

ACADEMIC COUNCIL MEETING
Graduate Studies Committee

AGENDA

Date: April 28, 2026

Time: 9:00 a.m. - 9:55 a.m.

[Zoom Videoconference Link](#) (registration required)

[GSC Meeting Schedule and Materials 2025-2026](#)

No.		Topic	Lead	Suggested Start Time
PUBLIC SESSION				
1.		Call to Order and Land Acknowledgement	Chair	9:00 a.m.
2.		Agenda (M)		
3.		Chair's Remarks		
4.		Academic Policy Instruments		
	4.1	Examination and Grading Policy Amendments* (M)	A. Wingate	9:10 a.m.
	4.2	Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP) Policy and Procedures* (D)	K. McCartney	
5.		Outstanding Thesis Award Amendments* (M)	Chair	9:40 a.m.
6.		Consent Agenda: (M)	Chair	9:50 a.m.
	6.1	Public Minutes of the February 24, 2026 Meeting* (M)		
	6.2	Associate Graduate Faculty (I) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Analytics and AI, Catherine Inbihunu, Faculty of Business and Information Technology • Computer Science, Meaghan Charest-Finn, Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science • Computer Science, Agnes Grudniewicz, Faculty of Business and Information Technology • Computer Science, Saiqa Aleem, Faculty of Business and Information Technology • Computer Science, Shih-Chia Huang, Faculty of Business and Information Technology 		

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer Science, Priyamvada Tripathi, Faculty of Business and Information Technology • Computer Science, Michael Miljanovic, Faculty of Science • Criminology, Jennifer Lavoie, Faculty of Social Science and Humanities • Education, Diane Tepylo, Frazer Faculty of Education • Education, Alison Mann, Frazer Faculty of Education • Education, Katie Higginbottom, Frazer Faculty of Education • Education, Margaret Robinson, Frazer Faculty of Education • Education, Sherra Robinson, Frazer Faculty of Education • Health Sciences, Sara Allin, Faculty of Health Sciences • Health Sciences, Kirsten Burgomaster, Faculty of Health Sciences • Health Sciences, Shabnam Pejhan, Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science • Information Technology Security, Shih-Chia Huang, Faculty of Business and Information Technology • Nursing, Rasha Wahid, Faculty of Health Sciences <p>Graduate Faculty (I)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electrical and Computer Engineering & Software Engineering, Kundi Yao, Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science <p>Emeritus Graduate Faculty (I)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modelling and Computational Science, Anatoli Chkrebti, Faculty of Science 		
	6.3	Graduate Thesis Completion Course* (I)		
7.		Termination	Chair	9:55 a.m.

Sandra Grouette, Assistant University Secretary

GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE REPORT

ACTION REQUESTED:

- Recommendation
Decision
Discussion/Direction
Information

DATE: April 28, 2026

PRESENTED BY: Adam Wingate, Associate Registrar and Director, Records and Scheduling

SUBJECT: Examination and Grading Policy Amendments

COMMITTEE MANDATE:

Under the Policy Framework and the University's Act and By-Laws, Academic Council is responsible for approving Academic Policy and to make recommendations to the Board on "the establishment and terms of reference of committees to exercise the Academic Council's delegated authority" under By-law no. 2. The Graduate Studies Committee has a mandate of maintaining the academic standards set by Academic Council and to serve as the deliberative body for academic policy instruments.

We present the attached revised Examination and Grading Policy for approval by Academic Council.

MOTION FOR CONSIDERATION:

That GSC hereby recommends to Academic Council the approval of the revised Examination and Grading Policy for approval by Academic Council.

BACKGROUND/CONTEXT & RATIONALE:

Feedback received from multiple faculties as well as the Academic Advising unit indicates that the number of undergraduate requests to make up or further defer deferred examinations is on the rise. This has numerous implications including but not limited to the instructor having to create, at minimum, three unique versions of the examination, and students pursuing subsequent related academic content without having fully completed the prerequisite content.

Reviewing data dating back to fall 2023 reveals that there is a significant volume of repeatedly deferred examinations. Specifically: 8 in the Faculty of Business and Information Technology, 66 in the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science and 37 in the Faculty of Science.

A review of the provincial landscape, via a survey of Ontario University Registrars, indicates that several institutions, including Lakehead University and McMaster University have outright discontinued the practice of offering multiple deferred examinations.

To this end, the following proposed revisions were made to our Examination and Grading Policy.

- Updated section 13.2: In most circumstances, a student who misses a deferred examination will not be permitted to make it up. Students who are unable to write their deferred examination due to a transitory illness or injury should submit a Consideration for Late Withdrawal. The university reserves the right to de-register the student from future academic terms until which time the deferred examination has been written. Accommodation requests made on the grounds of a disability or other protected grounds will be assessed in good faith and may result in the application of an alternative accommodation.
- Updated section 2 to reflect the definition of a transitory illness/injury.

RESOURCES REQUIRED:

- No resources required.

CONSULTATION AND APPROVAL:

- Online Consultation: March 9, 2026 – March 13, 2026
- Undergraduate Studies Committee Deliberation: April 21, 2026
- Graduate Studies Committee Deliberation: April 28, 2026
- Academic Council for approval: May 26, 2026

NEXT STEPS:

Pending approval by Academic Council, these amendments will become effective as of the date of approval.

SUPPORTING REFERENCE MATERIALS:

- ACD 1506 Examination and Grading Policy Tracked Changes
- ACD 1506_Examination and Grading Policy (Clean Copy)



Classification Number	ACD 1506
Framework Category	Academic
Approving Authority	Academic Council
Policy Owner	Registrar
Approval Date	June 28, 2022 TBD
Review Date	June 2025 May 2029
Supersedes	Editorial Amendments, February 18, 2020; Editorial Amendments, November 26, 2019; Examination and Grading Policy, January 17, 2017; Academic Regulations, Graduate Academic Calendar 2019-2020; Undergraduate Academic Calendar, Section 5.25, June 2015; Scheduling Guidelines and Protocols, Section 2, May 2012

Examination and Grading Policy

PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework to guide the effective administration and scheduling of in-term course work and examinations and the submission and release of final grades.

DEFINITIONS

2. For the purposes of this Policy the following definitions apply:

“Examination” means a form of testing intended to assess the level of students’ knowledge, ability, skills, comprehension, application, analysis, and/or synthesis of the subject matter in a course of study. This includes, but is not limited to in-person, online, take-home, practical, and laboratory Examinations.

“Deferred Examination” means an Examination written outside of the originally scheduled day and/or time.

“Final Examination Period” means the period of calendar days stated in the Academic Calendar that is set aside in each Semester and/or Session for the administration of Final Examinations.

“Final Examination” means an Examination scheduled during the Final Examination Period.

“In-term Course Work” means any course work assigned during the Semester or Session.

“In-term Examinations” means an Examination held during the Semester or Session.

“Semester” means sixty days of lectures and a Final Examination period.

“Session” means a period of approximately six consecutive weeks in the Summer Semester consisting of 30 days of lectures and a Final Examination period. The first half of Summer Semester is designated as Spring Session; the second half is designated as Summer Session.

“Study Break” means a period between the last day of lectures and the first day of the Final Examination Period.

“Transitory Illness/Injury” means a temporary health condition that lasts for a short period of time – ranging from minutes to days.

Formatted: Font: Bold

SCOPE AND AUTHORITY

3. This Policy applies to all In-Term Course Work and Examinations.
4. This Policy applies to the submission and release of final grades.
5. This Policy does not apply to PhD candidacy exams, master’s and doctoral thesis defense examinations. For more information regarding these types of examinations, please refer to the University's policy library.
6. The Registrar, or successor thereof, is the Policy Owner and is responsible for overseeing the implementation, administration and interpretation of this Policy.

POLICY

7. General

- 7.1. All Examinations, will be scheduled and administered in accordance with this Policy, the Procedures for Final Examination Administration, the Procedures for Consideration of Missed In-term Course Work and Examinations, and all other applicable University policies and procedures.
- 7.2. Students are responsible for all material covered in a given course and In-term and Final Examinations may be used to assess course material that is delivered both directly (e.g. during a scheduled class) or indirectly (e.g. additional reading assignments).
- 7.3. No Examinations or lectures may be administered during the Fall or Winter study week, or the Study Break before the Final Examination Period. In addition, students may not be required to present, submit term papers, reports, or other assigned material during these periods.

8. In-term Examination Scheduling

- 8.1. In-term Examinations will normally be held during regularly scheduled class times, though they may be scheduled on any calendar day of the Semester or Session.
- 8.2. In-term Examinations held outside of the regularly scheduled class times will require the approval of the Faculty and must be noted in the course syllabus prior to the start of the Semester or Session to ensure students have reasonable advance warning of such scheduling.
- 8.3. The total value of any In-term Examination given in the last five days of classes in a Semester or Session must be no more than 15 percent of the final mark of the course.

9. Final Examination Scheduling

- 9.1. The Office of the Registrar has authority for the scheduling of Final Examinations.
- 9.2. Final Examinations will only be scheduled during the Final Examination Period and will be scheduled in accordance with the Procedures for Final Examination Administration.
- 9.3. Scheduling of Final Examinations will be conducted to eliminate conflicts and to minimize the instances of consecutive examinations.
- 9.4. Normally, the Final Examination schedule will be published no later than six weeks prior to the first day of the Final Examination Period for a Semester. Normally, once published, there will be no scheduling changes.
- 9.5. Normally, the Final Examination schedule will be published no later than three weeks prior to the first day of the Final Examination Period for a Session. Normally, once published, there will be no scheduling changes.
- 9.6. **Warning about other commitments:** Final Examinations may be scheduled at any time during the Final Examination Period. Students are expected to avoid making travel or other professional or personal commitments during this time.
 - a) As instructors are not required to be present at their Final Examination, they should be available should an emergency occur.
- 9.7. Take-home Final Examination deadlines must fall within the Final Examination Period. The take-home Final Examination deadline must be noted in the course syllabus prior to the start of the Semester or Session.

10. Deferred Examination Scheduling

- 10.1. Deferred Examinations will normally be scheduled no later than the end of the first week of classes in the following Semester or Session.

