



University
of Windsor

University of Windsor Quality Assurance Processes Cyclical Program Review Guidance for Review Teams

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to outline the role of review teams in Cyclical Program Review, and to provide guidance to reviewers.

Independent expert review is foundational to the [Quality Assurance process for Ontario's universities](#). Thank you for participating in this essential process. The Cyclical Program Review of existing programs is the key quality assurance process aimed at assessing the quality of existing academic programs, identifying ongoing improvements to programs, and ensuring continuing relevance of the program to students and other stakeholders. For any questions, contact iqap@uwindsor.ca

Quality Assurance of Ontario's Universities

The Quality Council is the provincial body responsible for assuring the quality of all programs leading to degrees and graduate diplomas granted by Ontario's publicly assisted universities. It operates at arm's-length from both the provincial government and the universities. The Quality Council does not make decisions regarding the funding of university programs; however, the provincial government's Ministry of Colleges and Universities (MCU) will not fund a program which has not been quality assured and approved by the Quality Council. Ontario's universities have committed to a process to ensure the quality and continuous improvement of their academic undergraduate and graduate programs.

The degree of rigour established throughout the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) and in particular, the Protocol for Cyclical Program Reviews plays an essential role in ensuring the ongoing improvement of existing academic programs using internationally accepted quality assurance practices.

Role of Review Teams in Cyclical Program Review

Expert independent peer review is foundational to quality assurance. External reviewers should have a strong track record as academic scholars in the discipline and ideally should also have had academic administrative experience in such roles as undergraduate or graduate program coordinators, department chair, dean, graduate dean or associated positions. This combination of experience allows a reviewer to provide the most value to reviews of program proposals and existing programs. It is also important that the external reviewers have an appreciation of pedagogy. It is important as well that a member of the review team understands and appreciates the role that program-level learning outcomes and the methods for assessing student achievement of these outcomes plays within the Ontario context.

External reviewers are chosen because of their knowledge and standing in their field, and expertise in academic administration and curriculum development. Internal facilitators are chosen because of their knowledge about

Windsor and its administrative and academic structures, for their perspective on curriculum development, and for their experience with program reviews. During the site visit, the internal reviewer will provide important insights about Windsor so that any conclusions drawn, and/or recommendations made by the review team, are done with an understanding of how changes are implemented in a decentralized university like Windsor.

All members of the review team must be at arm's length from the program(s) under review. The report is written by the external reviewers and should be submitted within four weeks of the site visit to the [Office of Quality Assurance](#). Review Team Reports will be checked for completeness upon receipt. If the report is not completed, or requires clarification, the Associate Vice-President, Academic (AVPA) may reach out for amendments.

Review Team Report

The Review Team Report is created using a template which follows the requirements set out by the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance. As reviewers compose the Review Team Report, they should consider both the quality and the sustainability of the programs under review.

The Cyclical Program review consists of the following elements:

- The self-study and external review provide internal and external perspectives on the institutional goals, program's objectives, program-level learning outcomes, and graduate outcomes.
- Degree Level Expectations, combined with the expert judgment of external disciplinary scholars, provide the benchmarks for assessing a program's standards and quality.
- Following the submission of the External Reviewers Report, internal responses to the externals' reviewers' report are prepared and identify changes needed to maintain the quality of the academic programs through a Final Assessment Report, which includes an Implementation Plan.
- The required program changes identified in the Implementation Plan become the basis of a continuous improvement process through monitoring of key performance indicators.

Therefore, independent expert review is foundational to this process.

Reviewers should carefully consider programs' strengths and weaknesses as well as where and how improvements can be made. The Cyclical Program Review process is broad-based, reflective, and forward-looking: it focuses on where a program is now and where it will be in the next 7 years. As with all Quality Assurance processes at Windsor, its foundational operating principle is that quality requires continuous improvement.

Guidance for Creating Recommendations

- Recommendations should focus on specific steps to be taken that will lead to the continuous improvement of the programs, such as curriculum development and constructive alignment.
- There should be a minimum of three (3) recommendations. Recommendations should be clear, concise, actionable, and non-repetitive.
- Reviewers should consider timelines for recommendations, including short-term goals (18 months) as well as longer-term goals (several years).
- Reviewers should distinguish between those recommendations the program can itself take and those that require external action and should aim to provide more of the former.

Reviewers should look to the Self-Study for goals the unit has set for the programs being reviewed and consider including those in their recommendations.

Below you will find the **University of Windsor Quality Assurance Flowchart**. The pathway for the cyclical program reviews is highlighted in blue. External Review represents your role as an external reviewer. Below the Flowchart is a graphic detailing the **focus of the cyclical program review**.

