

**York University**

**York University Quality Assurance Procedures (YUQAP)**

**August 2020**

An electronic version of the York University Quality Assurance Procedures, along with various documentation that support the quality assurance process at York University, can be accessed through the YUQAP website located at <https://yuqap.info.yorku.ca/>

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## 1.0 QUALITY ASSURANCE CONTEXT

### 1.1 Preamble

The quality assurance of university academic programs has been adopted around the world and is widely recognized as a vital component of every viable educational system. An important component has been the articulation of degree level expectations and learning outcomes in postsecondary education.

In 2010 the Council of Ontario Universities (COU) approved the protocols for establishing new programs and other curriculum and for the cyclical review of programs, which were set out in a document called the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF). These protocols are overseen at the provincial level by a quality assurance body established by COU called the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance (the Quality Council). In developing the Quality Assurance Framework for postsecondary education, Ontario universities have shown significant leadership and a firm commitment to cultivating a culture of quality in education.

As set out in the QAF, academic standards, quality assurance, and program improvement are, in the first instance, the responsibility of universities themselves. The QAF recognizes the institution's autonomy to determine priorities for funding, space, and faculty allocation. Each institution's quality assurance process is ratified by the Quality Council whose work is supported by both an Appraisal Committee and an Audit Committee. The Quality Council operates at arm's-length from universities and the government to ensure its independence.

The York University Quality Assurance Procedures (YUQAP) outline the protocols for the assessment and approval of new programs, review of existing programs, modifications to existing programs, and closure of programs. Templates for the various types of curriculum submissions may be found on the website of the Office of the Vice-Provost Academic. The YUQAP were ratified by the Quality Council on March 31, 2011, and a revised version was ratified in August 2013. This version of the procedures was ratified by Quality Council in August of 2020.

The York University Policy on the Approval and Cyclical Review of Programs and other Curriculum governs the approval of proposed new programs and the review of existing programs at York University. The Policy on the Approval and Cyclical Review of Programs and other Curriculum was approved by Senate on October 28, 2010, and revised in May 2020.

Any change made to the QAF will be reflected in the YUQAP as appropriate. Such changes will be considered minor and will not require renewed ratification.

### 1.2 Scope of Application

York University's responsibility for quality assurance extends to new and continuing undergraduate and graduate degree/diploma programs and also to programs offered in

partnership, collaboration, or similar arrangements with other postsecondary institutions, including colleges, universities, or institutes.

### 1.3 York University Quality Assurance Procedures

The York University Quality Assurance Procedures (YUQAP) reflect two principles: (1) the pursuit of academic quality is the University's highest academic objective; and (2) quality assurance is a responsibility shared by academic units, Faculty Councils, and Senate. York University's commitment to academic quality is embedded within university planning documents.

The articulation of program learning outcomes is central to York University's approach to ensuring that its academic programs are of high quality compared to international standards. A priority embedded in the YUQAP is to ensure that the program learning outcomes have been articulated and are available to students in the case of all degree programs. Reviews are premised on the expectation that every program can be improved and that regular evaluation directed towards improvement is a major responsibility of the programs and their related departments, schools, and Faculties.

The YUQAP covers all academic programs whether or not they are eligible for government funding and regardless of mode of delivery or location. YUQAP comprises four distinct components based on the QAF as set out below.

#### 1.3.1 The Protocol for New Degree Program Approvals

The Protocol for New Degree Program Approvals applies to new undergraduate degrees, undergraduate honours specializations and majors (for which a similar specialization is not already approved), graduate degrees, and combined degrees (when a new parent program at the University is being proposed in conjunction with the combined degree). New degree programs are externally reviewed as part of the process leading to institutional approval. Once approved by the institutional governance process, new programs are reviewed by the Appraisal Committee of the Quality Council. The Quality Council has the authority to approve or decline new program proposals. (See Section 3.)

#### 1.3.2. The Protocol for New Programs with Expedited Approvals

The Protocol for New Programs with Expedited Approvals applies to new graduate diplomas. These programs do not require external appraisal. Once approved by the institutional governance process, these programs are reviewed by the Appraisal Committee of the Quality Council. The Quality Council has the authority to approve or decline these proposals. (See Section 4.)

#### 1.3.3 The Protocol for Major Modifications

The Protocol for Major Modifications is used to assure program quality where significant changes have been made to existing and previously approved programs, and for the establishment of a new minor program where there is no existing major. Program closures follow the same approval process as other major modifications. Major

modifications and closures are approved by the institutional governance process and are reported annually to the Quality Council. (See Section 5.)

#### 1.3.4 The Protocol for Cyclical Program Reviews

The Protocol for Cyclical Program Reviews assesses the academic standards of existing undergraduate and graduate programs, including graduate diploma and undergraduate certificate programs, and assures their ongoing improvement. To the extent possible, related undergraduate and graduate program reviews will be conducted concurrently. (See Section 6.)

#### 1.4 YUQAP Website

In addition to the protocols described in the YUQAP, the York University Quality Assurance website houses templates, forms, and toolkits that:

- a) Outline requirements for the Proposal Brief for new program proposals, major modifications, program closures, and Cyclical Program Reviews;
- b) Provide guidance on the Cyclical Program Reviews process, including the articulation of program learning outcomes, the format of the self-study (see the Guide to Cyclical Program Reviews on the YUQAP website);
- c) Describe the data provided for self-studies;
- d) Outline the processes for the selection of reviewers and scheduling of site visits for both new programs and Cyclical Program Reviews;
- e) Set out the planned cycle called the Rota for the conduct of undergraduate and graduate program reviews;
- f) Identify contact information for support and assistance;
- g) Provide exemplars for key components of program development and program renewal.

## 2. UNIVERSITY AUTHORITIES

### 2.1 Quality Council Liaison and Reporting

The Provost and Vice-President Academic is the chief academic officer at York University and is responsible for the oversight of the York University Quality Assurance Procedures (YUQAP). Within the Office of the Provost and Vice-President Academic, the Vice-Provost Academic oversees the administration, liaison, and reporting associated with the YUQAP.