11. Students Requiring Academic Accommodations

- 11.1. Students with disabilities who are registered with Student Accessibility Services will receive accommodations for all In-term Course Work and Examinations in accordance with their individual accommodation plan.

12. Missed In-Term Course Work and Examinations

- 12.1. **Grounds for Consideration:** The following are grounds for which a student may apply and be considered for approval to make up missed In-term Course Work or Examination.
 - a) **Religious Observance:** Students who are unable to submit In-term Course Work or write an Examination due to religious obligations.
 - b) **Extenuating Circumstances:** Students who are unable to submit In-term Course Work or write an Examination as a result of extenuating circumstances beyond their control. Extenuating circumstances that may be considered include:
 - Significant physical or psychological event or illness that is debilitating to the student's academic performance;
 - Severe family emergency;

- Other compelling personal reason.
- c) Competing Academic Conflict: Students who are unable to write an Examination as a result of a competing academic conflict. The following competing academic conflicts may be considered:
- Three Final Examinations scheduled within a 24-hour period from the start time of the first Final Examination to the end time of the third Final Examination. The middle examination of the three will be the one considered;
 - An In-term Examination that is scheduled outside of the regular class time and which conflicts with another scheduled class or In-term Examination.

12.2. Requests for Consideration

- a) Requests for consideration of missed In-term Course Work and Examinations must be made in accordance with the Procedures for Consideration of Missed In-term Course Work and Examinations. Considerations will only be granted where sufficient documentation is submitted.

12.3. Options for Make Up Work

- a) Students who are unable to submit In-term Course Work or attend an Examination may be required to make up the work in one of the following ways, at the discretion of the Faculty responsible for administering the course:
- Reweighting of the value of other course components;
 - Deferred Examination; or
 - Other such make up work as determined by the responsible Faculty.

13. Failure to Write a Deferred Examination

13.1. A student who is granted a Deferred Examination to make up a missed Examination will receive a grade of zero if they do not write the Deferred Examination on the scheduled deferred examination date.

13.2. ~~A request to make up a missed Deferred Examination will only be considered where the student can demonstrate a need based on one of the acceptable grounds under this Policy. In most circumstances, a student who misses a deferred examination will not be permitted to make it up. Students who are unable to write their deferred examination due to a transitory illness or injury should submit a Consideration for Late Withdrawal. The university reserves the right to de-register the student from future academic terms until which time the deferred examination has been written. Accommodation requests made on the grounds of a disability or other protected grounds will be assessed in good faith and may result in the application of an alternative accommodation.~~

14. Supplemental Examinations for Graduate Students

- 14.1. In some circumstances, graduate students may be allowed to write one supplemental examination.
- 14.2. The mark from a supplemental examination may replace or otherwise augment a mark previously obtained in an examination in the same course.
- 14.3. Students should contact their graduate program director for more information concerning supplemental examinations.

15. Final Grade Deadline and Submission

- 15.1. The submission deadline for Semester final grades is five calendar days after the last scheduled Final Examination in the Final Examination Period. Grades must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar by 10:00 a.m. on the fifth calendar day.
- 15.2. The submission deadline for Session final grades is four calendar days after the last scheduled Final Examination in the Final Examination Period. Grades must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar by 10:00 a.m. on the fourth calendar day.
- 15.3. Final grades will be posted by the Office of the Registrar and will normally appear on a student's transcript within five calendar days following the grade submission deadline.
- 15.4. Course instructors may not post and/or release final grades to students prior to the posting of final grades by the Office of the Registrar.
 - a) For courses that do not include a Final Examination, instructors must withhold the component grade for a terminal piece of coursework until final grades have been released by the Office of the Registrar.

16. Final Grade Deadline and Submission for Deferred Examinations

- 16.1. The submission deadline for Semester final grades of a Deferred Examination is five calendar days after the scheduled Deferred Examination. Grades must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar by 10:00 a.m. on the fifth calendar day.
- 16.2. The submission deadline for Session final grades of a Deferred Examination is four calendar days after the scheduled Deferred Examination. Grades must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar by 10:00 a.m. on the fifth calendar day.

17. Retention and Access to Final Examinations

- 17.1. Final Examination scripts are the property of the University and are retained in accordance with the University Records Retention and Classification Schedule.
- 17.2. A student has the right to view their Final Examination script and associated grade.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 18. This policy will be reviewed as necessary and at least every three years. The Registrar, or delegate thereof, is responsible to monitor and review this Policy.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

- 19. This section intentionally left blank.

RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES & DOCUMENTS

- 20.** Academic Staff Responsibilities with Regard to Students
 - Graduate Academic Calendar
 - Final Examination Administration Procedures
 - Procedures for Consideration of Missed In-term Course Work and Examinations
 - Records Classification and Retention Schedule
 - Undergraduate Academic Calendar, as amended
 - Administrative Guidelines for Determining the Academic Schedule
 - Doctoral Candidacy Examination Policy
 - Thesis Oral Examination for Master's and Doctoral Candidates Policy



Classification Number	ACD 1506
Framework Category	Academic
Approving Authority	Academic Council
Policy Owner	Registrar
Approval Date	TBD
Review Date	May 2029
Supersedes	Editorial Amendments, February 18, 2020; Editorial Amendments, November 26, 2019; Examination and Grading Policy, January 17, 2017; Academic Regulations, Graduate Academic Calendar 2019-2020; Undergraduate Academic Calendar, Section 5.25, June 2015; Scheduling Guidelines and Protocols, Section 2, May 2012

Examination and Grading Policy

PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework to guide the effective administration and scheduling of in-term course work and examinations and the submission and release of final grades.

DEFINITIONS

2. For the purposes of this Policy the following definitions apply:

“Examination” means a form of testing intended to assess the level of students’ knowledge, ability, skills, comprehension, application, analysis, and/or synthesis of the subject matter in a course of study. This includes, but is not limited to in-person, online, take-home, practical, and laboratory Examinations.

“Deferred Examination” means an Examination written outside of the originally scheduled day and/or time.

“Final Examination Period” means the period of calendar days stated in the Academic Calendar that is set aside in each Semester and/or Session for the administration of Final Examinations.

“Final Examination” means an Examination scheduled during the Final Examination Period.

“In-term Course Work” means any course work assigned during the Semester or Session.

“In-term Examinations” means an Examination held during the Semester or Session.

“Semester” means sixty days of lectures and a Final Examination period.

“Session” means a period of approximately six consecutive weeks in the Summer Semester consisting of 30 days of lectures and a Final Examination period. The first half of Summer Semester is designated as Spring Session; the second half is designated as Summer Session.

“Study Break” means a period between the last day of lectures and the first day of the Final Examination Period.

“Transitory Illness/Injury” means a temporary health condition that lasts for a short period of time – ranging from minutes to days.

SCOPE AND AUTHORITY

3. This Policy applies to all In-Term Course Work and Examinations.
4. This Policy applies to the submission and release of final grades.
5. This Policy does not apply to PhD candidacy exams, master’s and doctoral thesis defense examinations. For more information regarding these types of examinations, please refer to the University's policy library.
6. The Registrar, or successor thereof, is the Policy Owner and is responsible for overseeing the implementation, administration and interpretation of this Policy.

POLICY

7. General

- 7.1. All Examinations, will be scheduled and administered in accordance with this Policy, the Procedures for Final Examination Administration, the Procedures for Consideration of Missed In-term Course Work and Examinations, and all other applicable University policies and procedures.
- 7.2. Students are responsible for all material covered in a given course and In-term and Final Examinations may be used to assess course material that is delivered both directly (e.g. during a scheduled class) or indirectly (e.g. additional reading assignments).
- 7.3. No Examinations or lectures may be administered during the Fall or Winter study week, or the Study Break before the Final Examination Period. In addition, students may not be required to present, submit term papers, reports, or other assigned material during these periods.

8. In-term Examination Scheduling

- 8.1. In-term Examinations will normally be held during regularly scheduled class times, though they may be scheduled on any calendar day of the Semester or Session.
- 8.2. In-term Examinations held outside of the regularly scheduled class times will require the approval of the Faculty and must be noted in the course syllabus prior to the start of the Semester or Session to ensure students have reasonable advance warning of such scheduling.
- 8.3. The total value of any In-term Examination given in the last five days of classes in a Semester or Session must be no more than 15 percent of the final mark of the course.

9. Final Examination Scheduling

- 9.1. The Office of the Registrar has authority for the scheduling of Final Examinations.
 - 9.2. Final Examinations will only be scheduled during the Final Examination Period and will be scheduled in accordance with the Procedures for Final Examination Administration.
 - 9.3. Scheduling of Final Examinations will be conducted to eliminate conflicts and to minimize the instances of consecutive examinations.
 - 9.4. Normally, the Final Examination schedule will be published no later than six weeks prior to the first day of the Final Examination Period for a Semester. Normally, once published, there will be no scheduling changes.
 - 9.5. Normally, the Final Examination schedule will be published no later than three weeks prior to the first day of the Final Examination Period for a Session. Normally, once published, there will be no scheduling changes.
 - 9.6. **Warning about other commitments:** Final Examinations may be scheduled at any time during the Final Examination Period. Students are expected to avoid making travel or other professional or personal commitments during this time.
 - a) As instructors are not required to be present at their Final Examination, they should be available should an emergency occur.
 - 9.7. Take-home Final Examination deadlines must fall within the Final Examination Period. The take-home Final Examination deadline must be noted in the course syllabus prior to the start of the Semester or Session.
- 10. Deferred Examination Scheduling**
- 10.1. Deferred Examinations will normally be scheduled no later than the end of the first week of classes in the following Semester or Session.
- 11. Students Requiring Academic Accommodations**
- 11.1. Students with disabilities who are registered with Student Accessibility Services will receive accommodations for all In-term Course Work and Examinations in accordance with their individual accommodation plan.
- 12. Missed In-Term Course Work and Examinations**
- 12.1. **Grounds for Consideration:** The following are grounds for which a student may apply and be considered for approval to make up missed In-term Course Work or Examination.
 - a) Religious Observance: Students who are unable to submit In-term Course Work or write an Examination due to religious obligations.
 - b) Extenuating Circumstances: Students who are unable to submit In-term Course Work or write an Examination as a result of extenuating circumstances beyond their control. Extenuating circumstances that may be considered include:
 - Significant physical or psychological event or illness that is debilitating to the student's academic performance;
 - Severe family emergency;

- Other compelling personal reason.
- c) Competing Academic Conflict: Students who are unable to write an Examination as a result of a competing academic conflict. The following competing academic conflicts may be considered:
- Three Final Examinations scheduled within a 24-hour period from the start time of the first Final Examination to the end time of the third Final Examination. The middle examination of the three will be the one considered;
 - An In-term Examination that is scheduled outside of the regular class time and which conflicts with another scheduled class or In-term Examination.

