Institutional Quality Assurance Process

University of Ottawa

June 28, 2011
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1. INTRODUCTION

The policies and procedures for assessing existing and approving new undergraduate and graduate programs are a key mechanism in the University of Ottawa’s ability to provide the best quality and the highest standards in these programs.

At the University of Ottawa, undergraduate and graduate programs are reviewed separately, not concurrently.

1.1. Authorities

At the University of Ottawa, the Senate is the final authority responsible for quality assurance of all university for-credit programs. The Vice-President Academic and Provost of the University has general oversight over the two “arms” of the quality assurance process – the undergraduate and the graduate.

At the undergraduate level, the Vice-President Academic and Provost is assisted in this process by the Associate Vice-President Academic, who is responsible for undergraduate programs and who chairs both the Senate Committee on the Evaluation of Undergraduate Programs/Comité du Sénat sur l’évaluation des programmes de premier cycle (for cyclical reviews) and the Council on Undergraduate Studies/Conseil des études du premier cycle (for new programs and program modifications).

At the graduate level, the Vice-President Academic and Provost is assisted in this process by the Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, who is responsible for graduate programs and who chairs the Graduate Program Committee (for new programs and program modifications). The Vice-Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies chairs the Graduate Program Evaluation Committee (for cyclical reviews).

1.2 Contact person

The Vice-President Academic and Provost is the contact person for the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance (Quality Council).

1.3 Definitions

A program is a coherent whole composed of a set of articulated and integrated courses and/or other learning activities prescribed as the requirements for obtaining a particular degree.

A new program is defined as any degree, degree program, or program of specialization (including cost-recovery programs and offsite programs), which has not been approved by the Ontario Council on Quality Assurance, its predecessors, or any intra-institutional
approval processes that previously applied. It has substantially different program requirements and substantially different learning outcomes from those of any existing approved programs offered by the institution. A change of name only does not constitute a new program.

Major modifications to existing programs typically include one or more of the following program changes: requirements for the program that differ significantly from those existing at the time of the previous cyclical program review (e.g. a change in number and type of mandatory courses; a change in the language of program delivery), significant changes to the learning outcomes, or significant changes to the faculty engaged in delivering the program (e.g. a large proportion of professors retires; new hires alter the areas of research and teaching interests) and/or to the essential physical resources as may occur, for example, when there have been changes to the existing mode(s) of delivery.

1.4 Evaluation of programs

All programs offered at the University of Ottawa for which a degree is conferred or a diploma awarded are subject to evaluation. This includes programs offered by federated or affiliated institutions, as well as those offered in collaboration or in partnership with community colleges, other universities or other institutions of higher learning. For complete listings of such programs please refer to the List of joint and other collaborative undergraduate programs provided in Appendix 1 – Undergraduate Programs and to the List of joint and other collaborative graduate programs provided in Appendix 2 – Graduate Programs.

The list of evaluation criteria and the information required by the University of Ottawa for both new and existing undergraduate and graduate programs are available in the various protocols provided in this document.

1.5 Audit process

Before implementing its IQAP, the University of Ottawa must first submit it to the Quality Council for ratification. The same process will apply whenever the university implements any substantive changes to its quality assurance processes. The Quality Council will conduct its subsequent audit of University of Ottawa’s compliance with its ratified IQAP once every eight years.

The current document contains all the relevant protocols for the evaluation and approval of undergraduate and graduate programs. All related templates have been included in a separate manual (procedures).

The University of Ottawa IQAP is to be used in conjunction with the Quality Council Framework and Guidelines.
2. PROTOCOL FOR THE EVALUATION AND APPROVAL OF NEW PROGRAMS

2.1 Protocol for the Evaluation and Approval of New Undergraduate Programs

2.1.1 Evaluation and approval process for new undergraduate programs

The creation of a new program may be initiated by an academic unit, a faculty, the central administration, an internal committee, an external organization or at the request of the community.

Each proposal for a new program must undergo an appraisal and approval process that involves five main stages, some of which are broken down into sub-stages. At any of these stages, the proposal can be returned to the academic unit concerned, which must incorporate recommended modifications before moving on to the next approval stage.

2.1.1.1 Academic unit

The evaluation and approval process is normally started by the academic unit or units offering the program. The process may vary slightly for interdisciplinary and collaborative programs. However, before any discussions with academic authorities take place, the Vice-Dean Academic and the Dean of the faculty concerned must be advised of the proposed program of study.

The unit prepares a detailed proposal for the new program and submits it to all its academic authorities for approval (program committee and department assembly or their equivalent).

2.1.1.2 Faculty

The detailed proposal is submitted for approval to all faculty authorities (undergraduate program committee or its equivalent) and, finally, to the faculty council or councils.

2.1.1.3 External review

The external reviewers are selected by a subcommittee of the Council of Undergraduate Studies from two lists of candidates, one compiled by the Chair of the academic unit, and one compiled by the Dean of the faculty concerned. These individuals must have expertise in the discipline and must be at arm’s length from the program under evaluation (no family ties, partnership links, supervisory relations or other types of relationships). They must be associate or full professors and should have a good knowledge of university programs. There is a conflict of interest when a proposed external reviewer:
• has collaborated or published with a member or members of the academic program being evaluated within the past six years;
• has an administrative or family link with a member of the academic program being evaluated;
• is a former research supervisor, graduate student, or postdoctoral trainee of one of the members of the academic unit being evaluated;
• is involved in a dispute with a member of the academic program being evaluated.

As it sees fit, the subcommittee can also consult representatives from industry or related organizations and professions.

The external reviewers will receive a covering letter listing the evaluation’s objectives, their role and responsibilities and instructions for writing the report as well as a copy of the detailed proposal.

In most cases, the external review of a new undergraduate program will be conducted on-site, but may be conducted by desk audit, video-conference or an equivalent method if the external reviewer is satisfied that the off-site option is acceptable and if each reviewer submits a separate report. However, if the program proposed is considered innovative and an equivalent program does not exist anywhere in Canada, if the program is a pilot project or if the academic unit considers it necessary, the external review will include a site visit. In this case, the reviewers should submit a joint report. Within a month after the consultation, the external reviewers submit the report(s) examining the proposed program’s relevance, importance and viability. More specifically, the reviewers will consider the evaluation criteria described in section 2.1.4 below.

