QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS AUDIT

ASSESSORS' REPORT WORKBOOK

INSTITUTION NAME: UBC Okanagan

SITE VISIT DATES: November 29-30, 2021

SUBMISSION DATE: December 17, 2021

<u>OVERALL ASSESSMENT</u>

The panel was guided by the objectives and the guiding principles of the QAPA process in considerations of formulating the QAPA assessment for UBC Okanagan.

<u>Objectives</u>
The main objectives of the quality assurance process audit (QAPA) are to ascertain that the institution:
  a) Continues to meet the program review policy requirements outlined in the DQAB's Exempt Status Criteria and Guidelines and the Degree Program Review Criteria and Guidelines, as applicable to the institution.
  b) Has and continues to meet appropriate program review processes and policies for all credential programs; and
  c) Applies its quality assurance process in relation to those requirements and responds to review findings appropriately.

<u>Guiding Principles</u>
  1) Transparent and credible evidence of robust quality assurance criteria and processes are vital to BC public post-secondary institutions, the Degree Quality Assessment Board, and the Ministry; demonstrate accountability; and contribute to the national and international reputation of the BC public post-secondary system.
  2) Credible quality assurance should be rigorous and have peer evaluation as an essential feature.
  3) QAPA standards will recognize the diversity and different mandates of BC public post-secondary institutions.
  4) Primary responsibility and accountability for educational program quality assurance rests with post-secondary institutions themselves.
  5) QAPA will be carried out to maximize the opportunity to:
      a. affirm, and add value to, the internal quality assurance processes at each institution; and
      b. share best practices from other BC institutions and elsewhere.
  6) QAPA will promote a collaborative and supportive process that benefits BC public post- secondary system.

<u>Process</u>
The QAPA panel met virtually with members of UBCO over the period of November 29, 2021, to November 30, 2021. The panel members were provided with The Quality Assurance Process Audit Handbook, The UBCO Institutional Report Quality Assurance Process Audit (2021) as well as documentation related to the External Review of the Department of Computer Science, Math, Physics, and Statistics, the external review of the Department of Languages and World Literature, and the External Review of the Okanagan School of Engineering.

The agenda, prepared by UCBO, provided initial discussions with senior leaders to understand university-wide perspectives of quality assurance and improvement policies, processes, and practices at UBCO. The second part of the agenda focused on discussions related to three academic units regarding their experience and reflections on recent external reviews.

<u>Overall Assessment</u>
The panel members noted the unqualified commitment to quality assurance from each of the staff, senior leaders, and academic members that contributed to the discussions. The discussions were thoughtful and reflective of a culture of proactive engagement in the improvement of quality assurance at the university.

In an overall assessment of the QAPA objectives, the panel determined that:
  a. UBCO continues to meet the program review policy requirements applicable to the university,
  b. UBCO continues to meet its program review processes and policies for all credential programs,
  c. UBCO applies its quality assurance process to its review process and policy requirements and responds to review findings in alignment with strategic and budget considerations.

Commendations: areas where the institution has shown exemplary practice in the field of program quality assurance and improvement.

1. UBCO is commended on their deep commitment to program quality assurance and improvement both at the university and program level.

2. The Provost's Office has provided a high level of support to the units that enables the effective implementation of program reviews and program improvement, including providing guidelines for the development of external reports and use of the Excellence Fund enabling university commitments to improvement.

3. UBCO is commended for its commitment to deeper engagement with Indigenous Peoples through an innovative model of relationship building developed with the Elders and communities to enhance curriculum development, faculty and student experience, and program reviews.

4. The central development of university-wide curriculum mapping software, MAP, now in Pilot phase, provides a strategic tool for university-wide input of learning outcomes and has potential to enable the connection of learning outcomes with measurement of student success in the future.

5. The university OPAIR has developed an initial data set that provides core accountability data for program reviews and program effectiveness.

Affirmations: areas where the institution has identified a weakness and has articulated how it intends to correct it.