12.2. Requests for Consideration

- a) Requests for consideration of missed In-term Course Work and Examinations must be made in accordance with the Procedures for Consideration of Missed In-term Course Work and Examinations. Considerations will only be granted where sufficient documentation is submitted.

12.3. Options for Make Up Work

- a) Students who are unable to submit In-term Course Work or attend an Examination may be required to make up the work in one of the following ways, at the discretion of the Faculty responsible for administering the course:
- Reweighting of the value of other course components;
 - Deferred Examination; or
 - Other such make up work as determined by the responsible Faculty.

13. Failure to Write a Deferred Examination

- 13.1.** A student who is granted a Deferred Examination to make up a missed Examination will receive a grade of zero if they do not write the Deferred Examination on the scheduled deferred examination date.
- 13.2.** In most circumstances, a student who misses a deferred examination will not be permitted to make it up. Students who are unable to write their deferred examination due to a transitory illness or injury should submit a Consideration for Late Withdrawal. The university reserves the right to de-register the student from future academic terms until which time the deferred examination has been written. Accommodation requests made on the grounds of a disability or other protected grounds will be assessed in good faith and may result in the application of an alternative accommodation.

14. Supplemental Examinations for Graduate Students

- 14.1. In some circumstances, graduate students may be allowed to write one supplemental examination.
 - 14.2. The mark from a supplemental examination may replace or otherwise augment a mark previously obtained in an examination in the same course.
 - 14.3. Students should contact their graduate program director for more information concerning supplemental examinations.
 15. **Final Grade Deadline and Submission**
 - 15.1. The submission deadline for Semester final grades is five calendar days after the last scheduled Final Examination in the Final Examination Period. Grades must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar by 10:00 a.m. on the fifth calendar day.
 - 15.2. The submission deadline for Session final grades is four calendar days after the last scheduled Final Examination in the Final Examination Period. Grades must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar by 10:00 a.m. on the fourth calendar day.
 - 15.3. Final grades will be posted by the Office of the Registrar and will normally appear on a student's transcript within five calendar days following the grade submission deadline.
 - 15.4. Course instructors may not post and/or release final grades to students prior to the posting of final grades by the Office of the Registrar.
 - a) For courses that do not include a Final Examination, instructors must withhold the component grade for a terminal piece of coursework until final grades have been released by the Office of the Registrar.
 16. **Final Grade Deadline and Submission for Deferred Examinations**
 - 16.1. The submission deadline for Semester final grades of a Deferred Examination is five calendar days after the scheduled Deferred Examination. Grades must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar by 10:00 a.m. on the fifth calendar day.
 - 16.2. The submission deadline for Session final grades of a Deferred Examination is four calendar days after the scheduled Deferred Examination. Grades must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar by 10:00 a.m. on the fifth calendar day.
 17. **Retention and Access to Final Examinations**
 - 17.1. Final Examination scripts are the property of the University and are retained in accordance with the University Records Retention and Classification Schedule.
 - 17.2. A student has the right to view their Final Examination script and associated grade.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

18. This policy will be reviewed as necessary and at least every three years. The Registrar, or delegate thereof, is responsible to monitor and review this Policy.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

19. This section intentionally left blank.

RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES & DOCUMENTS

- 20.** Academic Staff Responsibilities with Regard to Students
 - Graduate Academic Calendar
 - Final Examination Administration Procedures
 - Procedures for Consideration of Missed In-term Course Work and Examinations
 - Records Classification and Retention Schedule
 - Undergraduate Academic Calendar, as amended
 - Administrative Guidelines for Determining the Academic Schedule
 - Doctoral Candidacy Examination Policy
 - Thesis Oral Examination for Master's and Doctoral Candidates Policy

ACADEMIC COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORT

SESSION:

Public

ACTION REQUESTED:

Decision
Discussion/Direction
Information

TO: Graduate Studies Committee (GSC)

DATE: 28 April 2026

FROM: Centre for Institutional Quality Enhancement

SUBJECT: Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP) Policy and Procedures

MANDATES:

- In accordance with its mandate, the Centre for Institutional Quality Enhancement (CIQE) is responsible for quality enhancement and continuous improvement of the University's academic programs.
- The Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance (Quality Council), established by the Council of Ontario Universities in July 2010, is responsible for oversight of the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) for Ontario Universities, including ratification of Institutional Quality Assurance Processes (IQAPs).
- As part of its responsibility, CIQE reviews the IQAP for compliance with provincial requirements and the University's academic standards, and ensures the University is following best practices
- In accordance with their Terms of Reference, the Undergraduate and Graduate Studies Committees have the delegated authority "to establish, oversee, and periodically review the undergraduate/graduate academic, admissions, and scholarship procedures, guidelines, and directives, and revise when appropriate, and provide regular updates to Academic Council", which is also reflected in the university's Policy Framework

BACKGROUND/CONTEXT & RATIONALE:

In 2019-2020 and 2021-2022 Academic Council and its Committees approved a number of substantive and editorial changes to the IQAP based on the 2017-2018 Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance (Quality Council) review and revised Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) (2021). Since that time there have been ongoing minor revisions to the QAF, and the Guidance provided by the Quality Council. The Quality Council requires all Ontario Universities to align with this revised version of the QAF. Additionally, the IQAP must align with the University Policy Framework, By-law No. 2, and current institutional and provincial practice.

As part of the regular review of policy documents, revisions have been made to the IQAP to once again bring it into alignment with the Quality Council's directives. The number and complexity of the new changes are minor. Following an online consultation period of two weeks, policy documents that have only editorial changes were approved by the Provost in accordance with the University's Policy Framework. These documents are presented to USC and GSC for information. Three documents which have changes that are non-editorial in nature are provided first for discussion and then will be presented for approval by both USC and GSC in May.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES:

A high-level summary of the changes is provided below.

Changes to other Policy Instruments

There are no associated changes to other policy instruments.

CONSULTATION AND APPROVAL:

- ✓ Online Consultation – April 2026
- Undergraduate Studies Committee and Graduate Studies Committee (for discussion of non-editorial changes) – April 2026
- Undergraduate Studies Committee and Graduate Studies Committee (for approval of non-editorial changes) – May 2026
- Academic Council (for information) – May 2026
- Quality Council (for information) – June 2026

NEXT STEPS:

All approved changes will be reported to Academic Council for information and submitted to the Quality Council. The associated handbooks and templates will be updated as needed.

SUPPORTING REFERENCE MATERIALS:

- **Summary of Changes**
- **For Approval - Draft Revised Procedures:**
 - Clean Copies
 - ACD 1501.01 Curriculum Change Procedures
 - ACD 1501.02 Cyclical Review and Auditing Procedures
 - ACD 1501.03 New Program Procedures
 - Tracked Changes
 - ACD 1501.01 Curriculum Change Procedures
 - ACD 1501.02 Cyclical Review and Auditing Procedures
 - ACD 1501.03 New Program Procedures
- **For Information - Revised Policy & Procedures:**
 - Clean Copies
 - ACD 1501 Institutional Quality Assurance Process Policy
 - ACD 1501.04 Program Closure Procedures
 - Tracked Changes
 - ACD 1501 Institutional Quality Assurance Process Policy
 - ACD 1501.04 Program Closure Procedures

Summary of Changes

Editorial Changes

- ❖ *IQAP Policy*
 - ❖ *Curriculum Change Procedures*
 - ❖ *Cyclical Review and Auditing Procedures*
 - ❖ *New Program Procedures*
 - ❖ *Program Closure Procedures*
-
- *Inclusion/revision of definitions pulled from the revised QAF, the Program Nomenclature Directives, or other Ontario Tech policy instruments, that provide clarity and consistency within the University and with other universities across the province; inclusion of terms used for clarity; removal of duplication of definitions across multiple documents*
 - *Changes to ensure consistency across all documents, where appropriate, to eliminate redundancy, or to clarify items that were unclear once they were put into practice*
 - *Formatting and proofreading edits*
 - *Updated web links for the Quality Council/QAF elements*

Non-Editorial Changes

- ❖ *Curriculum Change Procedures*
- ❖ *Cyclical Review and Auditing Procedures*
- ❖ *New Program Procedures*

Changes have been tracked and comments included throughout the documents where needed to describe the nature of the change. Many of the changes reflect updates to the provincial QAF but may also include adding items for clarity, to ensure established practice has been codified, or to correct errors and omissions in the last version of the documents.



Classification Number	ACD 1501.01
Parent Policy	Institutional Quality Assurance Process
Framework Category	Academic
Approving Authority	Academic Council
Policy Owner	Provost
Approval Date	TBA
Review Date	TBA
Supersedes	ACD 1501 (June 2010); Quality Assurance Handbook (June 2011); Curriculum Change Procedures (June 2020); Not-for-Academic Credit Digital Badges, Microcredentials, and Stackable Credentials Policy (July 2021)

CURRICULUM CHANGE PROCEDURES

PURPOSE

1. The purpose of these Procedures is to establish a consistent process for defining and documenting changes to courses and programs that will facilitate their review and approval under the provincial quality assurance framework.