In completing the review you are asked to follow the guidelines outlined in Table 5. This table comes directly from the University of Windsor IQAP document. We ask that you keep these review criteria in mind as you review the documentation we have provided:

- 1) University of Windsor Strategic Plan,
- 2) the self-study brief, and
- 3) faculty CVs and all other appendices.

The **Template for the Reviewers' Report** is provided under separate attachment.

It is the responsibility of the external reviewers to arrange travel to and from Windsor (to the Waterfront Hotel). The hotel booking and travel arrangements to and from the university for site visit days will be arranged by the Office of Quality Assurance. Travel and expenses will be reimbursed by the University of Windsor following the site visit. (Alcohol purchases cannot be covered.)

External reviewers will receive an Honorarium as part of their reimbursement.

Once the site visit has occurred we ask that you collaboratively complete the Reviewers' Report on Existing Programs document, sign in the area provided and return it via e-mail to myself, (avpa@uwindsor.ca), and copied to Penny Kollar (pkollar@uwindsor.ca) within 6 weeks.

If you require any further documentation while preparing for the site visit, or following the site visit, please do not hesitate to contact me or the IQAP office support staff.

Sincerely,



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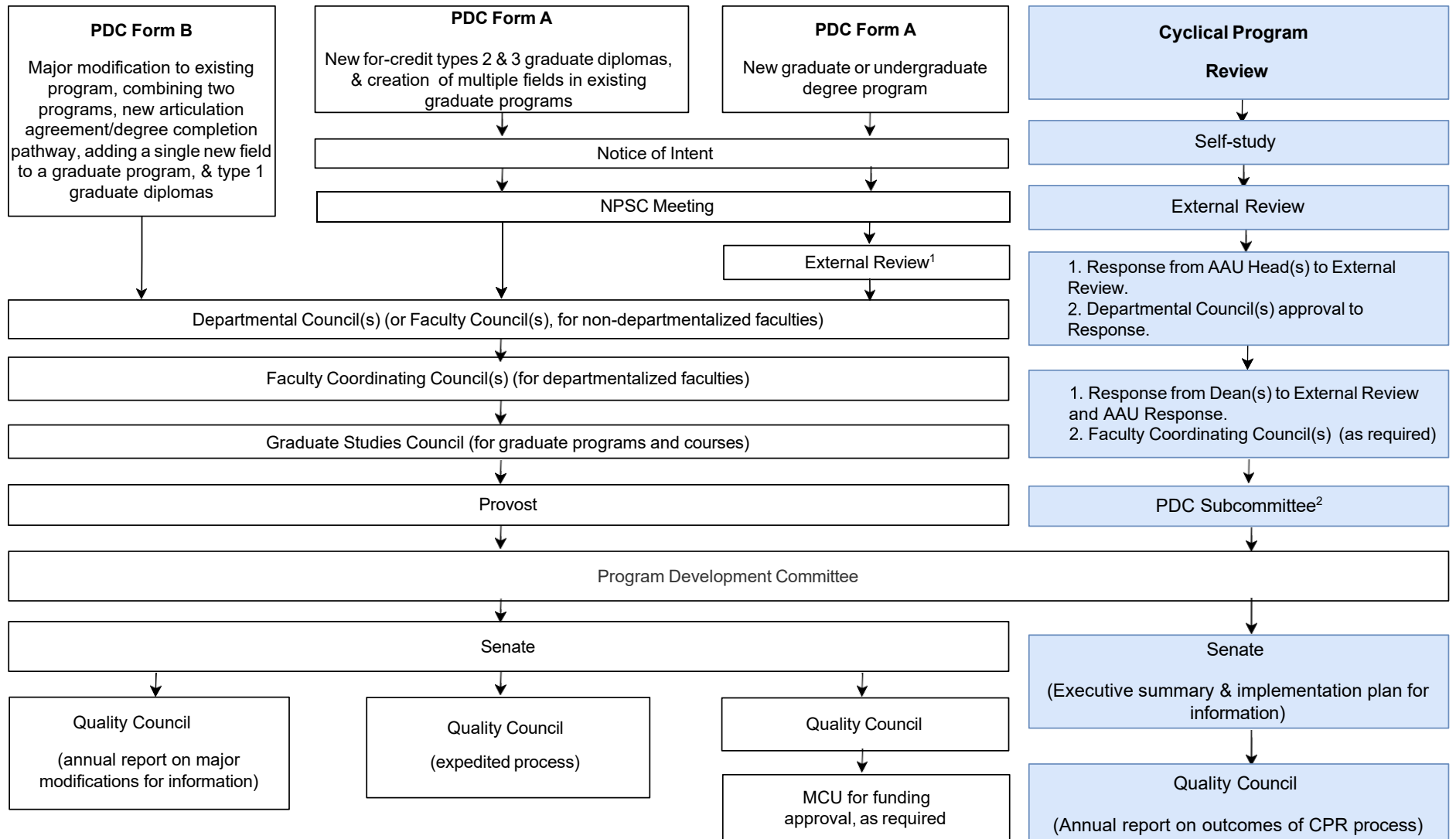
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Table 2
University of Windsor Quality Assurance Flow Chart