The following areas have been identified by the university for continuous work and improvements:

1. The need for university-wide program level learning outcome mappings that are linked to strategic planning and quality assessment and for use in measurement of student learning success.

   The university and program units clearly understand and are committed to the concept yet progress in non-accredited programs varies at the depth required to be meaningful.

   The university has taken this on as a priority and plans to engage in a wider rollout of the MAP tool.

2. The need for a review of current policies and review processes for program quality assurance to ensure that they encompass a more current and broader interpretation of EDI.

   UBCO has recognized the need to operationalize and expand their commitment to EDI and Indigenization in the program review process.

3. The university acknowledges that the program review process should include more explicit input from external stakeholders, including community and employers.

   The university is continuously engaged in building meaningful relationships with Indigenous communities, however, further engagement with these communities in the external review processes should be included in the processes.

4. The university review cycle is vague and inconsistent in its guidelines and requirements for student participation.

   The current policy review should include updates that clearly articulate requirements for student participation in quality assurance and improvement processes.

5. The university has a mandate for robust and meaningful institutional data collection.

   Gaps are recognized with respect to achieving the quality assurance and improvement goals of the university, specifically including fuller EDI data and a more systematic approach to tracking learning outcomes and student success, particularly in non-accredited programs.

Recommendations: Areas needing improvement including concerns identified for which no plan of action has yet been articulated.

The following recommendations are intended to recognize and to build upon the strengths of UBCO and to inform a proactive approach to the continual evolution of quality assurance and improvement both at the university level and the program level.

1. The university should explore further standardization, through broad consultation, of a core data set and process templates to enable reasonable comparisons across units and to support a university level profile.

2. The university should ensure that each review process is followed and documented for the entire cycle and participants kept fully informed throughout the cycle. This would enable a roll-forward of continuous improvement results over the succession of reviews.

3. The university should clearly encapsulate requirements for student participation and engagement with review processes and with quality assurance policy development.

4. The university should embed a requirement in the review process for clear articulation of the linkage of the review outcomes with unit and university strategic plans.

5. The university should develop policies and processes to ensure that learning outcomes, quantitative and qualitative, become the required practice across the university for the purposes of program quality assurance and improvements.

6. The standardized data packaged produced by OPAIR should be provided to the external review team as well as to the academic unit.

Signed:

Chair of the QAPA Team:

_____   _____
                    (Signature)   (Date)

_____
                  (Printed Name)

QAPA Assessors:

_____   _____
                    (Signature)   (Date)

_____
                  (Printed Name)

_____   _____
                    (Signature)   (Date)

_____
                  (Printed Name)

4.1. Overall Process

A. Does the process reflect the institution's mandate, mission, and values?	
CRITERIA:	COMMENTS / RECOMMENDATIONS:
(i) The institution should be able to demonstrate that it has an established institutional and program review planning cycle and process to assess the effectiveness of its educational programs and services, their responsiveness to student, labour market, and social needs.	UBC Okanagan has experienced rapid growth since its establishment in 2005. During this period the campus community has been dedicated to actioning initiatives to enhance the educational experience and academic success of its students. There are strengths and areas of opportunities around the process of academic reviews at UBC Okanagan, many of which are being currently addressed at the Senate level: • programs are reviewed within the context of their academic units. • this process is guided by the Senate policy on Reviews of Administrative Units, Board of Governors policy on the Extension of Deans and a set of Principles, Procedures and Guidelines (PPG), which were formalized by the Provost's Office in 2014 and mirror UBC-V's approach. Additionally, the Senate approves any further academic review guidelines for a particular Faculty: • the Provost's Office has developed web-based accompanying resource packages and information to support units; • the Senate-approved template for academic policies includes a section for cyclical renewal of the policy; • many of UBC-O's programs are accredited by one or more external agencies. As such, processes are in place to ensure academic programing is relevant and continuously updated to ensure it is of the highest quality and that it meets accreditation requirements; • some units have Indigenous engagement committees and community advisory committees who work with a unit's curriculum development committee; and • the Okanagan Planning and Institutional Research Office (OPAIR) plays a key role in supporting units preparing for external reviews. OPAIR creates, deploys and analyzes student surveys and focus groups to gather evidence of interest for a new program, provide feedback on a current program, or determine impact of a new or current academic or non-academic policy.