DEFINITIONS

2. For the purposes of these Procedures the definitions in the Policy apply.

SCOPE AND AUTHORITY

3. These procedures apply to the full range of for-academic-credit curricular and programmatic endeavours at both the graduate and undergraduate levels, including Micro-credentials, whether offered in full, in part, or conjointly by any institutions federated or affiliated with the University. It also applies to Programs offered in partnership, collaboration, or other such arrangement with other post-secondary institutions including colleges, universities, or other institutes.
4. The Provost, or successor thereof, is the Policy Owner and is responsible for overseeing the implementation, administration, and interpretation of these Procedures.

PROCEDURES

Modifications to existing Programs range from changes to individual courses and curricular offerings, through minor adjustments to programs and regulations, to major modifications, such as the introduction of new specializations and fields. The Centre for Institutional Quality Enhancement will provide access to an electronic workflow tracking system and repository for curricular changes. Individuals may use the templates provided at www.ontariotechu.ca/ciqe as a guide to assist in the planning of the changes prior to creating formal electronic proposals for approval in the [electronic system](#).

5. Minor Curricular Changes

- 5.1. The following Minor Curricular Changes fall under the purview of the Faculty Council(s):
 - The creation and closure of for-academic-credit courses
 - Changes to for-academic-credit courses, including:
 - course titles, course descriptions, course numbers, credit hours, grade mode, total contact hours, prerequisites, co-requisites, cross-listed courses, credit restrictions and/or credit exclusions, course learning outcomes, core competencies, and teaching and assessment methods
 - The addition or deletion of a lecture, lab, tutorial or other course component
 - Changes to, or the addition of, experiential learning components, which are part of the course delivery
- 5.2. The Minor Curricular Changes listed above will be approved at the relevant Faculty Council(s). Approved Minor Curricular Changes must be reported to the appropriate standing committee of Academic Council (USC or GSC) for information using the appropriate electronic proposal by the end of January each year for implementation in the upcoming Academic Calendar.
- 5.3. Consultation with other Faculty Councils is required if the course being modified is core to another program. Consultation, in accordance with the current procedures for Indigenous consultation, is required if the new course or course being modified will contain Indigenous content.
- 5.4. Course changes not listed in Section 5.1 are administrative in nature and it is the responsibility of the relevant Deans, Associate Deans, and/or Program Directors to oversee these changes in accordance with any relevant policies.
 - 5.4.1. Changes or additions to the mode of delivery (in-person, online, hybrid) of a course must be submitted using the appropriate electronic proposal to update the official course record.

6. Minor Program Adjustments

6.1. Minor Program Adjustments will include a full electronic proposal brief and are submitted to the appropriate standing committee of Academic Council for approval. Minor Program Adjustments include:

- Editorial changes to degree requirements, program learning outcomes, or core competencies which may include those completed as a result of a cyclical review
 - New academic requirements or changes to existing requirements, including the addition or deletion of required courses
 - The introduction of the option to complete a portion or portions of an existing program to receive a for-academic-credit Micro-credential
 - The creation of a new, stand-alone, for-academic-credit Micro-credential related to the Program
 - The creation of a new Minor program where an existing Major already exists
 - A change in the name of a Diploma, Major, or Program Component (e.g. Minor, Specialization, or Field) that does not result in a change to the degree designation or the Program Learning Outcomes
-
- For clarity, changes to degree requirements will be defined as Minor Program Adjustments when the introduction, deletion, or modification of courses or requirements equals no more than one-third of the total course credit hours of the Program.

6.2. Minor Program Adjustments must be presented directly to the USC or GSC for consideration and approval following their recommendation by Faculty Council. Any changes must receive USC or GSC approval prior to their implementation and inclusion in the academic calendars. The outcome is subsequently reported to Academic Council for information.

- 6.2.1.** To be included in the academic calendars for the subsequent academic year, proposals must be received by USC or GSC no later than the end of January.
- 6.2.2.** Proposals that include the creation or introduction of a Micro-credential will also be reported to the appropriate micro-credential committee. Approved Micro-credentials will be submitted to the Ministry for designation as eligible for Ontario Student Assistance Program funding, if applicable.

6.3. Minor Program Adjustment proposal briefs must minimally include the following information:

- a) A summary of the proposed change, setting out the rationale and context for it, including any consideration of the principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization.
- b) A description of the ways in which the proposed change will enhance the academic opportunities for students, or the issues or challenges that the proposed change are intended to address.
- c) An account of the process of consultation with other units and measures taken to minimize the impact of the change on students if the proposed change involves students/faculty from other programs or courses. An account of the process of consultation related to Indigenous content is required if the proposed change has or will contain Indigenous content.
- d) A timeline for the implementation of the proposed change and transition plan for current students if applicable.
- e) An analysis of the resource and enrolment implications, including support for any proposed online or hybrid delivery.
- f) Calendar copy and program maps for the proposed change that clearly highlight the revisions to be made to the existing curriculum.
- g) Completed proposals for all new courses and changes to existing courses that result from the change.

7. Major Program Modifications

7.1. The Quality Council defines Major Program Modifications as “ “significant changes” to existing academic programs where “the impact on the quality of the program and degree of significance can be measured qualitatively and/or quantitatively.” These include:

- Requirements that differ significantly from those existing at the time of the previous cyclical program review or at the time the program was first approved
- Significant changes to the learning outcomes
- Significant changes to the faculty engaged in delivering the program and/or to the essential physical resources as may occur, for example, where there have been changes to the existing mode(s) of delivery (e.g., different campus, online delivery, inter-institutional collaboration)

Examples from the Quality Council are provided in the [Quality Assurance Guide](#).

For greater clarity, in the Ontario Tech context, the following examples illustrate changes that normally constitute a significant change and would therefore be considered a Major Program Modification:

- Significant changes to the academic requirements and program content, including the introduction, deletion, or permanent modification of courses or requirements that equals more than one-third of the total credit hours of the Program, but that do not meet the threshold for a new Program
- Significant changes to one or more of the program learning outcomes that alter the meaning of the learning outcome(s) that do not, however, meet the threshold of a 'new Program'; changes to the course configuration that impact the learning outcomes (e.g. a course that meets a learning outcome is moved to the list of electives)
- The merger of two related Programs in the absence of any other significant changes (e.g., no changes to the degree designation, learning outcomes, etc. that may meet the threshold for a New Program)
- New formal pathways options, i.e. bridging or advanced entry, to or from another college or university
- Significant change in the laboratory time of an undergraduate Program
- The introduction or deletion of an undergraduate thesis or capstone project
- The introduction or deletion of a Program-level work experience, cooperative education, internship, practicum, or portfolio
- At the master's level, the introduction or deletion of a research project, research essay or thesis option, course-only option, co-operative education, internship, or practicum option
- The creation or deletion of a Type 1 Graduate Diploma
- The addition of a single new field to an existing graduate program. Note that universities are not required to declare fields for either master's or doctoral programs. Note also that the creation of more than one field at one point in time or over subsequent years may need to go through the New Program Expedited Protocol
- The creation or deletion of a minor where no corresponding Major exists
- Any change to or the addition or deletion of requirements for graduate program candidacy examinations, field studies, residency requirements, and/or comprehensive examinations
- Significant changes to the Program's delivery, including:
 - Changes to the Faculty delivering the Program that alter the areas of research and teaching interests (e.g. a large proportion of the faculty retires; new hires)
 - A change in the language of Program delivery
 - The introduction of inter-institutional collaboration or the establishment of an existing Program at another institution or location, including new dual Degree options

- To the mode of delivery (e.g. offering an existing Program substantially online where it had previously been offered in face-to-face mode, or vice versa) where it is the intention to permanently change the mode of delivery of the Program (or create multi-modal options) that would meaningfully affect the student experience
- Change to, or add, full- or part-time program options where one did not previously exist
- Changes to the essential resources, where these changes impair the delivery of the Program
- Change in the degree designation; change in the name of a Major or Program Component (e.g. Specialization, Minor, or Field), when this results in a change in learning outcomes

Modifications that will result in a more substantial change to the Program's nature and content will require review and approval in accordance with the New Program Procedure. The final determination of whether a Program modification constitutes a significant change or a new Program will rest with the Provost. The Quality Council has final authority to decide if a Major Program Modification constitutes a new program and, therefore, must follow the New Program Procedures.

7.2. Major Program Modifications will include full electronic proposals and must include evidence that appropriate consultation has taken place. Once proposals are approved by Faculty Council, they will be subject to review by the appropriate standing committee of Academic Council (USC or GSC). The standing committee will submit its recommendation for approval to the Academic Council for final review and approval. Major Program Modifications are reported annually to the Quality Council.

7.2.1. To be included in the academic calendars for the subsequent academic year, Major Program Modifications must be received by USC/GSC no later than the last working day in December.

7.3. Major Program Modification electronic proposals must minimally include the following:

- a)** A brief background on the existing program and rationale for the modification, including any consideration of the principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization.
- b)** Overview of the modification, indicating the opportunities for graduates and evidence of fit with the mission, mandate and strategic plans of the University and the Faculty Description of how the new program component fits into the broader array of Program offerings, particularly areas of teaching and research strengths and complementary areas of study.

- c) A fully developed section outlining: any new or modified program learning outcomes; the alignment of the change with the program learning outcomes and the provincial degree level expectations and universal competencies; new or modified admission requirements; program structure Calendar copy and program maps, where relevant, for the new program component showing courses and/or research components offered each semester and indicating courses currently offered, new courses, and required courses provided by other units; the impact the modification/new component has on students and how it will improve the student experience; any experiential or other applied learning opportunities that are part of the new program component; and program content including course outlines, descriptions, modes of delivery and teaching methods, and assessment with a linkage between the course learning outcomes and the program learning outcomes.
- d) A list of required faculty members, including current core faculty and required new faculty; additional academic and non-academic human resources that may be required to launch and maintain the modifications; physical resource requirements, with how current facilities will be used and what, if any, new resources may be required; and for graduate Programs, any student support (funding) requirements.
- e) An outline of areas consulted, which must include an account of mandatory feedback from students and recent graduates, and the process of consultation regarding Indigenous content, where appropriate.
- f) A summary statement of funding required to support the Program and a statement of current resource availability.
- g) When changing the mode of delivery to online/hybrid for all or a significant portion of a Program, the following must also be addressed:
- Describe the adequacy of the technological platform to be used for online delivery
 - Describe how the quality of education will be maintained
 - Describe how the program objectives will be met
 - Describe how the program learning outcomes will be met
 - Describe the support services and training for teaching staff that will be made available
 - Describe the sufficiency and type of supports that will be available to students

8. Admissions Changes

- 8.1.** Changes made exclusively to admission requirements in the absence of other program changes will proceed through the governance structure to various levels of approval based on the nature and impact of the change.
- 8.1.1.** Changes to admission requirements at the University level require final approval by Academic Council following recommendation by the USC/GSC. Changes of this nature are normally completed as a change to the relevant policy instrument.
- 8.1.2.** Changes to admission requirements at the Faculty level require approval by the USC/GSC and are reported for information to Academic Council; this update is generally completed as a Minor Program Adjustment.
- 8.1.3.** Changes to admission requirements at the individual program level are reported to the USC/GSC for information following approval by Faculty Council(s).