2.1.4 Internal Response

The Associate Vice-President Academic sends a copy of the reports to the Dean of the faculty and the Chair of the academic unit concerned, with a request for feedback. If necessary, the academic unit will then make any changes necessary to the proposal.

2.1.5 Senate

The Vice-Dean Academic of the faculty concerned submits the detailed proposal for approval to the Council on Undergraduate Studies. Next, the Associate Vice-President Academic presents this proposal to the Executive Committee of the Senate and then to the University Senate.

2.1.6 Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance

The detailed proposal as approved by the Senate is then submitted for approval to the Quality Council. The submission template will include information on
whether or not the proposed program will be cost-recovery. The same standards and protocols apply regardless of the source of funding.

2.1.2 Evaluation and approval process for new (and changes to existing) undergraduate programs that do not need to be submitted to the Quality Council

New programs (diplomas) and new program components (minors, options) that do not need to be submitted to the Quality Council must nevertheless be evaluated and approved by the University’s academic authorities. The process will be the same as indicated above in section 2.1, but without an external review (section 2.1.1.3) and without submission to the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance.

2.1.3 Information to be included in the proposal

The program proposal brief must include:

a) a rationale specifying the program’s goals, learning outcomes, degree level expectations, the student profile the program is expected to attract, and the expected enrolment consistent with the University’s mission and academic plans;

b) a detailed description of the program’s structure and content (total number of credits; compulsory, optional and elective courses; year-by-year course sequence), admission requirements and opportunities, including access to graduate studies;

c) a statement on ways in which the curriculum addresses the current state of the discipline or area of study;

d) a description of the program delivery methods, evaluation of teaching and learning assessment;

e) the administrative structure of the program;

f) the language of the program;

g) the length of the program;

h) a comparison with similar programs offered elsewhere, ensuring that any innovative aspects or distinctive features of the program are highlighted, including the strengths of the academic unit, teaching staff, partnerships, etc.;

i) an evaluation of the space, professorial, material and financial resources required to offer the program as well as expected class sizes;
j) evidence of interest in and a real demand for the program;
k) any possibilities for cooperation or partnerships with other institutions;
l) a completed New Program form.

If launching the program requires new resources, the Dean and the Administrative Committee must decide on the resources needed to keep the program running for a reasonable period of time. The financial impact of the new program on existing programs, and potential internal and external sources of funding must also be explored.

2.1.4 Evaluation criteria

The various academic authorities involved in the approval process examine the proposals according to several criteria. They take into account academic criteria specific to the University of Ottawa, the Quality Council’s requirements, and the Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents (OCAV) Guidelines on University Degree Level Expectations (Note: The University of Ottawa has adopted OCAV’s Guidelines on Degree Level Expectations and therefore the institution’s guidelines on Degree Level Expectations are the same as OCAV’s).

They must ensure that:

2.1.4.1 Objectives

a) the new program is consistent with the University’s mission and academic plans, particularly with respect to the Francophonie, the development of bilingualism, and the needs of Franco-Ontarians, and matches both the goals and the teaching and research strengths of the academic unit (or units) concerned;
b) the new program is consistent with the proposed educational goals and learning outcomes as well as with the undergraduate OCAV’s Degree Level Expectations;
c) the new program satisfies a societal need and students’ actual interests;

2.1.4.2 Admission requirements

a) the admission requirements as well as students’ prior learning (results) and level of preparation allow for the learning outcomes to be achieved;
b) other possible admission requirements such as the Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA), language requirements and recognition of prior learning experience are sufficiently and clearly explained.
2.1.4.3 **Program structure**

a) the program’s structure and requirements allow for learning outcomes to be achieved and undergraduate Degree Level Expectations to be met and to be consistent with OCAV’s Degree Level Expectations;

2.1.4.4 **Program content**

a) the program’s name and the degree awarded correspond to both the program content and the terminology used in the discipline;

b) ways in which the curriculum addresses the current state of the discipline or area of study;

c) any innovative aspects or distinctive features of the program are highlighted, in particular those that will contribute to the quality of the student University experience.

2.1.4.5 **Mode of delivery**

a) delivery methods ensure learning outcomes are achieved and meet undergraduate Degree Level Expectations;

b) expected class sizes are specified.

2.1.4.6 **Language of delivery**

a) there is evidence that, where appropriate, the University’s mission concerning Ontario’s Francophone Community and bilingualism is reflected in the program delivery.

2.1.4.7 **Assessment of teaching and learning**

a) the methods used to evaluate student progress ensure learning outcomes are achieved and undergraduate Degree Level Expectations are met and are consistent with OCAV’s guidelines on Degree Level Expectations.

b) the plans for documenting and demonstrating students’ level of performance are included and are consistent with the institution’s statement of its Degree Level Expectations

2.1.4.8 **Resources**

a) the experience and quality of the teaching staff is clearly recognized, and there is a sufficient number of regular faculty members;
b) the role of part-time and adjunct professors is defined;

c) the financial and physical resources available or invested for the program are sufficient;

d) the resources necessary to support students’ scholarly activities, such as experiential learning opportunities (if required), library services, information technology support and laboratory access, are sufficient and of good quality.

2.1.4.9 Quality and other indicators

a) quality indicators for teaching staff (training and skills, distinctions, ability to make a significant contribution to the proposed program) are set out;

b) all elements of the academic unit, program structure, composition of teaching staff and possible partnerships that will ensure an intellectually stimulating university experience are identified.

2.1.5 Role of the Council on Undergraduate Studies

In addition to receiving the detailed proposal for evaluation and approval, the Council on Undergraduate Studies elects the members of its subcommittee responsible for nominating the external reviewers.

Nomination Committee - Council on Undergraduate Studies

Creation
The Nomination Committee is a subcommittee of the Council on Undergraduate Studies.

Status
The Nomination Committee is an advisory committee of the Council on Undergraduate Studies.

Mandate
Under the authority of the Council on Undergraduate Studies, the Nomination Committee names the two professors from other universities to review each proposed undergraduate studies program.

Functions
The committee:

• receives the list of external reviewers from the Chair of the academic unit and the Dean of the faculty offering the program;
• names the two external reviewers and their substitutes (the reviewers will normally be associate or full professors, or the equivalent, with expertise in the discipline, and will be at arm’s length from the program under review);

• recommends any improvements to the process for identifying and nominating external reviewers.