	There was evidence that UBC-O program review begins at the development of a new program, with the assessment of new educational programs for responsiveness to student, labour market and social needs. In 2017, the Provost's Office developed a complementary process to propose new programs preceding the Senate-required steps delineated by the GCS. the Senate Curriculum Committee formalized the Provost's Office's suggested steps in the GCS in April 2021. As a result, all proposals are now required, by Senate, to meaningfully engage with peers and community members prior to submitting the complete proposal to Senate for their review and approval. These changes also require proponents to identify jobs in BC for which program graduates would qualify for upon successfully completing the program. The UBC Curriculum Mapping Tool, in pilot phase, will allow program coordinators to visualize their academic programs, in turn helping them gather pedagogical evidence to re-design programs towards an enhanced student learning experience and higher relevancy to the workforce after graduation via career-related competencies and alignment to high-demand occupations in the province.
(ii) The process should contribute to the continuous improvement of the institution.	Policy and procedures indicate a review cycle is in place at UBC-O: • "reviews are normally conducted every five years and the time interval between reviews must not exceed ten years"; and • an external review may also be initiated by the head, dean, provost, senate or, by other circumstances, such as accreditation requirements, revision of curriculum, joint initiatives with other units and/or a re-deployment of resources. In addition, the terms of reference for the review can be focused on specific areas of need and/or development. The ToR provided by the Provost's Office offer flexibility for the unit under review to ensure relevance to their context and discipline. The TOR may also be adapted by a unit to the specific areas of concern or focus for peer review. Comments from participants: • *Considering the rapid growth and resulting competing priorities of our campus since its inception in 2005, the campus has done its best to ensure units and programs undergo external reviews according to the Reviews of*

	Administrative Units Policy and the PPG. However, these efforts have had varying degrees of success. Discussions at Senate to date have identified areas for improvement and strengths that the revised policy on academic reviews (currently under review) will reflect.
	• *A new policy for academic reviews will clarify the expectation of a five-to-seven-year cycle, including follow-up reports with consideration of how to best align the review of units who are accredited by external bodies in order to mitigate the increased workload involved in the review process.*
	• *It has been recognized that UBC-O's formal engagement with external communities can be strengthened, in particular with our alumni. Our campus does not currently have a systematic and centralized way to support this engagement, although some units make efforts to engage with them through their own channels, such as email lists, blogs, periodic events or social media.*
	• *A gap identified in the academic reviews process is the follow-up reporting and dissemination of results. For faculty and school reviews, the Provost's Office has made an effort to disseminate memos, results and responses through its website. Similarly, the Faculty of Science and Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences disseminate review-relevant information through their internal website for faculty and staff. The Schools within the Faculty of Health and Social Development also disseminate review-relevant information through their websites. This practice is not present among all other units and an area where improvement could be made.*
	• *The current Senate policies on Reviews of Administrative Units and PPG have not been updated in many years.*

B. Is the scope of the process appropriate?	
CRITERIA:	COMMENTS / RECOMMENDATIONS:
(i) There should be evidence of a formal, institutionally approved policy and procedure for the periodic review of programs against published standards that	There is a short Senate policy for both UBC and UBCO campuses that we understand is undergoing revision. External reviews are also linked to the appointment of academic administrators through other policies. A more detailed set of review procedures was issued by the Provost's Office at

includes the following characteristics:

- A self-study undertaken by faculty members and administrators of the program based on evidence relating to program performance, including strengths and weaknesses, desired improvements, and future directions. A self-study takes into account:
- the continuing appropriateness of the program's structure, admissions requirements, method of delivery and curriculum for the program's educational goals and standards;
- the adequacy and effective use of resources (physical, technological, financial and human);
- faculty performance including the quality of teaching and supervision and demonstrable currency in the field of specialization;
- that the learning outcomes achieved by students/graduates meet the program's stated goals, the credential level standard, and where appropriate, the standards of any related regulatory, accrediting or professional association;
- the continuing adequacy of the methods used for evaluating student progress and achievement to ensure that the

UBCO in 2014, and this forms the basis for quality assurance at UBCO. Overall, this is a strong set of guidelines.

This document requires:

- A self-study, with details of what should be included in the self-study document; self-assessment, including SWOT analysis supported by data/evidence must be included.

- Review of undergraduate and graduate programs, enrollment, curriculum, learning outcomes and other measures of pedagogical quality and student success

- The adequacy of resources

- Performance of faculty members in teaching, research and service

- Evidence for engagement with Indigenous students and communities

- Linkage to strategic planning

- Description of curriculum, methods of teaching and assessment, evaluation of teaching performance

The document lacks substance in the following areas:

- The document makes little mention of assessment of learning outcomes in relation to the program's educational goals. UBCO should begin to incorporate data on what students actually learn into their external review process.

- The document does not require a critical assessment of how student progress is evaluated, nor does it require evidence of student satisfaction and post-university success. UBCO should incorporate data and analysis relevant to these issues in the external review process.

Further comments:

- We note that UBCO spends an inordinate amount of time and energy on curriculum design, and places too little emphasis on documenting the outcomes for students.

- There is a requirement that an independent review be conducted by a panel of external experts who visit

• program's stated goals have been achieved; • the graduate satisfaction level, student satisfaction level, and graduation rate; and • where appropriate, the graduate employment rates, employer satisfaction level, and advisory board satisfaction level. ➢ An assessment conducted by a panel that includes independent experts external to the institution. The assessment should normally include a site visit, a written report that assesses program quality and may recommend quality improvements; and an institution response to the report; ➢ A summary of the conclusions of the evaluation that is made appropriately available.	UBCO (in person or virtually), and who produce a written report with recommendations. We commend the practice of including a reviewer from the external community when appropriate. We recommend that the external review team be supplemented by a UBCO faculty member from a different unit who can provide external reviewers with contextual information about UBCO, as is currently done in Faculty of Science. • The 2014 guidelines provide for responses to the report from the head of department and the dean, and a requirement that an action plan be submitted to the Provost. The Provost is expected to summarize key aspects of action plans for Senate's information. However, we noted inconsistency in follow-up processes in the external reviews that were provided to us, and more attention needs to be paid to this aspect of the process, to ensure that action is taken when appropriate. We also noted a surprising lack of authorship information and dates on documents associated with the follow-up process.
(ii) The institution can demonstrate that it has a policy and process for new program approval that includes peer / external review by appropriate experts.	There are clear and well-documented policies and procedures for new program development and approval. The process was discussed during our visit and academic units expressed satisfaction with the process and with support from the Provost's office.

C. Are the guidelines differentiated and adaptable to respond to the needs and contexts of different units, e.g. faculties or departments or credential level?

CRITERIA:	COMMENTS / RECOMMENDATIONS:
(i) Are the guidelines adaptable to the range of programs and offerings within the institution?	The guidelines explicitly provide for flexibility in the external review process, and encourage the terms of reference to be tailored to the circumstances of individual units.