All decisions concerning admissions made within the scope of existing requirements are considered administrative decisions and can be approved by the Registrar or designate in consultation with the Dean.

QUALITY COUNCIL CYCLICAL AUDIT

- 9.** In accordance with the [Quality Assurance Framework](#), curricular changes as outlined in these Procedures are not normally subject to the University's Cyclical Audit.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 10.** This procedure will be reviewed as necessary and at least every three years. The Provost's Office, through the Center for Institutional Quality Enhancement coordinates the day to day management of the quality assurance process, and works in collaboration with Deans and units to implement the procedures for developing and accessing academic programs. The Provost or successor thereof, is responsible to monitor and review this Policy.

RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES & DOCUMENTS

[Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance - Quality Assurance Framework](#)

Institutional Quality Assurance Policy

Program Nomenclature Directives

Protocols associated with consultation/development of Indigenous curriculum

Protocols associated with the development of Micro-credentials

Classification Number	ACD 1501.02
Parent Policy	Institutional Quality Assurance Process
Framework Category	Academic
Approving Authority	Academic Council
Policy Owner	Provost
Approval Date	June 2020
Review Date	June 2023
Supersedes	ACD 1501 (June 2010); Quality Assurance Handbook (June 2011) Cyclical Program Review Procedures (June 2020); Not-for-Academic Credit Digital Badges, Microcredentials, and Stackable Credentials Policy (July 2021)



CYCLICAL REVIEW AND AUDITING PROCEDURES

PURPOSE

1. The purpose of these Procedures is to set out the process for conducting the monitoring of new Degree and Diploma Programs and the cyclical review of existing Degree and Diploma Programs to ensure that they continue to meet provincial quality assurance requirements and to support their ongoing rigour and coherence. Further, these procedures set out the process for the cyclical audit conducted by the Quality Council, which reviews the University’s institutional quality enhancement Policies, Procedures and processes. New Programs are monitored at the time of first intake and at least one year after the launch of the Program. Cyclical reviews of established Programs and the University audit occur at least once every 8 years.

DEFINITIONS

2. For the purposes of these Procedures the definitions in the Policy apply.

SCOPE AND AUTHORITY

3. These Procedures apply to undergraduate and graduate Degree and Diploma Programs and the associated governance processes, whether the Programs are offered in full, in part, or conjointly by any institutions federated or affiliated with the university. It also applies to Degree and Diploma programs offered in partnership, collaboration or other such arrangement with other post-secondary institutions including colleges, universities or other institutes.

4. For those Programs that are offered in more than one mode, at different locations, or having complementary components (e.g., bridging options, experiential education options, etc.), the distinct versions of the program will be identified and reviewed during new program monitoring and cyclical program review. The self-study brief will encompass all modes, locations, and components in one report.
5. Degree and Diploma Programs which have been approved but never launched, have been closed, or for which admission has been suspended, are not subject to these Procedures. Stand-alone Micro-credentials are also not subject to these Procedures.
6. The Provost, or successor thereof, is the Policy Owner and is responsible for overseeing the implementation, administration and interpretation of these Procedures.

PROCEDURES

7. Monitoring of New Academic Programs

- 7.1. At the time of first intake into the Program, CIQE, working with the Office of Institutional Research and Analysis, will prepare an initial report that will review admissions and enrolment data and report on any changes made to the program since it was approved. This report will be reviewed by the Office of the Provost, through the Resource Committee, to assess any issues that may arise and determine if alternate plans are required to ensure the overall success of the Program.
- 7.2. One year after the launch of the Program, CIQE, working with the Academic Unit, will prepare a report that will review: enrolment and admissions data; success in realizing the program objectives, requirements, and learning outcomes; any changes made to the program since approval; and other key metrics to assess New Program effectiveness. This report will be reviewed by the Provost, through the Resource Committee, to assess any issues and determine if alternate plans are required to ensure the overall success of the Program.
- 7.3. Should any recommendations arise from the one-year report, additional monitoring and review may be required at the request of the Provost or the Resource Committee. An additional monitoring report, if required, will analyze key curricular and student data (e.g. student evaluations, GPA, retention data, etc.) as well as address the recommendations from the initial report. Pending review, further documentation may be required for ongoing monitoring.
- 7.4. Should the Quality Council require any follow-up reports, as indicated at the time of approval, these shall be completed in accordance with the requirements outlined in the approval letter from the Quality Council.

- 7.5.** Programs will then be reviewed and refined on an ongoing basis in accordance with the Institutional Quality Assurance Policy. Specifically, approved Programs will be entered into the schedule of academic program reviews and the first review will take place no more than eight years after the start of the Program, and every eight years hence, in accordance with Section 8 of these Procedures. The first cyclical review will take into consideration the outcomes of the intake, one-year, and any additional reports, as well as any aspects highlighted by the Quality Council as required during the program review.

8. Cyclical Review of Degree and Diploma Programs

Procedures for program reviews involve six components: the review and enhancement of program learning outcomes and assessment of core competencies; the development of a self-study brief by the program under review; external evaluation to provide recommendations on program quality improvement; internal response to the external evaluation and recommendations; preparation and approval of a final assessment report and implementation plan; and subsequent reporting on the implementation of recommendations. Individuals may use the templates provided at www.ontariotechu.ca/ciqe as a guide to assist in the planning and implementation of the components of the cyclical review. It is expected that, unless otherwise specified below, all information, documents, and reports are not publicly accessible and will be afforded an appropriate level of confidentiality.

8.1. Appointment of Internal Assessment Team

- 8.1.1. Upon notification that a program is up for review, the Faculty Dean will appoint an Internal Assessment Team (IAT), comprised of faculty, staff and students (current or recent graduate of the program). The Dean will also appoint a faculty member from the IAT to act as Chair. A faculty co-chair may be appointed, if necessary.
- 8.1.2. The proposed IAT will be submitted to CIQE and will be approved by the Provost.

8.2. Review and Enhancement of Program Learning Outcomes

The IAT chair, in consultation with the IAT, will review and enhance the program learning outcomes, and map them to the degree level expectations (either undergraduate or graduate) set out by the Ministry.

- 8.2.1. The IAT will engage in a program learning outcome enhancement process where they will review and revise their program learning outcomes. These revisions will lay the groundwork for the program for the upcoming seven years. The program and course learning outcomes must be reviewed and revised using resources provided by CIQE and the Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC). It is strongly recommended that the IAT and other program

faculty participate in learning outcome sessions hosted by CIQE and TLC; alternatively, the revised program learning outcomes must be reviewed and approved by CIQE and TLC prior to the scheduling of the External Review. The IAT will then map the revised program learning outcomes to the appropriate degree level expectations (DLEs) with related skills and competencies using resources provided by CIQE and the Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC).

- 8.2.2. After the map to the degree level expectations is complete, the IAT will map their current course offerings to the revised program learning outcomes and analyze the results.
- 8.2.3. The revised program learning outcomes and DLE map, once finalized by the IAT, will be an appendix to the self-study document.

8.3. Self-Study Briefs

The self-study brief will form the basis of the program review and must clearly set out the indicators of program quality, as outlined in the [Evaluation Criteria](#), against which the program is to be assessed. The brief may also identify specific aspects of the program on which feedback is sought. A template for the proposal will be provided through the Centre for Institutional Quality Enhancement via the website at www.ontariotechu.ca/ciqe.

- 8.3.1. Self-study briefs for each program under review must be prepared and reviewed by a Program Review Internal Assessment Team (IAT).
- 8.3.2. The IAT will work in collaboration with the Centre for Institutional Quality Enhancement (CIQE) to pull together key institutional data and other indicators of program quality that will inform the self-study.
- 8.3.3. The brief should be broad-based, reflective and forward-looking and should demonstrate how the program advances the University's mission.
- 8.3.4. The brief must also present evidence to support an assessment of the program requirements, program learning outcomes and degree level expectations with related skills and competencies, along with the human and physical resources involved.
- 8.3.5. The brief should address any concerns and recommendations raised in previous reviews.
- 8.3.6. The brief will include a short description of the process by which the self-study was prepared, including faculty, staff, and student input and involvement.

- 8.3.7. The brief will also identify specific aspects of the program on which feedback is sought, including any consideration of the principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization; areas requiring improvement and those that hold promise for enhancement; any unique curriculum or program innovations, creative components, or significant high impact practices; as well as academic services that directly contribute to the academic quality of the program. The brief will incorporate feedback sought from representatives from industry, the professions or employers, where appropriate.
- 8.3.8. Upon its completion, the Faculty and the Dean will review the self-study brief to ensure that it presents the full range of evidence to support an assessment of program quality. The Dean may also highlight any areas of opportunity or institutional constraints that may need to be taken into account as part of the review.