### 2.2 Institutional Quality Assurance Authority

#### 2.2.1 Senate Authority and Relationship to Faculty Councils

All proposals for the establishment of new graduate and undergraduate degree programs, diplomas, and certificates and the revision of closure of graduate and undergraduate degree programs, diplomas, and certificates require the approval of Senate. Normally, only proposals that have been approved by the applicable Faculty Council(s) shall be considered by Senate and its committees (Senate Committee on

Academic Standards, Curriculum and Pedagogy (ASCP), Senate Academic Policy and Research Committee (APPRC).

#### 2.2.2 Oversight of the York University Quality Assurance Policy

Senate oversight of the Institutional Quality Assurance Policy is vested with the Joint Sub-Committee on Quality Assurance (Joint Sub-Committee) established by Senate's Academic Policy, Planning and Research Committee and the Academic Standards, Curriculum and Pedagogy Committee.

#### 2.2.3 Role of the Joint Sub-Committee

On behalf of Senate, the Joint Sub-Committee will ensure compliance with the Quality Council's protocols, respond to audit reports conducted by the Quality Council, and propose changes as may be needed. The Joint Sub-Committee oversees the cyclical review of programs and is responsible for the institutional implementation plan and follow-up.

##### 2.2.3(a) Composition of the Joint Sub-Committee

The Joint Sub-Committee is composed of the following members:

- Two members of the Academic Policy, Planning and Research Committee
- Two members of the Academic Standards, Curriculum and Pedagogy Committee
- The Vice-Provost Academic/Associate Vice-President Academic
- The Associate Vice-President Graduate and Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies

##### 2.2.3(b) Eligibility for Membership on the Joint Sub-Committee

At least one member from each of the parent committees shall hold an appointment in the Faculty of Graduate Studies.

From time to time the composition of the oversight committee may be modified and approved through revision of the quality assurance policy by the Senate of York University. Changes to the composition of the committee will be considered minor and will not require renewed ratification.

#### 2.3 Office of the Provost and Vice-President Academic – Administration of Processes

The Office of the Provost and Vice-President Academic is responsible for the administration of quality assurance processes and for the publication of required documents and information, and shall maintain a website for that purpose. The Vice-Provost Academic is responsible for the cyclical review process and shall maintain a Rota of program reviews, which shall be submitted annually to the Joint Sub-Committee. The Vice-Provost Academic shall provide support and advice to the Deans or Principals and their proponents and facilitate processes covered by this policy. Graduate programs will receive special attention from the relevant graduate committees and graduate studies offices, as well as from the Dean of Graduate Studies.

The Vice-Provost Academic is the sole contact between the institution and the Quality Council.



### 3. THE PROTOCOL FOR NEW DEGREE PROGRAM APPROVALS

#### 3.1 Definition

The Protocol for New Degree Program Approvals applies to new programs where a similar option has not already been approved. New programs include:

- Undergraduate degrees
- Undergraduate honours specializations and majors
- Graduate degrees

This protocol covers inter- and intra-institutional degree programs where a degree is being proposed.

A new program has substantially different program requirements and substantially different learning outcomes from those of any existing approved programs. A change of name, on its own, does not constitute a new program, nor does the inclusion of a new program of specialization where another with the same designation already exists (e.g., a new honours program where a major with the same designation already exists).

The Office of the Vice-Provost Academic will determine whether a change falls under the protocol for major modifications or new programs.

#### 3.2 Initial Institutional Process

The approval process for the introduction of new undergraduate and graduate degree programs is set out below.

##### 3.2.1 Early Notice of Intent

Prior to the development of a proposal, proponents shall submit to the Vice-Provost Academic a Notice of Intent, signed by the Deans or Principals of the relevant Faculties, providing a brief statement about the proposal, a summary of new or reallocated resources, and details about preliminary consultations undertaken and those anticipated.

The purpose of this required step is to allow the Vice-Provost Academic to:

- Provide input and ensure consultation with other Faculties and with the Deans or Principals
- Consult with the Dean of Graduate Studies as needed
- Facilitate consultations among interested parties at the earliest opportunity
- Ensure alignment with academic plans.

The Vice-Provost Academic is authorized to determine whether the proponents will be authorized to proceed with the development of a Proposal Brief. Authorization to proceed with a proposal does not constitute formal support.

The Notice of Intent form is posted on the YUQAP website.

### 3.2.2 Development of the New Program Brief

Once authorized, the proponents proceed to develop the New Program Brief with oversight from the Office of the Dean or Principal and with support from the Office of the Vice-Provost Academic, the Teaching Commons, and other relevant bodies. Following approval by the Faculty curriculum committee, the Faculty's Dean or Principal provides a full statement of support subject to revision pending the review of the proposal. The Office of the Vice-Provost Academic reviews the proposal for compliance with the evaluation criteria (see Section 3.3). The Provost and Vice-President Academic provides a full statement of support that is provisional and subject to revision pending the review of the proposal.

### 3.2.3 External Review of New Program Proposals

The external review of a new undergraduate degree or program will normally be conducted following approval of proposals by the Curriculum Committee of Faculty Councils but before consideration by individual Faculty Councils. The external review of new graduate program proposals requires an on-site visit. The external review of new undergraduate program proposals will normally be conducted on-site, but, under exceptional circumstances and with agreement from the external reviewer, a review may be conducted through an alternative off-site option.

### 3.2.4 External Reviewers

The Vice-Provost Academic is responsible for commissioning external appraisals and is responsible for contacting, selecting, and vetting potential external reviewers. Programs and Dean(s)/Principal will normally nominate eight reviewers which are to be ranked by the Dean(s)/Principal and submitted to the Vice-Provost Academic. There will be at least one reviewer for new undergraduate programs and two for new graduate programs. External reviewers will normally be associate or full professors, or the equivalent, with program management experience, a strong track record as academic scholars, and have previous academic administrative experience. They will be at arm's-length from the program under development. The York University External Reviewer Nomination Form, posted on the YUQAP website, defines arm's-length and the nomination process.