Membership
The Nomination Committee is chaired by the Associate Vice-President Academic and includes three members of the Council on Undergraduate Studies who are elected by the Council. Appointments are for one year, and elections take place in June at the last meeting of the academic year.

Meetings
The Nomination Committee meets at the call of its Chair as often as required to carry out its mandate.

Secretarial services
Secretarial services are provided by the Office of the Vice-President Academic and Provost.


## APPROVAL PROCESS FOR A NEW UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM PROPOSAL

1. **Academic Unit**
2. **Faculty**
3. **External Review**
4. **Internal Response**
5. **Council on Undergraduate Studies**
6. **Executive Committee of the Senate**
7. **Senate**
8. **Quality Council**
9. **Ongoing Program Monitoring by the Institution**
   (Vice-President Academic and Provost)
10. **Cyclical Review within 8 Years of First Enrolment**

### 2.1.6 Announcement of new programs

Upon approval by the Senate, the documentation is submitted by the Vice-President Academic and Provost to the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance.

Once the Council has received all the documentation, the academic unit may advertise the proposed program with the following caveat: *Conditional upon approval by the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance.* The academic unit must not solicit applications without the explicit authorization of the Vice-President Academic and Provost.
2.1.7 Implementation window

After a new program is approved to commence, the program will begin within thirty-six months of that date of approval; otherwise the approval will lapse.

2.1.8 Institutional follow-up

Ongoing monitoring of the program (including oversight of the timely implementation of recommendations) is ultimately the responsibility of the Vice-President Academic and Provost, who normally delegates this responsibility to the Dean and Vice-Dean, Academic (or equivalent) of the faculty or faculties concerned, who will monitor the implementation of the recommendations.

The academic unit must submit a brief report at the end of the second and fourth academic year after the program has been approved to commence. These reports will be sent to the Vice-President Academic and Provost with a copy to the Dean of the faculty concerned.

The report must provide the following information:

a) number of applicants;
b) number of offers extended;
c) number of offers accepted (student retention);
d) courses offered;
e) quality of the student experience as determined by focus groups or a survey;
f) any changes in human resources (departures, additions);
g) any other information deemed useful and pertinent by the academic unit.

This report will be shared with the Undergraduate Program Evaluation Committee. After this consultation, the academic unit may be required to make modifications to the program. The Vice-President Academic and Provost is ultimately responsible for overseeing these changes; however, this task is usually delegated to the Dean of the home faculty.

The first cyclical review for any new program must be conducted no more than eight years after the date of the program’s initial enrolment and in accordance with the program review schedule established by the University of Ottawa
3. PROTOCOL FOR EXPEDITED APPROVALS

3.1 Protocol for the Expedited Approval of Undergraduate Programs

This protocol applies to proposals for major modifications to existing and already approved undergraduate programs and for which the University is requesting approval from the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance (Quality Council). It also applies to new programs that are created from existing University of Ottawa programs or that involve adding components or options to current programs, and for which the University is not requesting an external review.

3.1.1 Major modifications

Modification to a program is considered major when:

a) the requirements for the program differ significantly from those existing at the time of the previous cyclical program review (e.g. a change in number and type of mandatory courses; a change in the language of program delivery; the introduction of a new concentration; a new mode of delivery; the addition or deletion of a coop or practicum; addition or deletion of a research paper; a change in the nature of the comprehensive, qualifying or candidacy examinations; the merger of two or more programs; the introduction of a bridging option for college diploma graduates; any change to field studies or residency requirements; major changes made to more than one-third of courses; a change from full to part-time program options or vice versa);

b) significant changes have been made to the learning outcomes (e.g. a major research component such as a research paper or thesis has been removed, added, or otherwise significantly changed);

c) any changes to program content, other than those listed above, that affect the learning outcomes, but do not meet the threshold for a “new program”;

d) significant changes have been made to the professors engaged in delivering the program (e.g. a large proportion of professors retires; new hires alter the areas of research and teaching interests; a field is deleted; an existing degree program is established at another location or institution). (For the introduction of a new field see above.);

e) when significant changes have been made to the essential physical resources (e.g. new laboratories are created; a complete on-line delivery of the program is proposed; the program is moved to an off-campus location) where these changes impair the delivery of the approved program.
The Senate Committee on Undergraduate Program Evaluation will act as an arbitrator to determine whether a change constitutes a major modification.

### 3.1.2 Evaluation and approval process for new programs that are created from existing University of Ottawa programs and for major modifications

All proposals for new programs that are created from existing University of Ottawa programs or for major modifications to existing programs are subject to an evaluation and approval process.

This process involves four stages, some of which are broken down into sub-stages, which are described below. At any of these stages, the proposal can be returned to the academic unit concerned, which must incorporate recommended modifications before moving on to the next approval stage.

#### 3.1.2.1 Academic unit

The evaluation and approval process usually begins in the academic unit(s) offering the program. The process may vary slightly for interdisciplinary and collaborative programs. However, before any discussions can take place with the academic authorities of the unit(s), the Vice-Dean Academic must be informed of the proposed modifications.

The unit drafts a proposal for a new program or for major modifications and submits it for approval to the academic authorities concerned (program committee and department assembly, or their equivalent).

#### 3.1.2.2 Faculty

The proposal is next submitted to all academic faculty authorities (undergraduate program committee or its equivalent), and, finally, to the faculty council or councils.

#### 3.1.2.3 Senate

The Vice-Dean Academic of the faculty concerned, or an equivalent authority, submits the proposal for approval to the Council on Undergraduate Studies. Next, the Associate Vice-President Academic forwards the proposal to the Executive Committee of the Senate and to the Senate, if necessary. Senate approval is necessary if a modification has an impact on the diploma (for example, if a new major is created).

