



**ONTARIO UNIVERSITIES**  
COUNCIL on QUALITY ASSURANCE

**SUMMARY OF AUDITORS' REPORT ON THE  
SCOPE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR'S  
RESPONSE TO THE QUALITY ASSURANCE  
AUDIT**

**JUNE 2016**

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# AUDITORS' REPORT ON THE INSTITUTIONAL ONE-YEAR FOLLOW-UP RESPONSE ON THE QUALITY ASSURANCE AUDIT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR

## SUMMARY

### INTRODUCTION

The Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance (Quality Council) undertook an Audit of Quality Assurance at the University of Windsor in 2014-15. As with all such audits, the purpose was to assess the extent to which the University of Windsor complies with its own Institutional Quality Assurance Processes (outlined in the University of Windsor IQAP) and to affirm that institutional practices are consistent with the Quality Assurance Framework that governs quality assurance activities at publicly assisted Ontario Universities.

A team of three Quality Council auditors prepared a report based on a desk audit of documents submitted by the University of Windsor and a three-day site visit to the institution. The Report on the Quality Assurance Audit of the University of Windsor was approved by the Quality Council on May 22, 2015 and sent to the University on May 25, 2015.

The Quality Assurance Framework requires that each institution submit a one-year follow-up response to the Quality Council in which it describes the steps it has taken to address the recommendations in the Audit Report. This response is reviewed by the auditors who prepare a report, and summary of that report, for consideration by the Audit Committee and, ultimately, by the Quality Council. Upon approval of the Institutional One-year Response, the Auditor's Report and its Summary, the Institutional One-year Response and Auditor's Summary Report are published on the Quality Council website.

The 2015 Audit Report for the University of Windsor contained eleven recommendations (listed below) as well as eleven suggestions. Under the Quality Assurance Framework, universities must satisfy audit recommendations, as they identify institutional practices that are not compliant with the university's IQAP. Suggestions are proposed by the auditors in the spirit of encouraging reflection on how practice might be improved; however compliance is not mandatory.

**Recommendation 1** The University of Windsor must ensure that faculty and students are engaged in the preparation of the self-study.

**Recommendation 2** The University of Windsor must ensure that recommendations from previous reviews are appropriately addressed in the self-study.

**Recommendation 3** The University of Windsor must ensure that all evaluation criteria in the IQAP are addressed in the self-study.

**Recommendation 4** The University of Windsor must ensure that all existing programs

develop and assess learning outcomes at the program level as part of the cyclical program review.

**Recommendation 5** The University of Windsor must ensure that when a program is reviewed, all contributing academic units are consulted and included, in the self-study, and in the cyclical program review process.

**Recommendation 6** The University of Windsor must ensure that it adheres to the protocols in its IQAP regarding the nomination and selection processes for external reviewers.

**Recommendation 7** The University of Windsor must enhance the methods of briefing external reviewers on the requirement to address all of the quality-assurance evaluation criteria set out in its IQAP.

**Recommendation 8** The University of Windsor must ensure accuracy and transparency in listing all programs on its cyclical review schedule, including programs that are on hiatus as well as all collaborative, concurrent and consecutive programs offered on campus or at other locations.

**Recommendation 9** The University of Windsor must ensure that new program proposals include explicit program level learning outcomes.

**Recommendation 10** The University of Windsor must include in its IQAP the full definition of “new program” from the Quality Assurance Framework.

**Recommendation 11** The University of Windsor must ensure that the introduction of all new programs follows its IQAP protocol and that the criteria used to identify new programs are consistent with the Quality Assurance Framework.

## **CONCLUSION**

After careful review of the University of Windsor’s Follow-Up One-Year Response, the auditors concluded that it is compliant with the recommendations in the Audit Report. Better monitoring of university IQAP processes from beginning to end has been achieved. The Auditors commend new initiatives to encourage the development of program and course learning outcomes, wider consultation and plans to refine the IQAP so that it reflects the University’s new investment and vigorous commitment to quality assurance processes and activities. The Auditors applaud the administrative reorganization of the Quality Assurance Office and the Centre for Teaching and Learning, and establishment of two new support systems: the Learning Outcomes Working Group and the New Program Steering Committee, all of which seem to have already yielded positive feedback and results.

## University of Windsor- Office of Quality Assurance Response to 2014 Audit

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The University of Windsor **must:**

- 1.** ensure that faculty and students are engaged in the preparation of the self-study.

It is now a requirement that all programs under review have an orientation meeting with the QA office and their Head and Coordinators, followed by a presentation at their departmental council where faculty and student representatives are in attendance. We always suggest that the programs engage students in the process to encourage them to have a voice in the documents.

Programs under review also complete a delegation document that outlines what faculty member has been responsible for which duty in terms of the IQAP report, appendices and site visit.

The Office of Quality Assurance has also created an expedited survey approval (in lieu of the lengthier Research Ethics Board approval), so that student and faculty surveys are a more viable option for gathering information for the self-study and new program development, giving students and faculty more voice.

We also ensure that the review team meet with a group of student representatives of all programs under review, and with the core faculty as part of the site visit.

- 2.** ensure that recommendations from previous reviews are appropriately addressed in the self-study.

We have always provided the AAU with previous UPR and OCGS reports but will more closely monitor that they address all recommendations made in these documents. We will also ensure that all self-studies include the UPR and OCGS report and recommendations as an appendix to the main document.

- 3.** ensure that all evaluation criteria in the IQAP are addressed in the self-study.