### 3.2.5 Appraisal Report

The reviewers will normally provide one report that appraises the standards and quality of the proposed program, addressing the criteria set out in Section 3.3, including the faculty members associated with the program and the material resources and facilities. They will identify any clearly innovative aspects of the proposed program and make recommendations on any essential or otherwise desirable modifications to it. The Appraisal Report will normally be due within two weeks of the site visit.

The Quality Council Appraisal process can be found here: <http://oucqa.ca/framework/2-3-initial-appraisal-process/>. The External Reviewers template is posted on the YUQAP website.

### 3.2.6 Internal Responses

Responses to the Appraisal Report and recommendations are required from both the proposing academic unit and the relevant Dean or Principal. The proponents may modify the program proposal at this time. The program response, including a summary of changes, if any, to the proposal will be provided by the proponents. The Dean or Principal and the Office of the Provost and Vice-President Academic will provide either modified statements of support or statements confirming that no modification is warranted. The Vice-Provost Academic will determine, at this point, if the program proposal should be returned to an earlier committee or if it may proceed directly to the Faculty Council(s).

### 3.2.7 Institutional Approval

Based on the Proposal Brief, the Appraisal Report, and the internal responses to both, the program proposal proceeds to Faculty Council, and then to the Senate Committee on Academic Standards, Curriculum and Pedagogy (ASCP) for its approval. ASCP determines whether the proposal satisfies the new program evaluation criteria or needs further modification or additional information.

Upon approval by ASCP, proposals are forwarded to the Senate Academic Policy, Planning and Research Committee (APPRC) for concurrence and then forwarded to Senate by ASCP.

Note: It is possible that a determination will be made at this point, or at any other point, not to proceed with a proposal. Communication to proponents about such a decision will come from the Vice-Provost Academic or, if initiated by proponents, be communicated to the Vice-Provost Academic.

### 3.2.8 Quality Council Secretariat and Other Approvals

Following Senate's approval of the proposal, the Office of the Provost and Vice-President Academic submits the Proposal Brief, together with all required reports and documents, to the Quality Council Secretariat.

The Office of the Vice-Provost Academic also coordinates program approval requests to the Ministry of University and Colleges.

### 3.2.9 Announcement of New Programs

Following Senate's approval of a new program and the submission of the New Program Brief to the Quality Council, and subject to approval by the Office of the Provost and Vice-President Academic, the University may announce its intention to offer the new undergraduate or graduate program in advance of approval by the Quality Council. In such instances, prospective students are advised that offers of admission to a new program may be made only after the University receives confirmation that the Quality Council has approved the program.

## 3.3 Evaluation Criteria

New Program Briefs must address the evaluation criteria in the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) as set out below.

#### 3.3.1 Objectives

- a) Consistency with the institution's mission and academic plans.
- b) Clarity and appropriateness of the program's learning outcomes and associated assessment and course requirements in addressing the institution's own undergraduate or graduate degree structure and degree level expectations.
- c) Appropriateness of degree nomenclature. Note: Degree types are approved by Senate and require two meetings for approval: an initial notice of motion and then the motion to establish the new degree type.

#### 3.3.2 Admission Requirements

- a) Appropriateness of the program's admission requirements for the learning outcomes established for completion of the program.
- b) Sufficient explanation of alternative requirements, if any, for admission into a graduate, second-entry, or undergraduate program, such as minimum grade point average, additional languages or portfolios, along with how the program recognizes prior work or learning experience.

#### 3.3.3 Structure

- a) Appropriateness of the program's structure and regulations to meet specified program learning outcomes and degree level expectations.
- b) Evidence of a program structure and faculty members' research that will ensure the intellectual quality of the student experience.
- c) For graduate programs, a clear rationale for program length that ensures that the program requirements can be reasonably completed within the proposed time period.

#### 3.3.4 Program Content

- a) Ways in which the curriculum addresses the current state of the discipline or area of study.
- b) Identification of any unique curriculum or program innovations or creative components.
- c) For research-focused graduate programs, a clear indication of the nature and suitability of the major research requirements for degree completion.
- d) Evidence that graduate students in the program are required to take a minimum of two-thirds of the course requirements from among graduate level courses.

#### 3.3.5 Mode of Delivery

Appropriateness of the proposed mode of delivery to meet the intended program learning outcomes and degree level expectations.

#### 3.3.6 Experiential Education

Appropriateness and sustainability of experiential components which may include a wide variety of options, including classroom-based activities, community-based learning, or internships and co-op placements.

### 3.3.7 Assessment of Teaching and Learning

- a) Appropriateness of the proposed methods for the assessment of student achievement of the Degree Level Expectations as articulated in the program learning outcomes.
- b) Completeness of plans for documenting and demonstrating the level of performance of students, consistent with the program learning outcomes and degree level expectations.
- c) Evidence of plans and the commitment to provide the necessary resources in step with the implementation of the program.
- d) Evidence of plans and the commitment to support the development and supervision of experiential learning opportunities (if required).

### 3.3.8 Resources for all Programs

- a) Adequacy of the administrative unit's planned utilization of existing human, electronic, physical, and financial resources, and any institutional commitment to supplement those resources, to support the program.
- b) Evidence and planning for adequate numbers and quality of faculty and staff to achieve the goals of the program.
- c) Participation of a sufficient number and quality of faculty members who are competent to teach and/or supervise in the program, including the role of adjunct and part-time faculty members.
- d) Indication of planned/anticipated class sizes.
- e) Evidence that there are adequate resources to sustain the quality of scholarship produced by undergraduate students' and graduate students' scholarship and research activities, including library support, information technology support, and laboratory access.
- f) Definition and use of indicators that provide evidence of quality of the faculty members (e.g., qualifications, research, innovation, and scholarly record; appropriateness of collective faculty members' expertise to contribute substantively to the proposed program).
- g) Indication of whether the new program is intended to be funded or to be a full-cost recovery program.