#### 3.1.2.4 Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance

The proposal is then sent for expedited approval to the Quality Council.
3.1.3 Information required in the proposal

The proposal must include the following information:

a) a justification for the major modifications proposed or for the new program created from existing programs;

b) a detailed description of the major modifications or of what has been added to the existing programs (admission or graduation requirements, program structure, courses, delivery methods, resource allocation, etc.);

c) how the major modifications or new program will affect the University’s mission and academic plans, learning objectives and outcomes, undergraduate Degree Level Expectations, admission requirements or students’ level of preparation, and student enrolment;

d) how the major modifications or new program will affect teaching, learning and evaluation methods;

e) how the major modifications or new program will affect space requirements as well as professorial resources, material resources, financial resources and anticipated class sizes;

f) how the major modifications or new program will affect the existing program’s administrative structure;

g) how the major modifications or new program will ensure a high quality student University experience.

If implementing the new program or the major modifications requires new resources, the Dean and the Administrative Committee are responsible for determining exactly what resources are needed to offer the program for a reasonable period of time. The financial impact of the major modifications or new program, as well as opportunities to secure extra funding from internal and external sources, must also be examined.

3.1.4 Evaluation criteria

The various academic authorities involved in the approval process examine the proposals according to several criteria. They take into account academic criteria specific to the University of Ottawa, the Quality Council’s requirements, and the Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents (OCAV) Guidelines on University Degree Level Expectations. (Note: The University of Ottawa has adopted OCAV’s Guidelines on
Degree Level Expectations and therefore the institution’s guidelines on Degree Level Expectations are the same as OCAV’s).

They must ensure that:

3.1.4.1 Objectives

a) the new program is consistent with the University’s mission and academic plans, particularly with respect to the Francophonie, the development of bilingualism, and the needs of Franco-Ontarians, and matches both the goals and the teaching and research strengths of the academic unit (or units) concerned;

b) the new program is consistent with the proposed educational goals and learning outcomes as well as with the undergraduate OCAV’s Degree Level Expectations;

c) the new program satisfies a societal need and students’ actual interests;

3.1.4.2 Admission requirements

a) the admission requirements as well as students’ prior learning (results) and level of preparation allow for the learning outcomes to be achieved;

b) other possible admission requirements such as the CGPA, language requirements and recognition of prior learning experience are sufficiently and clearly explained.

3.1.4.3 Program structure

a) the program’s structure and requirements allow for learning outcomes to be achieved and undergraduate Degree Level Expectations to be met and to be consistent with OCAV’s Degree Level Expectations;

3.1.4.4 Program content

a) the program’s name and the degree awarded correspond to both the program content and the terminology used in the discipline;

b) any innovative aspects or distinctive features of the program are highlighted, in particular those that will contribute to the quality of the student University experience.

3.1.4.5 Program delivery

a) delivery methods ensure learning outcomes are achieved and meet undergraduate Degree Level Expectations;
b) expected class sizes are specified.

3.1.4.6 Language of delivery

a) there is evidence that, where appropriate, the University’s mission concerning Ontario’s Francophone Community and bilingualism is reflected in the program delivery.

b) plans for documenting and demonstrating students’ level of performance are included and are consistent with the institution’s statement of its Degree Level Expectations.

3.1.4.7 Evaluation of teaching and learning assessment

a) the methods used to evaluate student progress ensure learning outcomes are achieved and undergraduate Degree Level Expectations are met and are consistent with OCAV’s guidelines on Degree Level Expectations;

b) plans for documenting and demonstrating students’ level of performance are included and are consistent with the institution’s statement of its Degree Level Expectations.

3.1.4.8 Resources

a) the experience and quality of the teaching staff is clearly recognized, and there is a sufficient number of regular faculty members;

b) the role of part-time and adjunct professors is defined;

c) the financial and physical resources available or invested for the program are sufficient;

d) the resources necessary to support students’ scholarly activities, such as experiential learning opportunities (if required), library services, information technology support and laboratory access, are sufficient and of good quality.

3.1.4.9 Quality and other indicators

a) quality indicators for teaching staff (training and skills, distinctions, ability to make a significant contribution to the proposed program) are set out;

b) all elements of the academic unit, program structure, composition of teaching staff and possible partnerships that will ensure an intellectually stimulating university experience are identified.
PROCESS FOR THE EXPEDITED APPROVAL OF NEW UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS CREATED FROM EXISTING PROGRAMS AND OF MAJOR MODIFICATIONS

Academic unit
  ↓
Faculty
  ↓
Council on Undergraduate Studies
  ↓
Executive Committee of the Senate
  ↓
Senate (if necessary)
  ↓
Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance
  ↓
Cyclical Review within 8 years
4. PROTOCOL FOR THE EVALUATION AND APPROVAL OF MAJOR MODIFICATIONS TO EXISTING PROGRAMS

4.1 Protocol for the Evaluation and Approval of Major Modifications to Existing Undergraduate Programs

4.1.1 Major modifications

Modification to a program is considered major when:

a) the requirements for the program differ significantly from those existing at the time of the previous cyclical program review (e.g. a change in number and type of mandatory courses; a change in the language of program delivery; the introduction of a new concentration; a new mode of delivery; the addition or deletion of a coop or practicum; addition or deletion of a research paper; a change in the nature of the comprehensive, qualifying or candidacy examinations; the merger of two or more programs; the introduction of a bridging option for college diploma graduates; any change to field studies or residency requirements; major changes made to more than one-third of courses; a change from full to part-time program options or vice versa);

b) significant changes have been made to the learning outcomes (e.g. a major research component such as a research paper or thesis has been removed, added, or otherwise significantly changed;

c) any changes to program content, other than those listed above, that affect the learning outcomes, but do not meet the threshold for a “new program”;

d) significant changes have been made to the professors engaged in delivering the program (e.g. a large proportion of professors retires; new hires alter the areas of research and teaching interests; a field is deleted; an existing degree program is established at another location or institution). (For the introduction of a new field see above.);

e) when significant changes have been made to the essential physical resources (e.g. new laboratories are created; a complete on-line delivery of the program is proposed; the program is moved to an off-campus location) where these changes impair the delivery of the approved program.

The Senate Committee on Undergraduate Program Evaluation will act as an arbitrator to determine whether a change constitutes a major modification.
4.1.2 Evaluation and approval process for major modifications

All proposals for major modifications to an existing program must undergo an evaluation and approval process. The stages involved in the process vary depending on whether the proposal is submitted to the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance (Quality Council). If the proposal is submitted to the Quality Council (expedited approval), it will undergo a five-stage evaluation and approval process similar to the process for evaluating and approving new programs. If the proposal is not submitted to the Quality Council, it will undergo a three-stage evaluation and approval process, as described below (some stages are broken down into sub-stages). At any of these stages, the proposal can be returned to the academic unit concerned, which must incorporate recommended modifications before moving on to the next approval stage.

