional performance measures and programs may be recommended for additional review as a result. Deans also have the option of requesting a program review at any time. Finally, we note that Trades, English as a Second Language, and Adult Basic Education programs all have a separate provincial quality assurance process through other jurisdictions.

VIU will identify the quality assurance processes already required of non-degree programs and compare the rigour with the degree quality assurance requirements to identify gaps and how to address those. (OUPA;AVPA)

VIU will consider and develop additional quality assurance requirements for selected non-degree programs based on the above assessment. (PROC)

VIU will undertake to define and better describe how the program review requirements of both degree and non-degree programs are related to the SPA process to enhance faculty understanding of the differences and how program review is related to SPA. (Planning and Priorities; OUPA)

The Assessors noted that accredited programs do not formally undergo program review and recommended mechanisms for addressing the areas NOT included in an accreditation study. Two possibilities were identified: joining the program review external team with the Accreditation Team or addressing additional program review criteria through an additional self-study.

Action Plan: VIU notes that Accreditation requirements and cycles are variable, depending on the discipline and therefore an individualized approach, within certain principles, is required.

VIU has recently required that an Action Plan be provided to PROC following all Accreditation Reviews. (Ongoing; PROC)

VIU identifies on the program review schedule all Accreditation Reviews and will, in future, work with each program to identify additional components that may be required, in line with our commitment to the excellence of the student educational experience. (PROC; OUPA)

The Assessors recommended that all criteria within the Program Review Template be “required”.

Action Plan: The program review handbook and self-study template will be revised to clarify that all criteria within the template are required, including an assessment of learning outcomes. Support will be provided for curriculum mapping through the CIEL. Programs undergoing review will receive an orientation to the process and standards expected. The Graduate Attributes will be incorporated into the template. Alternative forms of demonstrating or describing the program will be encouraged where appropriate. (e. g. A link to a digital description of the program, or a demonstration of student learning outcomes or portfolios.) (OUPA; CIEL)

The Assessors recommended a clearer and more rigorous accountability after the one-year action plan review.

Action Plan: VIU will develop a template for the Action Plan, with a focus on action items related to the student learning experience and including the curriculum revision process; scholarly and professional development requirements. Programs will be asked to provide a 3 and 5 year update on their action plans to PROC. (OUPA; PROC)

List of Acronyms:

AVPA	Associate Vice-President Academic
BCGEU	BC Government Employees Union (Union of vocational faculty members)
CIEL	Centre for Innovation and Excellence in Learning
DQAB	Degree Quality Assessment Board
OAEE	Office of Aboriginal Education and Engagement
OUPA	Office of University Planning and Analysis
PROC	Program Review Oversight Committee-A Sub-committee of Planning and Priorities
SPA	Summative Program Assessment
VIUFA	VIU Faculty Association (Union of academic faculty members)