### 3.3.9 Resources for Graduate Programs Only

- a) Evidence that faculty members have the recent research or professional/clinical expertise needed to sustain the program, promote innovation, and foster an appropriate intellectual climate.
- b) Where appropriate to the program, evidence that financial assistance for students will be sufficient to ensure adequate quality and numbers of students.

- c) Evidence of how supervisory loads will be distributed, and the qualifications and appointment status of faculty members who will provide instruction and supervision.

#### 3.3.10 Other Quality Indicators

Programs may identify other quality indicators not included above.

#### 3.4 Appraisal Process by the Quality Council

The Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) outlines the processes followed by the Appraisal Committee for new program proposals in detail. This includes the initial appraisal, the process for requesting additional information, decisions, and the appeal process.

The Quality Council makes one of the following decisions about new programs:

- a) Approval to commence
- b) Approval to commence, with report
- c) Deferral for up to one year, affording the institution an opportunity to amend and resubmit its Proposal Brief
- d) Refusal of program proposal

The outcomes of an appraisal process will be conveyed to the Office of the Vice-Provost Academic.

Where a report is required, the Office of the Vice-Provost Academic will, in consultation with the Dean or Principal, prepare and submit the report to the Quality Council.

A link to the Quality Assurance Framework and E-Guide can be found on the YUQAP website.

#### 3.5 Subsequent Process

##### 3.5.1 Ontario Government Funding

Program proposals are submitted, as required, to the relevant Ontario Ministry by the Office of the Vice-Provost Academic. The Notice of Approval by the Quality Council is forwarded to the Ministry.

##### 3.5.2 Monitoring of New Programs

New programs are to be monitored by the academic unit and the respective Deans or Principals responsible for delivering the program, including an annual assessment of data such as admissions and enrolment trends, retention patterns, and faculty resources. Significant concerns will be relayed to the Vice-Provost Academic.

##### 3.5.3 First Cyclical Review

The first cyclical review for any new program must be initiated no more than eight years after the date of the program's initial enrolment and normally in accordance with York University's program review schedule (the Rota).

### 3.5.4 Implementation Window

After a new program is approved to commence by the Quality Council, the program will begin within thirty-six months of that date of approval; otherwise, the approval will lapse. Programs shall inform the Office of the Vice-Provost Academic of any change in plans for the start of a program.

## 4. THE PROTOCOL FOR NEW PROGRAMS FOR EXPEDITED APPROVALS

### 4.1 Definition

The Protocol for New Programs for Expedited Approvals applies to new:

- Graduate diplomas
- Dual credential programs (with existing parent programs)
- Joint degree programs (with existing parent programs)

These programs do not require external appraisal and are forwarded to Senate by the Committee on Academic Standards, Curriculum and Pedagogy (ASCP). Once approved by Senate, the new programs are reviewed by the Appraisal Committee of the Quality Council. The Quality Council has the authority to approve or decline these proposals.

The Council of Ontario Universities' definitions for inter-university programs can be found in Section 1.6 of the Quality Assurance Framework.

<https://oucqa.ca/framework/1-6-definitions/>

### 4.2 Initial Institutional Process

The Protocol for New Programs for Expedited Approvals and the major steps within the institution and through the Quality Council differ from the Protocol for New Degree Programs only in the following respects.

#### 4.2.1 Development of the Proposal Brief

The expedited approvals process requires the submission to the Quality Council of a Proposal Brief of the proposed new program and the rationale for it. The evaluation criteria outlined in Section 3.3 will be applied to the proposal.

### 4.3 Expedited Approvals Process

The Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) outlines the processes followed by the Appraisal Committee for new program proposals in detail. This includes the initial appraisal, the process for requesting additional information, decisions, and the appeal process.

The Quality Council makes one of the following decisions about new programs:

- a) Approval to commence
- b) Approval to commence, with report
- c) Deferral for up to one year, affording the institution an opportunity to amend
- d) and resubmit its proposal brief
- e) Refusal of program proposal

The outcomes of the appraisal process will be conveyed to the Office of the Vice-Provost Academic.

Where a report is required, the Office of the Vice-Provost Academic will, in consultation with the Dean or Principal, prepare and submit the report to the Quality Council.

A link to the Quality Assurance Framework and Associate Guide can be found on the YUQAP website.

## 5. THE PROTOCOL FOR MAJOR MODIFICATIONS TO EXISTING PROGRAMS

### 5.1 Initial Institutional Process

The approval process for major modifications of undergraduate and graduate degree programs follows the Protocol for Major Modifications set out below.

Prior to the development of a proposal, proponents will normally submit a Notice of Intention, signed by the Deans or Principals of the relevant Faculties, providing a brief statement about the proposal, a summary of new or reallocated resources, and details about preliminary consultations undertaken.

The purpose of this required step is to allow the Office of the Provost and Vice-President Academic to:

- a) Provide input and ensure consultation with other Associate Vice-Presidents and the Vice-Provost Students as needed
- b) Consult with the Dean of Graduate Studies as needed
- c) Facilitate consultations among interested parties at the earliest opportunity
- d) Ensure alignment with academic plans.

The Vice-Provost Academic will, if appropriate, authorize the proponents to proceed with the development of a Proposal Brief.

The Office of the Vice-Provost Academic will determine whether a change falls under the protocol for major modification or another process not governed by the YUQAP.

The Notice of Intent form is available on the YUQAP website.

### 5.2 Definition

Major modifications involve changes to existing programs due to curricular renewal to keep a program current, the restructuring of a program, a merger of existing programs, and proposals for new certificates. Other drivers of program modifications include significant changes to essential resources that enhance or impair the delivery of an approved program. Examples include changes to faculty resources, staff resources, or physical space.