4.1.2.1 Academic unit

The evaluation and approval process for major modifications is normally initiated by the academic unit(s) offering the program. The process may vary slightly for interdisciplinary or collaborative programs. However, before any discussions with the unit’s academic authorities take place, the Vice-Dean Academic must be advised of the modifications being proposed.

The unit prepares a proposal for the major modifications and submits it to all its academic authorities for approval (program committee and department assembly, or their equivalent).

4.1.2.2 Faculty

The proposal is submitted for approval to all faculty academic authorities (including the undergraduate program committee, or its equivalent) and, finally, to the faculty council or councils.

4.1.2.3 Senate

The Vice-Dean Academic, or equivalent, of the faculty concerned submits the proposal to the Council on Undergraduate Studies for approval. The Associate Vice-President Academic then presents the proposal to the Executive Committee of the Senate and to the Senate, if necessary. Senate approval is necessary if a modification has an impact on the diploma (for example, if a new major is created).
4.1.2.4 Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance

A copy of the major modifications approved by Senate is sent to the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance as part of the University’s annual report on major modification(s) approved during the academic year.

4.1.3 Information to be included in the proposal

The proposal must include:

a) a justification for the major modifications being proposed;

b) a detailed description of the modifications (changes to admission or graduation requirements, program structure, courses, delivery methods, allocated resources, etc.);

c) the effect of these modifications on the University’s mission and academic plans, on the learning goals and expected learning outcomes, on undergraduate Degree Level Expectations, on admission requirements, on student preparedness, on enrolment and on the student university experience;

d) the effect of these modifications on teaching, learning or evaluation methods;

e) the effect of these modifications on physical space requirements as well as on professorial resources, material and financial resources required and expected class sizes;

f) and the effect of these modifications on the program’s administrative structure.

If new resources are required in order to implement the major modifications, the Dean and the Administrative Committee must decide on the resources needed to offer the program for a reasonable period of time. The financial impact of the major modifications and potential internal or external sources of funding must also be explored.

4.1.4 Evaluation criteria

The various academic authorities involved in the approval process examine the proposals according to several criteria. They take into account academic criteria specific to the University of Ottawa, the Quality Council’s requirements and the Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents (OCAV) guidelines on University Degree Level Expectations. They must ensure that:
4.1.4.1 Objectives

a) the major modifications allow the University to carry out or better carry out its mission and academic plans, reach its goals, and build upon the teaching and research strengths of the academic unit(s) concerned;

b) the major modifications are consistent with or reinforce the educational goals, learning outcomes, and undergraduate Degree Level Expectations;

c) major modifications allow the program to satisfy societal needs and students’ actual interests.

4.1.4.2 Admission requirements

a) the admission requirements, as well as students’ prior learning (results) and level of preparation, allow for the learning outcomes to be achieved;

b) other possible admission requirements such as the CGPA, language requirements, and recognition of prior learning experience are sufficiently and clearly explained.

4.1.4.3 Program structure

a) the program structure and requirements allow for learning outcomes to be achieved and undergraduate Degree Level Expectations to be met.

4.1.4.4 Program content

a) the name of the program and the degree awarded correspond to both the program content and the terminology used in the discipline;

b) any innovative aspects or distinctive features of the program are highlighted, in particular those that will contribute to the quality of the student University experience.

4.1.4.5 Mode of delivery

a) delivery methods ensure learning outcomes are achieved and meet undergraduate Degree Level Expectations;

b) expected class sizes are specified.

4.1.4.6 Language of delivery

a) there is evidence that, where appropriate, the University’s mission concerning Ontario’s Francophone Community and bilingualism is reflected in the course delivery.
4.1.4.7 **Assessment of teaching and learning**

a) the methods used to evaluate student progress ensure learning outcomes are achieved and undergraduate Degree Level Expectations are met and are consistent with OCAV’s guidelines on Degree Level Expectations.

4.1.4.8 **Resources**

a) the experience and quality of the teaching staff is clearly indicated, and there is a sufficient number of regular faculty members;

b) the role of part-time and associate professors is defined;

c) the financial and physical resources required or invested for the program are sufficient;

d) the resources necessary to support students’ scholarly activities, such as library services, information technology support and laboratory access, are sufficient and of good quality.

4.1.4.9 **Quality and other indicators**

a) quality indicators of teaching staff (training and skills, distinctions, ability to make a significant contribution to the proposed program) are set out;

b) all elements of the academic program, program structure, composition of the teaching staff and possible partnerships that will ensure an intellectually stimulating university experience are identified.
APPROVAL PROCESS FOR A MAJOR MODIFICATION PROPOSAL FOR UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

Academic unit
↓
Faculty
↓
Council on Undergraduate Studies
↓
Executive Committee of the Senate
↓
Senate (*if necessary*)
↓
Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance (via annual report)
5. PROTOCOL FOR THE EVALUATION AND APPROVAL OF MINOR MODIFICATIONS TO EXISTING PROGRAMS

5.1 Protocol for the Evaluation and Approval of Minor Modifications to Existing Undergraduate Programs

5.1.1 Minor modifications

Minor modifications are defined as small changes to a program for clarification purposes or to offer greater detail; these do not change the essence of a program or the expected learning outcomes.

Minor modifications include, but are not limited to, changes to titles, descriptions, course prerequisites and the list of compulsory and optional courses. They are generally any “cosmetic” modifications that do not, by and large, change the essential nature or the purpose of a program.

5.1.2 Evaluation and approval process for minor modifications

All proposals for minor modifications to an existing program must undergo a three-stage evaluation and approval process (some of the stages are broken down into sub-stages). At any of these stages, the proposal can be returned to the academic unit concerned, which must incorporate recommended modifications before moving on to the next approval stage.

5.1.2.1 Academic unit

The evaluation and approval process for minor modifications is normally initiated by the academic unit or units offering the program. The process may vary slightly for interdisciplinary and collaborative programs.

The unit prepares a short proposal for the minor modifications and submits the proposal to all its academic authorities for approval (program committee and department assembly or their equivalent).