	In fact the QAPA review team felt that too much flexibility was allowed, resulting in very different self-study documents that did not really allow for comparisons across units, and sometimes ignored required elements defined in the Provost's guidelines. For units that are not subject to professional accreditation reviews the panel recommends that UBCO require a format similar to the one that has been developed by Faculty of Science.
(ii) Do the guidelines provide measurable, consistent means and direction to undertake diversified program review?	The guidelines are sufficiently adaptable and may provide too much flexibility. The panel notes that the Provost provides standardized data sets to units for their self-study, which is commendable. However, these data sets should also be provided to the external review team.
(iii) Are the guidelines consistent with institutional Mandate, mission, vision and associated strategic goals?	The guidelines do relate to the overall mandate and mission of UBCO.

D. Does the process promote quality improvement?	
CRITERIA:	COMMENTS / RECOMMENDATIONS:
(i) The institution should be able to demonstrate that it has appropriate accountability mechanisms functioning for vocational, professional and academic programs.	Accountability Mechanisms for programs at UBCO: - Programs are reviewed within the context of their academic units; - this process is guided by the Senate policy on Reviews of Administrative Units, Board of Governors policy on the Extension of Deans and a set of Principles, Procedures and Guidelines (PPG), which were formalized by the Provost's Office in 2014 and mirror UBC-V's approach. Additionally, the Senate approves any further academic review guidelines for a particular Faculty; - the Provost's Office has developed web-based accompanying resource packages and information to support units; - the Senate-approved template for academic policies includes a section for cyclical renewal of the policy; - many of UBC-O's programs are accredited by one or more external agencies. As such, processes are in place to ensure academic programing is relevant and continuously updated to

	ensure it is of the highest quality and that it meets accreditation requirements; • some units have Indigenous engagement committees and community advisory committees who work with a unit's curriculum development committee; and • the Okanagan Planning and Institutional Research Office (OPAIR) plays a key role in supporting units preparing for external reviews. OPAIR creates, deploys and analyzes student surveys and focus groups to gather evidence of interest for a new program, provide feedback on a current program, or determine impact of a new or current academic or non-academic policy. Comments from participants: • *The process was reported to the panel as useful for reflection and analysis.* • *It was signalled to the panel that some units have struggled to move beyond the initial review impulse, i.e., to engage in continuous improvement beyond the time of the formal review. Solutions may include the creation of action plans approved by governance, with regular formal reporting required on that action plan.*
(ii) The institution should be able to demonstrate how faculty scholarship and professional development inform teaching (including graduate teaching) and continue to be a foundation for ensuring that programming is up to date.	• The Student Academic Success Committee (SASC) was formed in 2017. The committee membership includes associate deans or associate directors of both undergraduate and graduate programming, as well as those in leadership positions within student services. The committee's mandate is to discuss and promote best practices across the campus related to student success. • The Provost's Office has annually set aside funding to support and strengthen academic excellence through the Excellence Fund. The Excellence Fund supports ambitious research initiatives that provide significant transformative learning opportunities and contribute to the campus' Outlook 2040 goals. • UBC is committed to scholarship and professional development that informs teaching and initiatives to foster innovative academic programs responsive to the changing needs of our students and communities. The tenure-track Educational Leadership stream is a concrete example of this commitment.

- In March 2020, President Santa Ono launched the Academic Excellence Initiative (PAEI). At UBC Okanagan, the PAEI supports research excellence and transformative learning experiences for students.

- UBC Okanagan has established a number of resources and funding opportunities to support professional development:
  - The Office of Research Services (ORS). ORS has a number of research development officers who offer workshops and one-on-one support to faculty members as they develop their research programs. There are also a number of internal funding opportunities and awards to recognize the research accomplishments of faculty.

  - The Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL). CTL has educational consultants who organize workshops, communities of practice and one-on-one support to help faculty enhance their pedagogical practice and educational leadership activities. Educational consultants also support curriculum development and revision as well as Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) activities and curriculum development.

- The Provost's Office recognizes outstanding and Innovative teaching through a number of teaching awards.

- The Provost's Office has established funding opportunities such as the Aspire-2040 Learning Transformations Fund and Open Educational Resources Grant Program to support curriculum development and pedagogical innovation.