For all new undergraduate or graduate degree programs and new for-credit types 2 & 3 graduate diplomas, a New Program Notice of Intent form must be completed and approved by the New Program Steering Committee and the Provost. Go to: <https://www.uwindsor.ca/qualityassurance/805/new-program-development>



¹ includes opportunity for revisions and response to external review to be forwarded to Departmental Council

² the departments submit monitoring/progress reports on recommendations for PDC Subcommittee and PDC review

outcomes of the Quality Council reviews are reported to Senate

Focus of IQAP Program Reviews

The criteria used for external review is included in Table 5, **Cyclical Program Review Evaluation Criteria**, (on the next page) and is adapted from the Quality Assurance Framework. The diagram below provides the overall approach and demonstrates the evaluation criteria used in a cyclical program review. The content within the dotted outline is where greater emphasis is given to help inform continuous improvement for the programs.

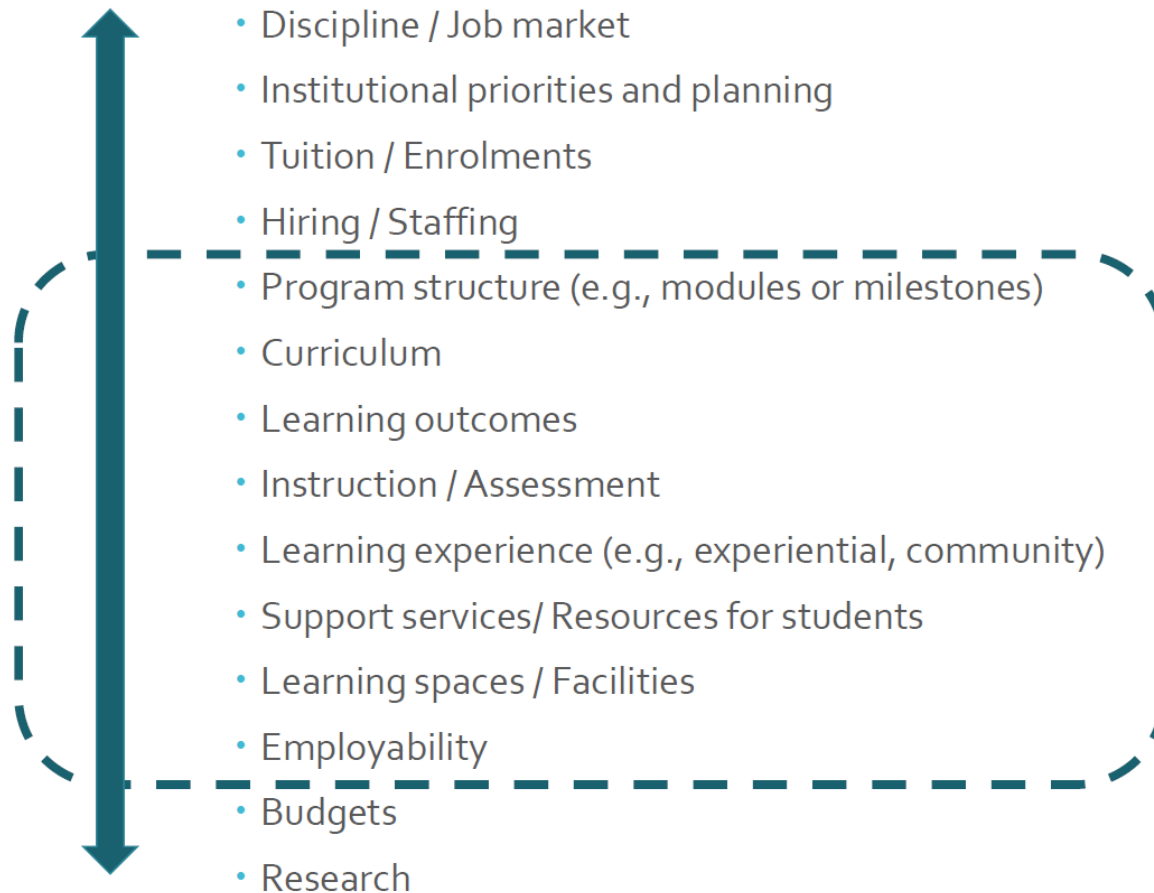


Table 5
Cyclical Program Review Evaluation Criteria
From the Quality Assurance Framework