8.4. External Review and Reporting

- 8.4.1. The Dean, in consultation with the IAT, will recommend to the Provost, at least 5 individuals to serve as external reviewers of the Program.
 - 8.4.1.1. Reviewers must be external to the University, will normally be tenured (or equivalent) and will have suitable disciplinary expertise, qualifications and program management experience at another university, including an appreciation of pedagogy and learning outcomes, and be at arm's length to the program under review, as outlined in the Proposed External Reviewer's form and on the Quality Council's [website](#).
 - 8.4.1.2. For undergraduate programs, two reviewers are required, with both being external to the university. At least one of the reviewers must currently be at a Canadian post-secondary institution.
 - 8.4.1.3. For graduate programs, at least two reviewers external to the university are required. At least one of the reviewers must currently be at a Canadian post-secondary institution. A third internal reviewer, external to the program, may additionally be included.
 - 8.4.1.4. For each External reviewer candidate, the recommendation must be accompanied by a rationale for the selection and a detailed biographical statement, prepared by the IAT, that outlines their academic expertise, administrative experience, accomplishments, and research.

8.4.1.5. External reviewer forms are sent to CIQE to be reviewed and subsequently approved by the Provost. The Office of Planning and Analysis will contact approved proposed reviewers to maintain arms-length process and ensure that the required number of reviewers are engaged to review the Program.

8.4.2. CIQE, in consultation with the Faculty, will organize a site visit to provide an opportunity for the reviewers to assess the standards and quality of the program and to prepare a report that addresses the University's program quality review [Evaluation Criteria](#).

8.4.2.1. External review of doctoral program must incorporate an on-site visit except in exceptional circumstances as determined by the Provost. External review of undergraduate, Master's, and Graduate Diploma programs will normally be conducted on-site, but at the request of the Dean, the Provost (or delegate) may approve that the review be conducted by desk audit, virtual site visit, or an equivalent method if the external reviewers are satisfied that the off-site option is acceptable. The Dean will provide a clear justification for the request to conduct the review without an on-site visit.

8.4.2.2. In advance of the site visit, or prior to the desk audit, CIQE will send to the reviewers the Program's self-study brief and any additional material or information that may be needed to inform the assessment.

8.4.2.3. At the beginning of the site visit, or prior to the desk audit, the Provost or their designate will meet with the reviewer(s) to outline the process for review and the roles and responsibilities of the reviewers.

8.4.2.4. During the site visit, reviewers will have an opportunity to meet with the IAT, and with other faculty, students, staff, senior academic administrators, and any others who can most appropriately provide informed comment, such as representatives from industry, the professions or employers, to discuss aspects of the self-study in the context of the program quality review criteria.

8.4.2.5. Reviewers will be required to respect the confidentiality of all aspects of the process and recognize the institution's autonomy to determine priorities for funding, space, and faculty allocation. Commentary or recommendations on issues such as faculty complement and/or space requirements, that are within the purview of the university's budgetary decision-making processes, must be tied directly to issues of program quality or sustainability.

8.4.3. Reviewers will submit a report to the Dean, through CIQE, which addresses the substance of the self-study and the program quality review [Evaluation Criteria](#). A template for the report will be provided by CIQE.

8.4.3.1. Normally, the report will be prepared jointly by the reviewers and will contain at least three recommendations.

8.4.3.2. Reviewers will be invited to acknowledge and provide evidence of any clearly innovative aspects of the program, including in the content and/or delivery of the program relative to other such programs, together with recommendations on specific steps to be taken to improve the program, distinguishing between those the program can itself take, and those that require external action.

8.4.3.3. Reviewers will also be asked to identify and commend notably strong and creative attributes of the program; describe the program's strengths, areas for improvement, and opportunities for enhancement; and identify distinctive attributes of each discrete program/mode of delivery/site, where applicable.

8.4.3.4. Normally, the report will be completed within 30 days of the site visit.

8.4.3.5. Upon submission, CIQE will review the external reviewers' report to ensure it meets the requirements stated in Article 8.4.3. If additional details or clarification are needed from the reviewers, CIQE will reach out to the reviewers to request this in a revised report.

8.5. Response to Report

8.5.1. Upon receipt of the reviewers' report(s), the Dean and the IAT will consider its recommendations, including consideration of any financial or other resource implications.

8.5.1.1. The IAT Chair will solicit feedback from Program faculty and, in consultation with the IAT, will prepare and send to CIQE the Program's response to the reviewers' report that will include a summary of the program strengths, opportunities for improvement and a response to the recommendations put forward by the reviewers. A template for the Program's response report will be provided through CIQE.

8.5.1.2. Using the Program's response report as a guideline, the Dean, using a template provided by CIQE and working in consultation with the

Office of the Provost, will prepare a separate decanal response to the reviewers' report. The response will include the Dean's assessment and prioritization of the recommendations and an Implementation Plan (IP) including resource requirements, a timeline for acting on and monitoring the implementation of the recommendations, and persons/area responsible for acting on the recommendations. A template for the decanal response and IP will be provided through CIQE. The Dean must solicit feedback on the Implementation Plan through Faculty Council.

- 8.5.1.3. The IP will be reviewed by the Provost, through the Resource Committee, to examine resource implications and allocations. The Resource Committee will create a brief summary of its review.

8.6. Approval Process

- 8.6.1. Using the self-study brief, together with the reviewers' report(s), the Dean's and Program's responses, the IP, and the Resource Committee's summary, CIQE will prepare a Final Assessment Report (FAR). If confidential or sensitive information is presented in any of the documentation used to prepare the FAR this information will be included only in an appendix. The appendix will be afforded the appropriate level of confidentiality within the Office of the Provost and the Faculty and will be withheld from distribution.
 - 8.6.1.1. The FAR will synthesize the reports and recommendations resulting from the review and identify the strengths of the program as well as the opportunities for program improvement and enhancement.
 - 8.6.1.2. The FAR will list all recommendations of the external reviewers and the associated separate internal responses and assessments from the Program and the Dean. The list of recommendations and/or responses may be paraphrased and combined under themes to facilitate clear tracking and monitoring. Explanation for reviewer recommendations not selected for further action, as well as any additional recommendations that the Program, the Dean and/or the university may have identified as requiring action, will be included in the FAR.
 - 8.6.1.3. The FAR will include an Executive Summary as to be suitable for publication.
- 8.6.2. The FAR (excluding the confidential appendix, if applicable) and IP, will be presented to the appropriate standing committee of Academic Council (USC or GSC) for approval. The role of the committee is to verify that the FAR and IP are an accurate and transparent synthesis of the Program's review.

- 8.6.3. In those cases where the program review cycle includes both undergraduate and graduate programs, separate reviews will be conducted and reports will be submitted to the USC and GSC concerning the reviews relevant to the mandate of each committee.
- 8.6.4. The Executive Summary to the FAR and the IP are then posted on the Ontario Tech corporate website.
- 8.6.5. A summary of all reviews including each FAR (excluding the confidential appendices) and IP will be distributed to Academic Council and the Board of Governors for information.
- 8.6.6. A summary report of all reviews completed during the year, with a link to the Executive Summaries and IPs, will be sent to the Quality Council as required under the [Quality Assurance Framework](#).
- 8.6.7. The approved FAR, including confidential information, and the final IP will be provided to the Faculty(ies), through the Dean(s), as primary owner. These will serve as the basis for the continuous improvement and monitoring of the program. The Faculty is responsible for subsequent reporting and monitoring of the IP, as outlined in Section 8.7.

8.7. Subsequent Reporting and Monitoring of the Implementation of Recommendations

- 8.7.1. Eighteen months following the completion of the review, the Office of the Provost will request from the Dean a brief follow-up report that outlines the progress that has been made in implementing the agreed upon plans for improvement. The report will be sent to the Resource Committee for review.
- 8.7.2. If outstanding items remain at the time of the follow-up report, the Resource Committee will review these outstanding items with the Dean. The Resource Committee may recommend further monitoring of these items on a case-by-case basis.
- 8.7.3. The follow-up report, excluding any confidential or sensitive information, is then posted on the Ontario Tech corporate website.
- 8.7.4. A summary of the progress reports will be distributed to the appropriate standing committee of Academic Council (USC/GSC), to Academic Council, and to the Board of Governors, for information.

- 8.7.5. A summary report of all follow-up reporting completed during the year, with a link to the reports, will be sent to the Quality Council as required under the [Quality Assurance Framework](#).

8.8. Review of Joint or Collaborative Programs

- 8.8.1. Joint programs, and other programs offered in collaboration with other post-secondary institutions, will ensure that the required quality assurance requirements of both institutions are met.
- 8.8.2. When the program is held jointly with an institution that does not have an IQAP that has been ratified by the Quality Council, the Ontario Tech IQAP Policy and associated Procedures will apply with Ontario Tech as the leading institution.
- 8.8.3. In cases where the program is held jointly with an institution that does have an IQAP ratified by the Quality Council, the Office of the Provost, through CIQE, will collaborate with the partner institution to develop a process and associated templates that will address all requirements of each institution's IQAP. Specifically, the collaboration will address:
- a) The selection of external reviewers
 - b) Templates to be used for a single self-study and required reports from the external reviewers, program team, and Dean(s)
 - c) The location(s) or the site visit(s), timing for program review, and subsequent reporting
 - d) The development of a joint committee to review the program
 - e) The process for monitoring and reporting on the implementation of recommendations after the review
 - f) The lead institution for the purposes of submission to the Quality Council

9. Quality Council Cyclical Audit

In accordance with the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF), the University is subject to a Cyclical Audit by the Quality Council, at least once every eight years. The Quality Council has established the schedule of institutional participation in the audit process within the eight-year cycle and publishes the agreed [schedule](#) on its website. The Cyclical Audit provides necessary accountability to post-secondary education's principal stakeholders by assessing the degree to

which the University's internally-defined quality assurance processes, procedures, and practices align with and satisfy the agreed upon standards, as set out in the QAF.

Specifically, the Cyclical Audit will:

- Review institutional changes made in policy, process, and practice in response to the recommendations from the previous audit
- Confirm the University's practice is in compliance with its IQAP as ratified by the Quality Council and note any misalignment of its IQAP with the Quality Assurance Framework; and
- Review institutional quality enhancement practices that contribute to continuous improvement of programs, especially the processes for New Program Approvals and Cyclical Program Reviews

9.1. The Audit Team

Normally three auditors, selected from the Audit Committee's membership by the Quality Assurance Secretariat, conduct the Cyclical Audit. These auditors will be at arm's length from the University undergoing the audit. Members of the Quality Assurance Secretariat accompany the auditors on their site visit and constitute the remainder of the Audit Team.