5.1.2.2 Faculty

The proposal is submitted for approval to all faculty academic authorities (undergraduate program committee or its equivalent) and, finally, to the faculty council or councils.
5.1.2.3 Senate

The Vice-Dean Academic, or equivalent, of the faculty concerned submits the proposal to the Council on Undergraduate Studies for approval and then to the Executive Committee of the Senate. This is the last stage of approval.

5.1.2.4 Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance

Minor changes to the program are reported to the Quality Council by way of the Vice-President Academic and Provost’s annual report.

5.1.3 Information to be included in the proposal

The proposal must include:

   a) a short justification for the minor modifications being proposed;
   b) a description of the modifications (titles, descriptions, course prerequisites, etc.);
   c) the effect that these modifications will have.

5.1.4 Evaluation criteria

The various authorities involved in the approval process examine the proposal according to following criteria: the relevance of the modifications, the potential for improving the program and the students’ university experience, as well as the consistency with the University’s mission and academic plans.
APPROVAL PROCESS FOR A MINOR MODIFICATION PROPOSAL TO AN UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM

Academic unit
   ↓
Faculty
   ↓
Council on Undergraduate Studies
   ↓
Executive Committee of the Senate
   ↓
Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance

(via Vice-President Academic and Provost’s Annual Report)
6. PROTOCOL FOR THE CYCLICAL REVIEW OF PROGRAMS

6.1 Protocol for the Cyclical Review of Undergraduate Programs

6.1.1 Programs subject to the evaluation process

The evaluation process applies to all undergraduate programs that lead to a degree or a diploma from the University of Ottawa, whether they require prior university studies or not. Also subject to evaluation are programs offered by affiliated or federated institutions under collaborative agreements or partnerships with other colleges and universities.

Undergraduate programs are evaluated in turn within eight years, according to a predetermined schedule. If under exceptional circumstances a deferral is required, the Quality Council will be informed. The schedule takes into account the evaluations required for graduate programs, as well as those conducted by professional accreditation bodies.

Programs requiring professional accreditation may undergo both the cyclical review and the accreditation at the same time. The template for evaluating these programs is designed to meet the requirements of both the professional bodies and those of the cyclical review. The schedule is set as required by the professional accreditation process; however, when accreditation visits are scheduled every four years, cyclical reviews take place every eight years.

Bidisciplinary programs and integrated programs are evaluated at two specific times, that is, once from the discipline-specific perspective, and once from the structural perspective. For the discipline-specific context, they are assessed discipline-by-discipline during the cyclical review of the program applicable to that discipline (major, honours, honours with specialization). From the structural perspective, they undergo evaluation every eight years; the University has designed a specific template for this eight-year evaluation and does not require an external review.

General bachelor’s programs also undergo cyclical reviews, but these are conducted using a specifically designed template and do not involve an external review component.

For joint and other collaborative undergraduate programs, the cyclical review process will include a self-evaluation report that clearly explains how input was received from faculty, staff and students at each partner institution. The selection of the reviewers involves participation by each partner institution and the site visit involves all partner institutions and preferably at all sites (with exceptions noted, as per Quality Assurance Framework, p.6). Reviewers consult faculty, staff, and students at each partner institution, preferably in person. For a complete list of undergraduate collaborative...
programs, please refer to the **List of joint and other collaborative undergraduate programs** available in Appendix 1 – Undergraduate Programs.

6.1.2 **Components of the cyclical review**

The evaluation of undergraduate programs takes into account the Quality Council’s Framework, the Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents (OCAV) guidelines for University Degree Level Expectations and the learning outcomes of both the program and the degree. These periodic evaluations of undergraduate programs allow us to measure the degree to which programs:

- have attained program goals and learning outcomes;
- meet students’ needs and provide students with a university experience that lives up to their high expectations;
- help the University accomplish its academic plan and mission;
- have the quantity and quality of human, financial and material resources they need;
- are viable and relevant.

The following five stages are involved in the cyclical review (some of the stages are broken down into sub-stages):

6.1.2.1 **Self-evaluation**

The self-evaluation critically analyzes all aspects of a program, specifically, the curriculum, student population and faculty resources, as well as all other human, financial and material resources. It is an in-depth, forward-looking probe based on significant data and on quality indicators. The self-evaluation calls for the involvement of all professors in the academic unit, of a representative number of students, especially those serving on the unit’s assembly or standing committees, and of administrative staff.

The self-evaluation report must include a specific description of educational goals and learning outcomes of the program under review. The goals should refer to the program’s purpose (specific profession and graduate studies, in-depth training in a specific discipline, prerequisite training for a related program, etc.) while the outcomes translate students’ expected learning in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes. Reference should be made to the Guidelines for University Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations as approved by the Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents (OCAV).
Information to be included in the self-evaluation report

The self-evaluation report must include the following:

a) a rationale specifying the program’s goals, learning outcomes, Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations, student profile and enrolment;

b) a detailed description of the program’s structure and content (total number of credits; compulsory, optional and elective courses; year-by-year course sequence), admission requirements and opportunities, including access to graduate studies;

c) a statement on ways in which the curriculum addresses the current state of the discipline or area of study;

d) a description of the program delivery methods, evaluation of teaching and learning assessment;

e) the administrative structure of the program;

f) the language of the program;

g) the length of the program;

h) program-related data and measures of performance, including applicable provincial, national and professional standards (where applicable);

i) a comparison with similar programs offered elsewhere, ensuring that any innovative aspects or distinctive features of the program are highlighted, including the strengths of the academic unit, teaching staff, partnerships, etc.;

j) an evaluation of the space, professorial, material and financial resources required to offer the program as well as expected class sizes;

k) an evaluation of academic services (library, co-op education, academic advising, etc.);

l) concerns and recommendations raised in previous reviews;

m) comments from others deemed relevant and useful (e.g. graduates of the program, employers, representatives from industry, business, the professions, or practical training programs) may also be solicited and included in the self-study.

The Senate Committee on the Evaluation of Undergraduate Programs (SCEUP) reviews the self-evaluation reports and then meets with those who drafted the
reports as well as with the Chair of the academic unit concerned and asks for modifications if required. The revised self-evaluation report is then forwarded to the external reviewers.

