



Institutional Quality Assurance Process

University of Ottawa

June 27, 2011

PROTOCOL FOR THE CYCLICAL REVIEW OF UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

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 pre-determined 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. 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.

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):

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>). 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.

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.

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 .

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.

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.

1.2.3 Internal Response

The Dean and Chair are invited to submit their comments on the external evaluators' report.

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.

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.

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.

1.3 Evaluation criteria

The evaluation criteria are divided into the following categories:

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.

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?

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.

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).

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.

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.

1.3.7 Quality enhancement

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

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.

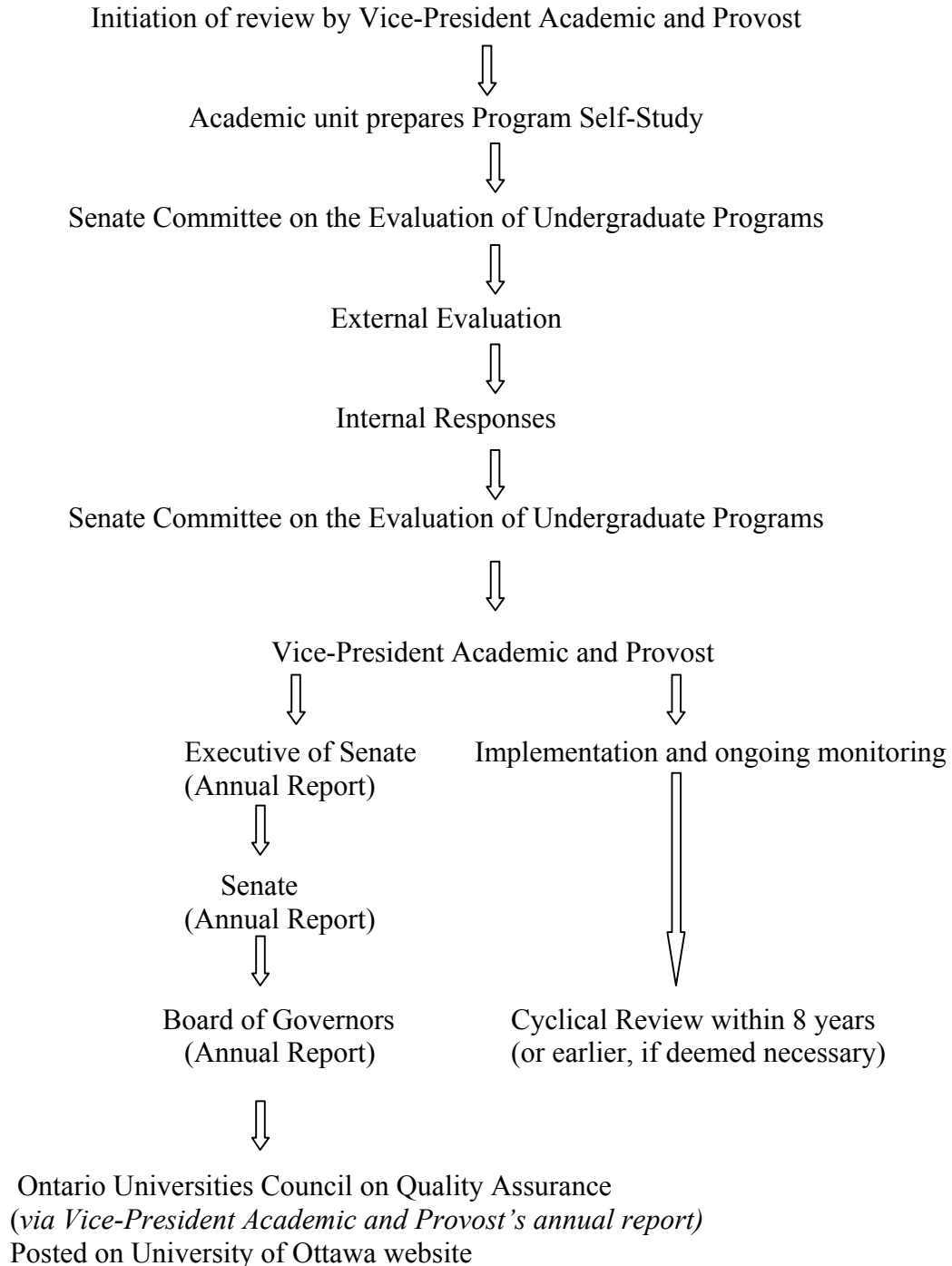
1.5 Role of the Senate Committee on the Evaluation of Undergraduate Programs (SCEUP)

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



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*