9.2. Scope of the Audit

- 9.2.1. The Audit Team will independently select a sample of programs for audit that represent the development of new Degree programs under the New Program Procedures (normally two examples of new programs) and Section 8 of the Cyclical Review and Auditing Procedures (normally three or four examples of programs that have undergone a Cyclical Program Review). New Degree programs and Cyclical Program Reviews undertaken within the period since the previous Audit are eligible for selection.
- 9.2.2. Diploma Programs and Micro-credentials that have been developed under the New Program Procedures and changes made under the Curriculum Change Procedures or Program Closure Procedures will not normally be subject to audit.
- 9.2.3. A small sample of new programs still in development and/or cyclical program reviews that are still in progress may also be selected, in consultation with the University. If so, documentation associated with these in-progress processes will not be required for submission for audit. Instead, the auditors will ask to meet with the program representatives to gain a better understanding of current quality practices.

9.2.4. Specific areas of focus may also be added to the audit when an immediately previous audit has documented Causes for Concern, or when the Quality Council so requests. The University will be informed of the specific areas of focus in the letter from the Quality Assurance Secretariat that also details the programs selected for audit. The University itself may also request that specific programs and/or quality enhancement elements be audited.

9.3. Pre-Audit Orientation and Briefing

The Quality Assurance Secretariat will schedule an in-person, half-day briefing approximately one year prior to the University's scheduled Cyclical Audit. During this briefing, the Quality Assurance Secretariat and a member of the Audit Team will provide an orientation on what to expect from the Cyclical Audit to the University Key Contact, key CIQE staff members, and any other relevant stakeholder(s) as determined by the Provost or designate.

9.4. Self-Study

9.4.1. In consultation with the Provost, CIQE will prepare a self-study, which reflects on past and current policies and practices and the extent to which the University demonstrates a focus on continuous improvement in the development of new programs and the cyclical review of existing ones. The self-study will present and assess the quality enhancement processes, including challenges and opportunities, within its own institutional context and pay particular attention to issues, if any, flagged in the previous Audit.

9.4.2. CIQE will also prepare a package of all relevant documentation for each program selected for audit, including all items related to each step outlined in the Procedures. The self-study and document packages are submitted by CIQE to the Quality Assurance Secretariat in advance of the desk audit.

9.4.3. The documentation to be submitted for audit will include, but is not limited to:

- All templates, proposal briefs/self-studies, reports and responses, minutes of meetings, and any other relevant documents and other information related to the programs selected for audit, as requested by the Audit Team;
- A record of any revisions of the university's IQAP, as ratified by the Quality Council; and
- The annual report of any minor revisions of the university's IQAP that did not require Quality Council re-ratification.

9.5. Audit Team Review

9.5.1. Desk Audit

The auditors will first undertake a desk audit of the University's quality enhancement practices, which will determine whether the University's practice is in compliance with the IQAP and will also note any misalignment of the IQAP with the QAF. The desk audit serves to raise specific issues and questions to be pursued during the on-site visit and to facilitate an effective and efficient audit. The auditors will undertake to preserve the confidentiality required for all documentation and communications and to meet all applicable requirements of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA).

9.5.2. Site Visit

After the desk audit, auditors will normally visit the University over two or three days. The principal purpose of the on-site visit is for the auditors to get a sufficiently complete and accurate understanding of the University's application of the IQAP in the pursuit of continuous improvement of programs. Further, the site visit will serve to answer questions and address information gaps that arose during the desk audit and assess the degree to which the institution's quality enhancement practices contribute to continuous improvement.

9.5.2.1. CIQE, in consultation with the Office of the Provost and the auditors, will establish the program and schedule for the site visit. In the course of the site visit, the auditors speak with the university's senior academic leadership including those who the IQAP identifies as having important roles in the governance process.

9.5.2.2. The auditors also meet with representatives from those programs selected for audit, students, and representatives of units that play an important role in ensuring program quality and success.

9.6. Audit Report

9.6.1. Following the conduct of an audit, the auditors will prepare a report that will be approved by the Quality Council. The report, which is to be suitable for publication, comments on the institution's commitment to the culture of engagement with quality assurance and continuous improvement and will meet the requirements as outlined in Section 6.2.7 of the QAF. The report shall not contain any confidential information.

9.6.2. A separate addendum will provide the University with detailed findings related to the audited programs. This addendum is not subject to

publication. The report may include findings in the form of Suggestions, Recommendations, and/or Causes for Concern.

- 9.6.3. The Audit Report also includes recommendations for the Quality Council to take one or more steps, as appropriate, as outlined in Section 6.2.7 of the QAF. This may include participation in a Focused Audit, as described in Section 9.10 below.
- 9.6.4. The Quality Assurance Secretariat submits the Audit Report to the Audit Committee for consideration. Once the Audit Committee is satisfied with the Report, it makes a conditional recommendation to the Quality Council for approval of the Report, subject only to minor revisions resulting from the fact checking stage.
- 9.6.5. The Quality Assurance Secretariat provides a copy to the University, via the Provost, for fact checking. This consultation is intended to ensure that the report does not contain errors or omissions of fact but not to discuss the substance or findings of the report. CIQE will prepare a report, for submission by the Provost, on the factual accuracy of the draft report within 30 days. If needed, the Provost can request an extension of this deadline by contacting the Quality Assurance Secretariat and providing a rationale for the request. This response becomes part of the official record and the audit team may use it to revise their report. However, the fact checking response will not be published on the Quality Council's website. When substantive changes are required, the draft report will be taken back to the Audit Committee.
- 9.6.6. Upon approval by the Quality Council, the Quality Assurance Secretariat sends the approved report to the university with an indication of the timing for any required follow-up.

9.7. University Response to Report

- 9.7.1. When a Follow-up Response Report is required, the University, through CIQE, will submit the Report within the specified timeframe, detailing the steps it has taken to address the recommendations and/or Cause(s) for Concern.
- 9.7.2. If the Audit Team is satisfied with the University's Follow-up Response Report, it will draft a report on the sufficiency of the response. The auditors' report, suitable for publication, is then submitted to the Audit Committee for consideration.
- 9.7.3. If the Audit Team is not satisfied with the response, the Audit Team will consult with the University, through the Quality Assurance Secretariat, to

ensure the follow-up response is modified to satisfy the requirements of the Audit Report. In so doing, the University will be asked to make any necessary changes to the follow-up response within a specified timeframe.

- 9.7.4. The Audit Committee will submit a recommendation to the Quality Council to accept the university's follow-up response and associated auditors' report.

9.8. Publication of the Results of the Audit

- 9.8.1. The Quality Assurance Secretariat will publish the approved report of the overall findings, absent the addendum that details the findings related to the audited programs, together with a record of the recommendations on the Quality Council's website.
- 9.8.2. The University will also publish the report (absent the previously specified addendum) on its website.
- 9.8.3. The Quality Assurance Secretariat publishes any Follow-up Response Report and the auditors' report on the scope and adequacy of the university's response on the Quality Council website and sends a copy to the University for publication on its website.
- 9.8.4. A report on all audit-related activity is provided to the Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents (OCAV), the Council of Ontario Universities (COU), and the Ministry through the Quality Council's Annual Report.

9.9. Outcomes of the Cyclical Audit

The Audit Report describes the extent to which the University is compliant with the IQAP and approximates best practice. Based on the findings in its Report, the Audit Committee will make recommendations about future oversight by the Quality Council and/or one or more of its Committees.

- 9.9.1. When the Audit Report finds relatively high to very high degrees of compliance and good to best practices, the Audit Committee may recommend reduced Quality Council oversight in one or more areas of the University's quality enhancement practices. The recommendation may include, but is not limited to, the elimination of the requirement for a Follow-up Response Report to the Audit Report and possibly a reduced set of documentation required for a subsequent audit.
- 9.9.2. Alternatively, when the Audit Report identifies deficiencies in several areas of the University's practices and/or systemic challenges, the Audit Committee may recommend increased oversight by the Quality Council. The

nature of this oversight will be determined by the Quality Council and may include one or more of the following outcomes, which are less formal than the Cyclical Audit and, thus, will not replace it:

- Increased reporting requirements;
- A focused audit (Section 9.10, below); and/or
- Any other action deemed appropriate by the Quality Council.

9.10. Focused Audit

9.10.1. When an Audit Report has identified at least one Cause for Concern, the Audit Committee will recommend to the Quality Council that the specific area(s) of concern may require closer scrutiny and further support through a Focused Audit.

9.10.2. A Focused Audit may also be triggered by the Quality Council when it has some concerns about the quality assurance processes at a particular university.

9.10.3. A Focused Audit may take the form of a desk audit and/or an additional site visit. The Audit Committee will also recommend to the Quality Council a proposed timeframe within which the Focused Audit should take place.

9.10.4. The Focused Audit Report

9.10.4.1. Following the conduct of a Focused Audit, the auditors will prepare a report that will be approved by the Quality Council. The report will be suitable for subsequent publication, and will meet the requirements as outlined in Section 6.3 of the QAF.

9.10.4.2. The Focused Audit Report may also include Suggestions, Recommendations, and/or Cause(s) for Concern.

9.10.4.3. The report will be published on both the Quality Council and University websites. Other standard elements associated with a Cyclical Audit, such as the requirement for a one-year response, will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

10. These procedures will be reviewed as necessary and at least every three years. The Office of the Provost, through the Center for Institutional Quality Enhancement, coordinates the day to day management of the quality assurance process, and works in collaboration with Deans and units to implement the procedures for developing and accessing academic programs. The Provost or successor thereof, is responsible to monitor and review this Policy.

RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES & DOCUMENTS

[Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance - Quality Assurance Framework](#)

Institutional Quality Assurance Policy

Academic Resource Committee Terms of Reference

Program Nomenclature Directives

Protocols associated with consultation/development of Indigenous curriculum

Classification Number	ACD 1501.03
Parent Policy	Institutional Quality Assurance Process
Framework Category	Academic
Approving Authority	Academic Council
Policy Owner	Provost
Approval Date	
Review Date	
Supersedes	ACD 1501.03 (June 20120);



NEW PROGRAM PROCEDURES

PURPOSE

1. The purpose of these Procedures is to establish a consistent process for the planning and establishment for any new degree or diploma program at the University.