Major modifications typically include one or more of the following features:



- a) Substantive changes to learning outcomes and/or approved requirements that comprise up to approximately one-third of the program serve as a guideline for inclusion under the major modification guideline.
- b) Major changes to courses comprising a significant proportion of the program and making an important contribution to meeting program learning outcomes (approximately one-third of courses).
- c) The addition of a new major (undergraduate) where a similar major exists.
- d) A new specialization at the graduate level.
- e) Addition or deletion of streams.
- f) The addition of a new option (e.g., location or part-time/full-time) within an existing program.
- g) Establishment of undergraduate certificates.
- h) The merger of two or more programs.
- i) Establishment of a minor program or option.
- j) The offering of an existing program substantially online where it had previously been offered in face-to-face mode, or vice versa.
- k) At the master's level, the introduction or deletion of a major research paper or thesis, course-only, co-op placement, internship, or practicum option.
- l) The introduction or deletion of a field in a graduate program.
- m) The creation of a collaborative specialization at the graduate level.
- n) The creation of combined degrees (existing programs), either undergraduate, graduate, or undergraduate/graduate.
- o) Any change to the requirements for graduate program candidacy examinations or residence requirements.

Major modifications to existing programs do not require submission of a Proposal Brief to the Quality Council.

The University may request that the Quality Council review a major modification proposal, and normally that will occur through the expedited approval process.

#### 5.2.1 Closure

Closure of a program (majors, certificate, degrees). The Closure template is posted on the YUQAP website.

#### 5.2.2 Other Modifications

Other changes may also come forward through Faculty Councils to the Senate Committee on Academic Standards, Curriculum and Pedagogy (ASCP). Examples include changes to degree or admission requirements.

Minor modifications require divisional approval by the respective Faculty Council(s) and include, for example, the revision of a field in a graduate program, the creation of a new course, the substitution of a course requirement, or edits to a list of courses from which students are required to take one or more courses.

These modifications are forwarded to ASCP and Senate for either information or approval as appropriate.

### 5.3 Proposal Brief

The Proposal Brief for a major modification includes the following along with any additional requirements that a Faculty may choose to apply. The Major Modifications template is posted on the YUQAP website.

- a) A description of the proposed changes and the rationale, including alignment with University and Faculty academic plans.
- b) An outline of the changes to requirements, including how the proposed requirements will support the achievement of program learning outcomes.
- c) An overview of the consultation undertaken with relevant academic units and an assessment of the impact of the major modifications on other programs (where and as appropriate, the proposal must include statements from the relevant program(s) confirming consultation/support).
- d) A summary of any resource implications and how they are being addressed. Attention should be paid to whether the proposed changes will be supported by a reallocation of existing resources or if new/additional resources are required. A letter from the relevant Dean or Principal is required if new resources are required.
- e) The application of any other relevant criteria as outlined in Section 3.3 to the proposed changes.
- f) A summary of how students currently enrolled in the program will be accommodated.
- g) Other information as required by Senate and/or its committees (for example, a side-by-side comparison of the existing and proposed program requirements as they will appear in the Undergraduate or Graduate Calendar).

### 5.4 Institutional Approval Process

Upon approval by the Faculty Council subcommittee on curriculum, the proposal proceeds to Faculty Council, and, once approved, proceeds to the Senate ASCP for approval. Upon approval by the ASCP, proposals are forwarded to the Senate.

### 5.5 Annual Report to the Quality Council

The Office of the Provost and Vice-President Academic files an Annual Report with the Quality Council which provides a summary of major program modifications that were approved through the University's internal approval process in the past year.

## 6. THE PROTOCOL FOR CYCLICAL PROGRAM REVIEWS

### 6.1 Definition

The Protocol for the Cyclical Program Reviews assesses the academic standards of existing undergraduate and graduate programs, including graduate diplomas, and ensures that programs maintain the highest academic quality.

All undergraduate and graduate degree programs, certificates, and diplomas approved by the Senate of York University, including those offered in partnership, collaboration, or other such arrangement with other postsecondary institutions (i.e., colleges, universities, Institutes of Technology and Advanced Learning [ITALs]), are required to initiate a review every eight years, in accordance with the protocol, guidelines, and schedule set out in the YUQAP, the Policy on the Approval and Cyclical Review of Programs and other Curriculum, and the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF).

## 6.2 Administration and Authority for Cyclical Reviews

The Office of the Vice-Provost Academic shall have administrative responsibility for the cyclical review process and for establishing a Rota of reviews, which shall be submitted annually to the Joint Sub-Committee. The Vice-Provost Academic will commission the external reviewers in consultation with the relevant faculties/schools and ensure that the reviewers receive all relevant materials prior to the site visit. The Vice-Provost Academic shall provide advice to proponents and facilitate processes covered by this policy, consulting with the Dean of Graduate Studies as appropriate. Resources, including templates, guidance documents, and links to the QAF are posted on the YUQAP website.

The Vice-Provost Academic may, under exceptional circumstances, authorize a one-year extension of a cyclical review due to specific academic and logistical challenges, including efforts to align related undergraduate and graduate programs, newly introduced programs in units, and accreditation reviews. Similarly, the Vice-Provost Academic may require a program to launch a review in order to align with related programs.

The Joint Sub-Committee shall have authority for ensuring that cyclical reviews adhere to the protocol and shall monitor the timely implementation of improvements. The Joint Sub-Committee receives the Reviewer Report, along with all relevant documentation; it affirms the implementation plan, the Final Assessment Report, and the Follow-up Report. The reports are transmitted by the Joint Sub-Committee to the Committee of Academic Standards, Curriculum and Pedagogy (ASCP) and to the Committee on Academic Policy Planning and Resources (APPRC). The Vice-Provost Academic transmits the Final Assessment Report to the Dean or Principal, the program, and the Quality Council.

Academic programs under review are responsible for the preparation of all components of the Self-Study Brief and the site visit itinerary.