In essence, the self-evaluation report is much more than a description of the aspects under evaluation. It must be the product of a thorough examination into the program’s strengths and weaknesses; where applicable, it must suggest how the program can be improved and what its future directions are.

To help units draft their self-evaluation reports, the University has developed a workshop and a detailed template (the detailed Template for the Self-Evaluation of Undergraduate Programs is available online at [http://www.uottawa.ca/vr-etudes-academic/en/templates.html](http://www.uottawa.ca/vr-etudes-academic/en/templates.html)). In addition, units can call on the professional expertise of the Teaching and Learning Support Service. Finally, through the Office of Institutional Planning and Research, they can tap into a range of relevant statistics on the student population: number of applications, number of offers, number of acceptances, admission averages, registration figures, size and direction of cohorts; language used; age, sex, region of origin, withdrawal rates, graduation rates, length of studies before graduation, grade distribution, grades in the final year of studies, teaching-evaluation results, number of registrations per class, etc. The Office also provides academic units with the results of surveys conducted among students registered in the program and students who have completed the program since the last evaluation.

Self-evaluation reports have three volumes: the first is the evaluation itself; the second contains the curricula vitae of all faculty members; and the third includes the curricula vitae of the suggested external reviewers.

It is important that some sections of the report be written in French and others in English. If for some reason a fully unilingual report is submitted, the Committee will ask to have the summary presented in the other official language.

### 6.1.2.2 External review

The external review is conducted by two reviewers selected by members of the SCEUP from a list of external candidates compiled by both the Dean and the Chair of the academic unit concerned. These individuals must have expertise in the discipline and must be at arm’s length from the program under evaluation (no family ties, partnership links, supervisory relations or other types of relationships). They must be associate or full professors and should have a good knowledge of university programs. There is a conflict of interest when a proposed external reviewer:

- has collaborated or published with a member or members of the academic program being evaluated within the past six years;
• has an administrative or family link with a member of the academic program being evaluated;
• is a former research supervisor, graduate student, or postdoctoral trainee of one of the members of the academic unit being evaluated;
• is involved in a dispute with a member of the academic program being evaluated.

If it sees fit, the SCEUP can also consult representatives from industry, related professions and practical training programs.

The reviewers will appraise the standards and quality of the program as set out in the Evaluation Criteria. They will also be invited to acknowledge any clearly innovative aspects of the program together with recommendations on any essential or otherwise desirable modifications to it.

In addition to commenting on the way in which the program conforms (or not) to the Evaluation Criteria, the reviewers will also be invited:
• to identify and commend the program’s notably strong and creative attributes;
• to describe the program’s respective strengths, areas for improvement, and opportunities for enhancement;
• to recommend specific steps to be taken to improve the program, distinguishing between those that the program can itself take and those that require external action;
• to understand and recognize the institution’s autonomy in determining priorities for funding, space, and faculty allocation.

6.1.2.2.1 Material provided to the external reviewers

The material to be sent to the external reviewers before their visit includes:

a) a cover letter, including a requirement on respecting the confidentiality necessary for all aspects of the review process;

b) a guide listing the objectives of the cyclical review, the roles and responsibilities of external reviewers, and instructions for writing their report;

c) a checklist of the evaluation criteria;

d) the protocol for the cyclical review of undergraduate programs;

e) sections I and II of the self-evaluation report.

External reviewers can ask for any other piece of information they deem useful in preparation for their visit.
The material to be provided to external reviewers *during* their visit includes:

a) all course outlines for the program;
b) a sampling of assignments and examinations;
c) a template for reviewers’ report.

### 6.1.2.2.2 External reviewers’ visit

The visit usually extends over one or two days and must include meetings with the Vice-President Academic and Provost, the Associate Vice-President Academic, the Dean and the Chair of the academic unit concerned, full-time professors, a representative sample of part-time professors, of the student body, key support staff members, as well as any other individuals who have an important role in ensuring program quality.

Where programs are offered jointly with other institutions, the external reviewers must also visit those institutions to meet with the program manager(s) and with professors. For a list of such programs, see the **List of joint and other collaborative undergraduate programs** provided in Appendix 1 – Undergraduate Programs.

When the undergraduate and graduate programs are evaluated the same year, visits by external reviewers take place sequentially.

For programs offered by the University of Ottawa at other sites, their review will include a site visit or, alternately, videoconferencing will be made available to the external reviewers so they may communicate with teaching staff, administrative staff and students at these sites.

### 6.1.2.2.3 External reviewers’ report

The report submitted by external reviewers must address each section of the self-evaluation report. (see section 6.1.2.1 above)

Within one month of the visit, the external reviewers submit a joint report to the Vice-President Academic and Provost, who forwards a copy to both the Dean and the Chair of the academic unit concerned. The University may also accept individual reports from the external reviewers if they so request, for instance because of language needs.

### 6.1.2.3 Internal Response

The Dean and Chair are invited to submit their comments on the external evaluators’ report.
6.1.2.4 Evaluation summary

The SCEUP drafts a summary report based on all the information it has received, the aim being to determine the quality of each program and the measures required. This report will, but is not limited to:

• Identify any significant strengths of the program;
• Identify opportunities for program improvement and enhancement;
• Set out and prioritize the recommendations that are selected for implementation;
• Set out a timetable and deadline for implementing any of those recommendations;
• May include a confidential section (where personnel issues require to be addressed).

The SCEUP submits its observations and recommendations to the Vice-President Academic and Provost. These can go as far as calling into question the need for the program. The Vice-President Academic and Provost then forwards the summary report to the Dean and to the Chair of the unit concerned, who are then responsible for implementing the recommendations.

The Dean and the Chair of the program(s) under review are responsible for providing responses to the recommendations made by the external evaluators on any change in program structure, policy or governance. As for recommendations pertaining to resources, financial and otherwise, the Dean has the responsibility of addressing these issues.

6.1.2.5 Follow-up procedure for the implementation of recommendations

Roughly one year after the cyclical review, the SCEUP asks the academic unit to submit a progress report on the implementation of the recommendations put forward.

Depending on the nature of the recommendations (some can take several years to implement) or on the progress made in implementing requested measures, the SCEUP can require other follow-up reports until all adjustments have been made to the full satisfaction of its members.