We have learned a considerable amount from the reviews we have now completed and moving forward we will apply this knowledge. This will enable us to be more effective in supporting self-study teams and will make us more conscientious in ensuring that self-studies sufficiently address all required components and evaluation criteria. It appears that one of the main areas where this recommendation can be taken into particular

account is when it comes to learning outcomes and proper curriculum mapping within the self-study. As mentioned in response to recommendation 4, below, we are taking proper action to remedy issues surrounding program and course learning outcomes and this will allow us to follow through in ensuring complete and effective self-studies.

- 4.** ensure that all existing programs develop and assess learning outcomes at the program level as part of the cyclical program review.

We will no longer move a cyclical review forward unless we are certain that the team has consulted with the Centre for Teaching and Learning regarding learning outcomes and that these are in the process of being approved by our University Senate. The University offers many training opportunities for individuals, programs, and departments to develop greater familiarity and facility with learning outcomes development. A recent re-organization of reporting structures has also brought the Office of Quality Assurance and Centre for Teaching and Learning under one administrator, with the potential for greater coordination of efforts between the two units and greater support for faculty learning about learning outcomes, program development, and improvement-oriented program review.

Our Senate recently established a Learning Outcomes Working Group to assess current progress on course- and program-level learning outcomes development, with the aim of establishing ongoing dialogue and strategic planning for the enhancement of these practices on campus. The membership includes faculty, staff, learning specialists, a student, and a representative from the Office of Quality Assurance. The Working Group was convened in January 2016 and should have a report ready for Senate in Spring 2016. The collaboration involved has already established better communication among those involved in supporting learning outcomes development, as well as consensus around the need for greater coordination and transparency among these departments. It is envisioned that one outcome of the report will be a strategic mandate for stronger university-wide procedures and policies regarding learning outcomes development.

- 5.** ensure that when a program is reviewed, all contributing academic units are consulted and included, in the self-study, and in the cyclical program review process.

We have created an updated and very [detailed schedule of reviews](#) that includes details about all programs and articulation agreements/collaborative programs offered by the department. Programs listed in the schedule must be included in self-studies and units must collaborate with the other units/institutions as necessary in developing the relevant sections of their documents. This document is available on our website (see link above).

This schedule document also includes notes on programs that may have existed in the past eight years but are no longer accepting admissions. This will ensure that all programs operating or on hiatus during the period under review are taken into consideration in the self-study.

- 6.** ensure that it adheres to the protocols in its IQAP regarding the nomination and selection processes for external reviewers.

We have recently (2015) revised our external reviewer nomination process to ensure that the QA office is the sole point of contact with the review team. The department under review/ proposing a new program will now merely offer 6-8 suggestions. Suggested reviewers will be contacted by the QA office to determine their willingness to serve on the team and asked to provide CVs.

We also ensure that departments are well aware that they are to have no contact with potential or appointed reviewers at any point in the process leading to the site visit and thereafter. Departments are told that any inquiries that the review team may for any reason wish to make should be redirected to the QA office. If this policy is breached a new reviewer will be selected.

- 7.** enhance the methods of briefing the external reviewers on the requirement to address all aspects of the quality-assurance evaluation set out in its IQAP.

Review teams have consistently been provided with an orientation document that outlines the process and provides them with a template on which to complete their evaluation of the program under review or being proposed. The reviewers are also introduced to the process when they arrive, as their first meeting is with the Dean of Graduate Studies and Office of Quality Assurance. At this meeting, they are oriented to the Ontario framework, the UWindsor Quality Assurance Protocol, and to the expectations placed upon the review team. The reviewers' report template is also discussed to ensure the review team understands that responding to each item is required in the final report.

The review team is also encouraged to contact the QA Office at any time while completing the report if they have any inquiries or concerns.

The Quality Assurance Office currently checks the reviewers' report for completeness and clarity. We will continue our efforts to ensure that all sections of their evaluation are clearly and effectively completed before moving the documents along to the next step of the IQAP process.

- 8.** ensure accuracy and transparency in listing all programs on its cyclical review schedule, including programs that are on hiatus as well as all collaborative, concurrent and consecutive programs offered on campus or at other locations.

We have revisited and revised our schedule to ensure that all programs are slotted in the appropriate review cycle and that it is clear which programs within the AAU must be reviewed.

The revised and more detailed schedule document ensures that programs that are no longer visible on the undergraduate/graduate calendar, due to suspension of admissions or program closure, but which were in place during the period under review, are noted and will be included in the review document.

This document also details all joint programs and articulation agreements to ensure that the department/faculty addresses all programs and collaborations in creating their self-study from the onset.

- 9.** ensure that all new program proposals include explicit program level learning outcomes.

Program-level learning outcomes have been required as part of our institutional new program development process since 2007. Learning outcomes for all new program proposals are forwarded to the Centre for Teaching and Learning for consultation prior to review by the Senate Program Development Committee. This process has been in place for five years and has been consistently applied.

A review of Senate documents shows that all new program proposals approved by Senate since December 2007 have included program-level learning outcomes, consistent with the Characteristics of a University of Windsor graduate and the Undergraduate or Graduate Degree Level Expectations (as appropriate).

- 10.** include in its IQAP the full definition of “new program” from the Quality Assurance Framework.

The UWindsor IQAP will be revised to include the full definition.

- 11.** ensure that the introduction of all new programs follows its IQAP protocol and that the criteria used to identify new programs are consistent with the Quality Assurance Framework.

The Office of Quality Assurance is persistently working toward making the protocol and new program criteria clear and this will only be aided by the actions that will be taken in



addressing Recommendation #10. This definition will become an embedded component of the IQAP framework, making it clear what a new program means.

We have also created a New Program Steering Committee with membership from various partners on campus to address preliminary program development decisions and planning, including the definition of a new program versus a field, delivery models, learning outcomes development, and the requirements for successful completion of an institutional program development form. This step has significantly improved clarity regarding planning, requirements, and procedures among recent proponents.