## 6.3 Programs and Review Schedule

The University's full complement of its undergraduate and certificate programs and its graduate and diploma programs are reviewed on a planned cycle (the Rota). A "program" is a Senate-approved sequence of courses or other components of study prescribed for the fulfillment of the requirements of a particular degree, certificate, or diploma and is considered to be the comprehensive body of studies required to graduate with a degree, certificate, or diploma in a particular discipline or

interdisciplinary field of study. Units<sup>1</sup> that administer more than one program must conduct a full review of each, including all elements, as outlined below.

A cyclical review is publicly announced by posting the Rota on the Provost and Vice-President Academic website on Quality Assurance. It is the responsibility of the “unit” and program(s) under review to provide further communications to faculty members, staff, students, and other stakeholders, as may be appropriate.

Programs are reviewed on a regular basis but the interval between program reviews must not exceed eight years. Cyclical reviews of undergraduate programs will normally be conducted concurrently with reviews of graduate programs. Interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary graduate programs, as well as cognate programs offered at multiple campuses, may involve faculty members from several different academic units. A senior academic (typically a Chairperson or a Director) will act as the lead contact and be responsible for the local coordination, in consultation with relevant Directors of undergraduate and graduate programs.

Reviews may also be aligned with professional accreditation. Note that university reviews are not waived because an externally commissioned review, such as an accreditation, has recently been conducted. In some cases, the University process may be streamlined by aligning the requirements of the internally and externally commissioned reviews and supplementing documentation as necessary.

The review cycle will include all dual credential or joint degree programs, multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, second-entry, multi-sited and inter-institutional programs, and all modes of delivery. Inter-institutional programs offered in partnership with other postsecondary institutions must establish a review process.

#### 6.4 Commissioning Officer for Reviews

Reviews of academic programs are commissioned by the Vice-Provost Academic in consultation with the relevant Dean or Principal. A database containing the full schedule of all program reviews is maintained in the Office of the Vice-Provost Academic. The Vice-Provost Academic will seek input from the partner institution(s) regarding the commissioning of the review in cases where the program is offered with other postsecondary education institutions through formal collaborative and/or affiliation agreements.

#### 6.5 Process Overview

The YUQAP for the conduct of Cyclical Program Reviews has five principal components.

- a) Self-Study Brief, including course descriptions and CVs of full-time faculty and CVs or bios of part-time/adjunct faculty
- b) Review Report with recommendations on program quality improvement

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1 The term “unit” should be taken to include departments, schools, and Faculties (i.e., those bodies responsible for administering academic programs).

- c) Responses each from the program and from the Dean or Principal to the Review Report recommendations
- d) A Final Assessment Report which includes an institutional implementation plan for recommendations, including timelines
- e) Follow-up Report on the Implementation Plan

#### 6.5.1 Dual Credential, Joint, and Collaborative Programs

The Cyclical Program Reviews of dual credential, joint, and collaborative programs will include the following:

- One Self-Study Brief
- Input from partners on external reviewers and the selection of reviewers
- Site visits at partner institutions
- A combined Review Report, on which feedback from all institutions will be sought
- A combined Final Assessment Report and Institutional Implementation Plan, which will be made available at each institution
- Follow-up Report with input from each institution

#### 6.6 Self-Study: Internal Program Perspective

Relevant Chairs, Directors, Undergraduate Program Directors, and Graduate Program Directors will collaborate in the preparation a single omnibus report even if the documentation has separate sections addressing the undergraduate and graduate programs.

##### 6.6.1 Contents

The unit and/or program prepares a Self-Study Brief that is broad-based, reflective, forward-looking, and includes critical analysis. It is an assessment of the strengths of the program(s) and opportunities for strengthening the program(s) in relation to the quality of student experience and the reputation of the program(s). During preparation for the Self-Study Brief, the program should consider the appropriateness of the program(s) in the context of current trends in the field, relevant academic plans, and critical reflection on the program(s) learning outcomes and assessment. Undertaking the self-study involves faculty members, staff, students, and other stakeholders such as alumni or industry partners, and articulating their participation in the process. The Self-Study Brief must address and document the terms of reference and program evaluation criteria that will be provided to the reviewers (see the Self-Study template on the YUQAP website).

The Self-Study Brief describes the following:

- a) Consistency of the program learning outcomes with the institution's mission and degree level expectations, and an articulation of how the learning outcomes are communicated to students and how the achievement of those outcomes is assessed and documented.
- b) Participation of program faculty, staff, and students in the self-study process and how their views were obtained and taken into account.

- c) Program-related data and measures of performance, including applicable provincial, national, and professional standards (where available).
- d) Reflection on the information and trends revealed by the data provided and/or collected.
- e) Review criteria and quality indicators identified in Section 6.7.7.
- f) Concerns and recommendations raised in previous reviews and an outline of the program's responses.
- g) Areas identified through the self-study process that require improvement.
- h) Areas identified that hold promise for enhancement.
- i) Academic services that directly contribute to the academic quality of each program under review.

The Self-Study Brief includes course descriptions and CVs of full-time faculty and CVs or biographies of part-time/adjunct faculty. For graduate programs, the Self-Study Brief includes a list, with rank, of those appointed to the Faculty of Graduate Studies, and the criteria for appointment.

The Dean's or Principal's Agenda of Concerns will be submitted to the Vice-Provost Academic along with the Self-Study Brief.

The documentation for the reviewers will be reviewed and approved by the Office of the Vice-Provost Academic to ensure that it meets the core elements of a self-study and program evaluation criteria. The Vice-Provost Academic will consult with the Dean of Graduate Studies as needed.

## 6.7 Evaluation Criteria and Quality Indicators

The minimum evaluation criteria for the cyclical review of programs as defined by the QAF are set out below. Institutional criteria aligned with the University's priorities may be included in the Self-Study template.