6.1.2.6 Distribution of reports

The SCEUP submits an annual report to the Senate and to the Board of Governors. The report includes the list of external evaluators, all summary reports stemming from the cyclical reviews, follow-up recommendations as well as the progress reports received during the current year. The SCEUP sends a copy of the report to the Council on Undergraduate Studies, to the Student Academic Success Service and to the Teaching and Learning Support Service. Finally, the annual report is made available for public access on the University of Ottawa website and a copy is
forwarded to the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance. Self-study reports are not made public and will not be posted on the University website.

6.1.3 Evaluation criteria

The evaluation criteria are divided into the following categories:

6.1.3.1 Objectives

a) The degree to which the program contributes to the University’s mission and academic plan, specifically:
   - the availability of programs, in both English and French, of national and international calibre;
   - the availability of programs and services that fulfill the needs of Ontario’s Francophone population.

b) The degree to which the program meshes academically, at both the teaching and research levels, with the goals and strengths of the academic unit(s) concerned.

c) The degree to which the program’s learning outcomes are consistent with the University’s mission and Degree Level Expectations and to which the program’s graduates achieve those outcomes.

6.1.3.2 Admission requirements

The coherence between the admission requirements/required degree of preparation and the program’s learning outcomes.

- Are admission requirements appropriately aligned with the learning outcomes established for completion of the program?
- Is there sufficient explanation of alternative requirements, if any, such as minimum grade point average, additional languages or portfolios, along with how the program recognizes prior work or learning experience?

6.1.3.3 Curriculum

a) The curriculum reflects the current state of the discipline or area of studies, the degree to which the program’s innovative aspects and distinctive features stand out, and evidence of any significant innovation or creativity in the content and/or delivery of the program relative to other programs.

b) Mode(s) of delivery to meet the program’s identified learning outcomes are appropriate and effective.
c) The degree to which the program’s teaching and learning methods relate to learning outcomes and to University of Ottawa’s Degree Level Expectations.

d) The degree to which the program’s structure and innovative aspects contribute to ensuring the quality of the student university experience.

6.1.3.4 Assessment of teaching and evaluation

a) The relevance and efficiency of the methods used to assess student progress in relation to the program’s learning outcomes and degree learning expectations;

b) The relevance and efficiency of the methods used to assess the achievement of learning outcomes in the final year of the program, by clearly demonstrating achievement of the program learning objectives and the program’s statement of Degree Level Expectation;

c) The student satisfaction with the program (results of the Undergraduate Program Evaluation Survey).

6.1.3.5 Resources

The proper and effective use of the human resources (e.g. number and quality of faculty members), financial resources and material resources (e.g. space, library and laboratory resources, access to computers, e-mail, and the internet, etc.) allocated to the program. In making this assessment, reviewers must recognize the institution’s autonomy to determine priorities for funding, space and faculty allocation.

6.1.3.6 Quality and other indicators

a) Professors: education and skills, awards, distinctions; class size; percentage of courses taught by regular and contract professors; number of professors, number of courses taught; education and qualifications of part-time professors;

b) Students: number of applications and registrations; admission averages; attrition rates; length of studies; academic performance in final year of studies; graduation rates; awards and distinctions;
c) Graduates: graduation rates; employment rates six months and two years after graduation; admissions to graduate studies; appreciation of program quality.

6.1.3.7 Quality enhancement

a) A description of all measures taken to improve the program since the previous evaluation.

6.1.4 Role of the Dean

The Dean of the faculty whose program is being evaluated takes part in the evaluation process at several stages. First, he or she is notified of which programs are scheduled for evaluation in the following year. If need be, the Dean can ask the Office of Institutional Research and Planning to compile and supply specific data on the program being evaluated. He or she ensures that someone is appointed to produce the self-evaluation report and that each evaluation process is completed within the set timeline. The Dean also proposes external reviewers to the SCEUP, meets with these reviewers when they visit the campus and provides comments on the external review reports. Finally, he or she receives a copy of the summary report sent by the Vice-President Academic and Provost at the end of the process and must ensure that the progress report and the follow-up reports are submitted by the requested deadlines.

6.1.5 Role of the Senate Committee on the Evaluation of Undergraduate Programs (SCEUP)

The SCEUP sets the evaluation schedule, selects the external reviewers and informs the Vice-President Academic and Provost accordingly. It also informs the Vice-President Academic and Provost of the evaluation results and of any other issue related to the overall process.

The Committee reviews the self-evaluation reports and then meets with those who drafted the reports as well as with the Chair of the academic unit concerned. Using the evaluation reports and other comments received, the Committee drafts a summary report that lists the strengths and weaknesses of the program in question, puts forward recommendations and ensures they are implemented.

The SCEUP is chaired by the Associate Vice-President Academic; its membership comprises a maximum of eight professors, who must represent the two major branches of knowledge – the pure and applied sciences, and the humanities and social sciences – as well as programs requiring prior university studies. Members are appointed by the Executive Committee of the Senate, upon recommendation by the Vice-President Academic and Provost. One of the members is a faculty member at Saint-Paul University, in keeping with the agreement between the two institutions.
OVERVIEW OF THE CYCLICAL REVIEW OF EXISTING UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

Initiation of review by Vice-President Academic and Provost

↓

Academic unit prepares Program Self-Study

↓

Senate Committee on the Evaluation of Undergraduate Programs

↓

External Evaluation

↓

Internal Responses

↓

Senate Committee on the Evaluation of Undergraduate Programs

↓

Vice-President Academic and Provost

↓

Executive of Senate (Annual Report)

↓

Senate (Annual Report)

↓

Board of Governors (Annual Report)

↓

Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance

(via Vice-President Academic and Provost’s annual report)

Posted on University of Ottawa website
APPENDIX
Appendix 1
List of Joint and Other Collaborative Undergraduate Programs

Undergraduate Programs Offered in Collaboration with Algonquin College

• Honours Bachelor in Journalism
• Honours Bachelor in Public Relations
• Bachelor of Science in Nursing (Woodroffe and Pembroke Campuses)

Undergraduate Programs Offered in Collaboration with La Cité collégiale

• Baccalauréat spécialisé en journalisme
• Baccalauréat spécialisé en relations publiques et communication
• Baccalauréat ès sciences en sciences infirmières