The IQAP for review of existing undergraduate and graduate programs requires the evaluation criteria below.
<p>5.1.3.1.1 Objectives</p> <p>a) Program is consistent with the institution’s mission and academic plans.</p>
<p>5.1.3.1.2 Program requirements</p> <p>a) Appropriateness of the program’s structure and the requirements to meet its objectives and the program-level learning outcomes;</p> <p>b) Appropriateness of the program’s structure, requirements and program-level learning outcomes in meeting the institution’s own undergraduate or graduate Degree Level Expectations;</p> <p>c) Appropriateness and effectiveness of the mode(s) of delivery to facilitate students’ successful completion of the program-level learning outcomes; and</p> <p>d) Ways in which the curriculum addresses the current state of the discipline or area of study.</p>
<p>5.1.3.1.3 Program requirements for graduate programs only</p> <p>a) Clear rationale for program length that ensures that students can complete the program-level learning outcomes and requirements within the time required;</p> <p>b) 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; and</p> <p>c) For research-focused graduate programs, clear indication of the nature and suitability of the major research requirements for degree completion.</p>
<p>5.1.3.1.4 Assessment of teaching and Learning</p> <p>a) Appropriateness and effectiveness of the methods for assessing student achievement of the program-level learning outcomes and degree level expectations; and</p> <p>b) Appropriateness and effectiveness of the plans to monitor and assess:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The overall quality of the program; • Whether the program continues to achieve in practice its objectives; • Whether its students are achieving the program-level learning outcomes; and • How the resulting information will be documented and subsequently used to inform continuous program improvement.
<p>5.1.3.1.5 Admission requirements</p> <p>e) Appropriateness of the program’s admission requirements given the program’s objectives and program-level learning outcomes; and</p> <p>f) Sufficient explanation of alternative requirements, if applicable, for admission into a graduate, second-entry or undergraduate program, e.g., minimum grade point average, additional languages or portfolios, and how the program recognizes prior work or learning experience.</p>
<p>5.1.3.1.6 Resources**</p> <p>Given the program’s class sizes and cohorts as well as its program-level learning outcomes:</p> <p>d) Participation of a sufficient number of qualified core faculty who are competent to teach and/or supervise in and achieve the goals of the program and foster the appropriate academic environment;</p> <p>e) If applicable, discussion/explanation of the role and approximate percentage of adjunct and part-time faculty/limited term appointments used in the delivery of the program and the associated plans to ensure the sustainability of the program and quality of the student experience;</p> <p>f) If required, provision of supervision of experiential learning opportunities;</p> <p>g) Adequacy of the administrative unit’s utilization of existing human, physical and financial resources; and</p> <p>h) Evidence that there are adequate resources to sustain the quality of scholarship and research activities produced by students, including library support, information technology support, and laboratory access.</p>

5.1.3.1.7 Resources for graduate program only**

Given the program's class sizes and cohorts, as well as its program-level learning outcomes:

- c) Evidence that faculty have the recent research or professional/clinical expertise needed to foster an appropriate intellectual climate, sustain the program, and promote innovation;
- d) Where appropriate to the program, evidence that financial assistance for students is sufficient to ensure adequate quality and numbers of students; and
- e) Evidence of how supervisory loads are distributed, in light of qualifications and appointment status of the faculty.

5.1.3.1.8 Quality indicators

- a) Evidence of the quality of the faculty (e.g., qualifications, funding, honours, awards, research, innovation and scholarly record; appropriateness of collective faculty expertise to contribute substantively to the program and commitment to student mentoring);
- b) Any other evidence that the program and faculty ensure the intellectual quality of the student experience; and
- c) For students: grade-level for admission, scholarly output, success rates in provincial and national scholarships, competitions, awards and commitment to professional and transferable skills, and times-to-completion and retention rates.

**In keeping with past practice and the requirement for a review of academic services that directly contribute to the quality of each program under review in the Self-Study, consideration must also be given to the appropriateness, effectiveness, and sufficiency of resources and services that directly contribute to the academic quality of programs, in particular, library resources and services, for both graduate and undergraduate programs.