There are several widely used quality indicators or proxies for reflecting program quality, and institutions are encouraged by the QAF to include available measures of their own which they see as best achieving that goal. Outcome measures of student performance and achievement are of particular interest, but there are also important input and process measures which are known to have a strong association with quality outcomes. This section aligns with the most recent QAF wording and may be updated as the QAF is refined.

### 6.7.1 Objectives

- a) Consistency of the program with the institution's mission and academic plans.
- b) Clarity and appropriateness of the program's requirements and associated learning outcomes in addressing their alignment with the degree level expectations.

### 6.7.2 Admission Requirements

- a) Appropriateness of the program's admission requirements for the learning outcomes established for completion of the program.
- b) Sufficient explanation of alternative requirements, if any, for admission into a graduate, second-entry, or undergraduate program, such as minimum grade-point average, additional languages or portfolios, along with how the program recognizes prior work and varied learning experiences.

#### 6.7.3 Structure

- a) Appropriateness of the program's structure and regulations to meet specified program learning outcomes and degree level expectations.
- b) For graduate programs, a clear rationale for program length that ensures that the program requirements can be reasonably completed within the proposed time period.

#### 6.7.4 Program Content

- a) Ways in which the curriculum addresses the current state of the discipline or area of study.
- b) Identification of any unique curriculum or program innovations or creative components.
- c) For research-focused graduate programs, clear indication of the nature and suitability of the major research requirements for degree completion.
- d) Evidence that each graduate student in the program is required to take a minimum of two-thirds of the course requirements from among graduate level courses.

#### 6.7.5 Experiential Education

Appropriateness and sustainability of experiential components which may include a wide variety of options, including classroom-based activities, community-based learning, or internships and co-op placements.

#### 6.7.6 Mode of Delivery

Appropriateness of the proposed mode of delivery to meet the intended program learning outcomes.

#### 6.7.7 Assessment of Teaching and Learning

- a) Appropriateness and effectiveness of the means of assessment, especially in the students' final year of the program, in clearly demonstrating achievement of the Degree Level Expectations as articulated by the program learning outcomes.
- b) Completeness of plans for communicating to students the assessment of program learning outcomes, at appropriate levels, using appropriate methods.
- c) Completeness of plans to document and assess the program's achievement of its stated learning and student outcomes.
- d) Plans for addressing courses that are determined to have significant drop and failure rates.

#### 6.7.8 Resources for all Programs

- a) Participation of a sufficient number of appropriately qualified faculty members who are competent to teach and/or supervise in the program. Information about class sizes, the percentage of classes taught by permanent or non-permanent (contractual) faculty members, the participation and qualifications of part-time or temporary faculty members should be included.
- b) Evidence that there are adequate resources to sustain the quality of scholarship produced by undergraduate students as well as graduate students' scholarship and research activities, including library support, information technology support, and laboratory access.
- c) Adequacy of the administrative unit's planned utilization of existing human, physical, and financial resources, and any institutional commitment to supplement those resources, to support the program.

#### 6.7.9 Resources for Graduate Programs

- a) Evidence that faculty members have the recent research or professional/clinical expertise needed to sustain the program, promote innovation, and foster an appropriate intellectual climate, including evidence, where appropriate, of funding honours and awards.
- b) Where appropriate to the program, evidence that financial assistance for students will be sufficient to ensure adequate quality and numbers of students, including international students.
- c) Evidence of how supervisory loads will be distributed, and the qualifications and appointment status of faculty who will provide instruction and supervision and student mentoring.
- d) Evidence that students' time-to-completion is both monitored and managed in relation to the program's defined length and requirements.
- e) Sufficient number of graduate-level courses that allow students to meet the requirement that they take two-thirds of their courses at this level.

#### 6.7.10 Students

Trends, challenges, and opportunities for students include applications and registrations, retention or attrition rates, time-to-completion, final-year academic achievement, graduation rates, academic awards, and student in-course reports on teaching.

For graduate students, trends, challenges, and opportunities include rates of graduation, employment following six months and two years after graduation, post-graduate study, "skills match," and alumni reports on program quality when available. Reviewers will be instructed that these items may not be available and applicable to all programs.

#### 6.7.11 Quality Enhancement



Quality enhancement of programs includes initiatives taken to improve the quality of the program and the associated learning and teaching environment, taking into consideration the recommendations from the previous review.

#### 6.8 Reviewer Selection and Process

The Vice-Provost Academic is responsible for contacting, selecting, and vetting potential external reviewers. The senior academic lead (typically a Chair or a Director) is responsible for submitting recommendations for reviewers to the Dean or Principal. Programs and Dean(s)/Principal will normally nominate eight reviewers which are to be ranked by the Dean(s)/Principal and submitted to the Vice-Provost Academic. Consultation should be undertaken with the relevant Director or Chair, Graduate Program Director, and Undergraduate Program Director if the undergraduate and graduate programs are being reviewed together to ensure that the needs of both programs are addressed. Further, if there is more than one department or school involved either at one campus or at different campuses, consultations should be undertaken to produce a comprehensive list of reviewers that is supported by the different program(s) and/or unit(s).

A list of suggested reviewers will be submitted to the Vice-Provost Academic who will finalize the selection of the reviewers who are qualified by discipline and experience to review the programs. In the case of graduate programs, the selection will be made in consultation with the Dean of Graduate Studies.

##### 6.8.1 Number of Reviewers

Normally the evaluation will be conducted by a Review Committee composed of at least:

- One external reviewer for an undergraduate program
- Two external reviewers for a graduate program
- Two external reviewers for the concurrent review of an undergraduate and graduate program
- One further reviewer who is either from within the university but from outside the discipline (or interdisciplinary group) and engaged in the program or external to the university

See Section 3.2.4 for requirements regarding external reviewers.

Additional discretionary members may be assigned to be reviewers if required by the complexity of the program(s) or other factors.

##### 6.8.2 Communication with the Reviewers

The Vice-Provost Academic will communicate with the reviewers prior to the commencement of the site visit and/or start of the review process to establish a mutually agreeable date for the site visit and to ensure that the reviewers:

- a) Understand their role and obligations.
- b) Identify and commend the program's notably strong and creative attributes.