  Additional financial support is provided to staff and faculty to support participation in external professional development opportunities, such as attending conferences and/or workshops, membership fees for professional organizations and fees and subscriptions for journals and books.

Comments from Participants:
The review panel was informed that:
- *there is limited cross-campus activity in support of creating up-to-date curriculum; and*
- *while reviews informed the development of up-to-date programming, the process fell short on (a) ensuring ongoing engagement with stakeholders; (b) connection*

	between academic goals and budgeting; and (c) a holistic perspective on program design and delivery.
(iii) The institution should be able to demonstrate how learning outcomes are being achieved and how student progress is assessed and measured.	Current planning includes: • UBC Okanagan plans for learning outcomes at the course and program levels, as reflected in the current institutional Strategic Plan. Specifically, through Strategy 12, UBC aims to reframe the design of undergraduate academic programs in terms of learning outcomes and competencies. As examples, the recently revised Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Human Kinetics programs are structured around competency-based and program learning outcomes. • UBC-O's Senate Curriculum Committee is guided by its Curriculum Guidelines, which are reviewed by the committee at the end of every academic year. The Guidelines require new courses and programs to clearly articulate their intended learning outcomes. • The Senate Curriculum Committee's approval is necessary for current courses to significantly change their learning outcomes. • The syllabus template in the Guidelines ensures this process is followed for all courses at UBC Okanagan. Current support includes: • The Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) offers support and resources to help instructors identify course or program learning outcomes. • Further support is underway through a UBC-designed web application—the Curriculum Mapping Tool— that will soon allow instructors to engage in curriculum mapping from a backward-design perspective by focusing on learning outcomes, teaching and learning activities, and assessment methods. • Academic units across UBC Okanagan have developed curriculum committees to provide a coordinated effort and oversight to ensure assessment methods remain appropriate and assess the course learning outcomes. Review:

	The review panel found uneven evidence of learning outcomes. This is an area noted for further strengthening.

4.2. Review findings

A. Were the responses to the sample program review findings adequate?	
CRITERIA:	COMMENTS / RECOMMENDATIONS:

The institution has a follow up process for internal program reviews and acts in accordance with it.	• The responses to the sample program review findings were, in general adequate. The university has a policy that requires a report on progress to the recommendations made by the review within two years of the review.
	
	• Responses to execution of recommendations varies, however, by unit and by faculty. For recommendations directed to the unit, the unit is responsible for implementing as feasible. For those recommendations requiring strategic and/or budget requests the Dean brings the case to the Provost for consideration.
	
	• In discussion with the three sample units, the panel noted that there was little feedback to the unit after they completed and submitted their response to the review.
	
	• We found that the follow-up process was inconsistent and poorly documented.
	
	    o Each recommendation of the external review should be considered by the academic unit and incorporated in an action plan (with the option of disputing or modifying a recommendation).
	
	    o The action plan should be reviewed by the relevant dean, and endorsed where appropriate.
	
	    o Key performance indicators for action items should be defined.
	
	    o We recommend that the external review and the action plan be brought by the Provost to Senate or a Senate committee for approval.
	
	    o All actions plans should document resource implications.
	
	    o External reviews and follow-up documents should be appropriately archived for future reference.

B. Does the process inform future decision making?	
CRITERIA:	COMMENTS / RECOMMENDATIONS:
The program review ensures that the program remains consistent with the institution's current mission, goals and long-range plan.	• The sample reviews present clear evidence that the units made short and medium term decisions in response to the recommendations. • There is less evidence that the review process supports longer term strategic alignment of decisions to support longer term vision.

C. Are the review findings appropriately disseminated?	
CRITERIA:	COMMENTS / RECOMMENDATIONS:
The institution has a well-defined system to disseminate the review findings to the appropriate entities.	• In each case, the review findings were distributed and discussed within the unit in accordance with policy. • It was not clear how the findings of external reviews are disseminated, because we did not see the documentation that goes from the Provost's office to Senate.