- c) Describe the program's respective strengths, areas for improvement, and opportunities for enhancement.
- d) Recommend specific steps to be taken to improve the program, distinguishing between those the program can itself take and those that require external action.
- e) Recognize the institution's autonomy to determine priorities for funding, space, and faculty allocation.
- f) Respect the confidentiality required for all aspects of the review process.
- g) That the reviewers agree to the timelines of the process.

### 6.8.3 Documentation Provided to the Reviewers

The external reviewers will receive the following documents prior to the site visit either in hard copy or through online access to the unit website and related links (see the YUQAP website for further information):

- University planning documents (University Academic Plan, Faculty Plans, for example)
- Self-Study Brief along with the Dean's or Principal's Agenda of Concerns
- Faculty CVs
- Other materials deemed relevant by the program, in consultation with the Vice-Provost Academic
- The Review Report template

### 6.8.4 Site Visit

The senior academic lead in the unit is responsible for arranging the itinerary for the site visit prior to commencement of the visit. The reviewers should visit together and attend all relevant campuses.

The Vice-Provost Academic and, in the case of reviews involving a graduate program, the Dean of Graduate Studies shall attend. During the site visit they will meet with reviewers at the beginning of their visit, and provisions must be made for them to meet with faculty members, students, administrative staff, and senior program administrators, including the relevant Dean or Principal.

### 6.8.5 Reviewer Report

The Reviewer Report is normally submitted within two months following the site visit to the Vice-Provost Academic. The Review Report will address the substance of the self-study and the evaluation criteria set out in Section 6.7. The Vice-Provost Academic will have an opportunity to identify any clear factual errors. The Review Report will be provided to the program lead and Dean or Principal by the Vice-Provost Academic.

In the case of an unsatisfactory or incomplete review report, the Vice-Provost will work with the reviewers to ensure a viable report is provided.

## 6.9 Institutional Response

#### 6.9.1 Unit Response

The senior academic lead is responsible for preparing the formal response to the Review Report and recommendations, in consultation with other members of the unit, including any relevant Directors of undergraduate and/or graduate programs. The response shall provide the response to the Review Committee's report(s) and recommendations.

The unit's response is submitted to the Vice-Provost Academic.

#### 6.9.2 Dean's or Principal's Response

Following receipt and review of the unit's response, the Dean or Principal of the Faculty provides a response and proposes actions, which include the following:

- a) Identification of those responsible for acting on and monitoring those recommendations.
- b) The resources, financial and otherwise, that will be provided to support the implementation of the recommendations; and identification of what other supports are required from the institutional level.
- c) A proposed timeline for the implementation of those recommendations.

#### 6.9.3 Implementation Plan and Final Assessment Report

The Vice-Provost Academic drafts an implementation plan that identifies recommendations to be implemented by the program, with specified resources, timelines and support, as well as recommendations that will not be pursued, with a rationale.

The Joint Sub-Committee reviews the following documentation:

- Self-Study Brief along with the Dean's or Principal's Agenda of Concerns
- Review Report
- Program's response to the Review Report
- Dean's or Principal's response

The Vice-Provost Academic writes the Final Assessment Report, which includes the implementation plan, and an Executive Summary of the FAR. These are confirmed by the Joint Sub-Committee

The Final Assessment Report is a summary of the external evaluation and internal responses and assessments which:

- a) Identifies any significant strengths of the program
- b) Identifies opportunities for program improvement and enhancement
- c) Sets out and prioritizes the plan for the external reviewer recommendations that are confirmed for implementation
- d) May include a confidential section (where personnel issues need to be addressed)
- e) Provides an Executive Summary, exclusive of any such confidential information, and suitable for publication on the YUQAP website

#### 6.9.4 Reporting Requirements and Access

The Final Assessment Report (excluding all confidential information) shall be forwarded to the parent Senate committees, ASCP and APPR. The ASCP transmits the Report to the program(s) and Dean(s)/Principal as well as Faculty Councils and Senate for their information.

The Executive Summary of the Final Assessment Report, which includes the Implementation Plan resulting from the review, is provided to the Board of Governors through the Board Academic Resources Committee.

The Executive Summary is posted on the website of the Vice-Provost Academic. Information provided to the program for the self-study and the Self-Study Brief, as well as the Report of the Review Committee, will be available only to the program, the Dean or Principal, and the relevant committees involved in the cyclical review.

The Office of the Vice-Provost Academic transmits the Final Assessment Report to the Quality Council and maintains an administrative record to track the subsequent eighteen-month follow-up reports.

The Follow-up Report, normally due eighteen months after the Final Assessment Report is completed, is provided in a written report on the Implementation Plan from the Dean or Principal. The Implementation Plan may identify more frequent or earlier or specified reports. Upon review and confirmation by the Joint Sub-Committee, the Follow-up Report is transmitted to the relevant Faculty Council(s).

## 7. THE QUALITY COUNCIL REVIEW AND AUDIT PROCESS

### 7.1 Ongoing Approval of Changes to the YUQAP

Substantive revisions to the York University Quality Assurance Procedures (YUQAP) are subject to approval by the Quality Council. Minor changes, as determined by the Joint Sub-Committee, may be made to YUQAP as required.

### 7.2 Audit Process

The objective of the audit is to determine whether or not the institution, since the last review, has acted in compliance with the provisions of the York University Quality Assurance Procedures, as ratified by the Quality Council.

All publicly assisted universities in Ontario associated with the Quality Council have committed to participating in this audit process once every eight years. Additional audits for specific institutions may take place within any cycle. The Quality Council consults with the Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents in establishing the schedule of institutional participation in the audit process within the eight-year cycle and publishes the agreed upon schedule on its website.

Auditors independently select the programs for audit, which are typically four undergraduate and four graduate Cyclical Program Reviews.