DEFINITIONS

2. For the purposes of these Procedures the definitions in the Policy apply.

SCOPE AND AUTHORITY

3. These procedures apply to new cost-recovery or government-funded undergraduate and graduate Degree or Diploma Programs and may apply to new Micro-credentials, whether offered in full, in part, or conjointly by any institutions federated or affiliated with the University. It also applies to new Programs offered in partnership, collaboration or other such arrangement with other post-secondary institutions including colleges, universities, or other institutes.
4. The Provost, or successor thereof, is the Policy Owner and is responsible for overseeing the implementation, administration and interpretation of these Procedures.

PROCEDURES

Procedures for new Degree Programs involve seven components which will be undertaken in order: a project initiation discussion and submission of a Notice of Intent to be approved by the Provost that demonstrates the program's fit with the Strategic Mandate Agreement, Integrated Academic and Research Plan (or equivalent) of the university, and the academic and strategic plans of the Faculty(ies) offering the program; development of a proposal brief by the initiating program; external evaluation to

provide an assessment of program quality; internal response to assessment; internal approval of proposal; submission of proposal to the Quality Council and Ministry as appropriate; and subsequent review of the program as part of the university's program review process in accordance with the Institutional Quality Assurance Policy and the Cyclical Review and Auditing Procedures.

New Diploma Programs are normally not subject to external review. Procedures for new Diploma Programs involve five components which will be undertaken in order: a project initiation discussion and submission of a Notice of Intent to be approved by the Provost that demonstrates the program's fit with the Strategic Mandate Agreement, Integrated Academic and Research Plan (or equivalent) of the university, and the academic and strategic plans of the Faculty(ies) offering the program; development of a proposal brief by the initiating program; internal approval of proposal; submission of proposal to the Quality Council and Ministry as appropriate; and subsequent review of the program as part of the university's program review process in accordance with the Institutional Quality Assurance Policy and the Cyclical Review and Auditing Procedures.

Procedures for new Micro-credential programs are outlined in Section 8.

Individuals may use the templates provided at www.ontariotechu.ca/ciqe to assist in the planning and implementation of the components of New Program development.

5. New Degree Programs

5.1. Notice of Intent and Consultation

Faculties that wish to propose new Degree Programs will first contact the Centre for Institutional Quality Enhancement (CIQE) to conduct a project initiation meeting and for assistance with completing a Notice of Intent (NOI) form available through the CIQE website at www.ontariotechu.ca/ciqe. The Notice of Intent will facilitate the necessary consultation at the beginning of the planning stages, but will not replace ongoing communication and consultation throughout the process.

- 5.1.1.** All NOIs must be approved by the Provost to ensure that any resource requirements are appropriately addressed before work on the proposal proceeds. Once an NOI has been approved, the new Program must be developed and approved at Academic Council within two years, or the approval will lapse and a new NOI must be submitted.
- 5.1.2.** In the planning for any New Program, the Dean, in consultation with the Provost, must also determine the human, instructional and physical resources needed to implement the program and ensure its ongoing operation. The financial impact of the New Program on existing Programs must also be examined, and consideration must be given to possible collaborations with other units.
- 5.1.3.** In addition, there must be broad consultation with members of the academic community, including faculty, staff and students who may be affected by the initiative, and with those who are key to its implementation, including the Provost, the Registrar,

the Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, and the Chief Librarian. Staff and faculty wishing to develop New Programs related to Indigenization and reconciliation, or that contain Indigenous content, must also consult in a Good Way, in accordance with the current procedures for Indigenous consultation.

5.2. Proposal Briefs

Detailed proposals for all new Degree Programs must be prepared by the proponents and feedback provided by the Faculty Council(s). The proposal brief must clearly set out the rationale for the Program, including the ways in which the program advances the university's mission and mandate, and addresses the need and demand for graduates of the Program. The proposal must also detail how the Program fits within Strategic Mandate Agreement and Integrated Academic and Research Plan (or equivalent) of the University and the academic and strategic plans of the Faculty(ies), the requirements of the Program, along with details of the human, physical and financial resources required. A template for the proposal will be provided through CIQE via the website at www.ontariotechu.ca/ciqe. Proposal briefs for new Degree Programs must fully and clearly address the [Evaluation Criteria](#) as outlined in Section 2.1.2 of the [Quality Assurance Framework \(QAF\)](#), and answer all questions provided on the template. In addition to the Evaluation Criteria, proposal briefs must minimally include:

- a) The rationale for the Program, fit with the University's and Faculty's strategic direction, background on the Program's development, a Program abstract, unique curriculum or program innovations, creative components, or significant high impact practices, and evidence of student demand and societal need. It will also note any duplication with existing post-secondary programs at other institutions.
- b) A fully developed section outlining the Program learning outcomes and alignment with the provincial degree level expectations and skills and competencies; any consideration of the principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization; admission requirements; program structure; and program content including course outlines, descriptions, modes of delivery and teaching methods, and assessment with a linkage between the course learning outcomes and the program learning outcomes. The program and course learning outcomes must be developed and aligned to the provincial degree level expectations using resources provided by CIQE and the Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC). It is strongly recommended that the proponents participate in learning outcome development sessions hosted by CIQE and TLC; alternatively, the program and course learning outcomes must be reviewed and approved by CIQE and TLC prior to the scheduling of the External Review. Should the curriculum contain any Indigenous content, evidence of consultation and approval in accordance with the current procedures for Indigenous consultation will be provided.
- c) A list of required faculty members, including current core faculty and required new faculty; additional academic and non-academic human resources that may be required to launch and maintain the Program; physical resource requirements,

noting how current facilities will be used and what, if any, new resources may be required; and for graduate programs, any student support (funding) requirements. Curricula Vitae (CV) for all required faculty members will be provided for inclusion in the proposal package presented to external reviewers.

- d) Summary statements of resources required to support the Program and a statement of current resource availability.
- e) For Programs offered jointly by more than one Faculty, the protocol for review and approval of program and course changes after the launch of the Program. This established protocol may be revised by agreement of all parties.

5.3. External Review and Reports

- 5.3.1. Prior to external review, the Office of the Provost, through the Resource Committee, will review the draft proposal to ensure that all operational and financial issues and Evaluation Criteria ([QAF Section 2.1.2](#)) have been adequately considered and addressed.

5.3.2. External Reviewers

For new Degree Programs, the Dean, in consultation with the Faculty committee responsible for developing the Program, will recommend to the Provost, through CIQE, the names of at least 5 individuals who may serve as reviewers of the Program. Two reviewers will be engaged to review new Degree Programs. These reviewers must be external to the University, will normally be tenured (or equivalent) and will have suitable disciplinary expertise, qualifications and program management experience, including an appreciation of pedagogy and learning outcomes, and be at arm's length to the program under review. CIQE will provide guidance on meeting the arm's length requirement, which is defined in the Guidelines section of the Proposed External Reviewers Nomination Form and on the Quality Council's [website](#). Recommendations for external reviewers must be accompanied by a rationale for the selection and a brief, comprehensive biographical statement for each candidate.

5.3.3. Site Visit

The Faculty, in consultation with CIQE, will organize a site visit to provide an opportunity for the reviewers to assess the standards and quality of the proposed Program. External review of new Programs will normally be conducted on-site, but, at the request of the Dean, the Provost (or delegate) may approve that the review be conducted by [desk audit](#), [virtual site visit](#), or an equivalent method if the external reviewers are satisfied that the off-site option is acceptable. The Dean will provide a clear justification for the decision to conduct the review without an on-site visit. At the beginning of the site visit, or prior to the desk audit, the Provost or their designate will meet with the reviewer(s) to outline the process for review and the roles and responsibilities of the reviewers.

5.3.4. External Reviewers' Report

- 5.3.4.1.** The reviewer(s) will submit to the Dean, through CIQE, using a template provided, a report that appraises the standards and quality of the proposed program and addresses the Evaluation Criteria and other requirements ([QAF Section 2.1.2](#) and [QAF Section 2.2.2](#)). Reviewers will be invited to acknowledge any clearly innovative aspects of the proposed program together with recommendations on any essential or otherwise desirable modifications to the program. Normally, the report will be prepared within 30 days of the site visit.
- 5.3.4.2.** Upon submission of the reviewers' report, CIQE will review the report to ensure it meets the requirements stated in Article 5.3.4.1. If additional details or clarification are needed from the reviewers, CIQE will reach out to the reviewers to request this in a revised report.

5.3.5. Response to Report

- 5.3.5.1.** Upon receipt of the reviewers' assessment, the Dean and the program proponents will consider the recommendations of the report.
- 5.3.5.2.** The program proponents will respond and comment on the recommendations from the external reviewer(s)' report. This program response will also include a list of changes that can be made to the proposal based on the reviewer(s)' recommendations.
- 5.3.5.3.** The Dean will respond and comment on the recommendations and the program's responses, considering overall Faculty and University plans.
- 5.3.5.4.** The program proponents, working with the Dean, will amend the proposal and append to it a final list of changes made based on the recommendations and the program committee's and Dean's responses to the external report.

5.4. Internal Approval Process

- 5.4.1.** The amended proposal brief, together with the reviewers' report and the Dean's and program committee's responses will be reviewed and approved by the Faculty Council(s). If there are additional resource implications resulting from the external review, the amended proposal brief will also be reviewed by the Resource Committee.
- 5.4.2.** The proposal brief, together with the reviewers' report and the Dean's and program committee's response will then be presented to the appropriate standing committee of Academic Council (GSC or USC) who will prepare a recommendation to Academic Council. The proposal brief will then be sent to Academic Council for review and approval. Proposals are then submitted to the University Board of Governors for final approval.

5.5. Submission of New Degree Programs to the Quality Council and the Ministry

- 5.5.1.** Once Academic Council approval for a new Degree Program has been obtained, the program proposal must be submitted to the Quality Council for review. The submission will include the final proposal document with the date of Academic Council approval, the external reviewers' report, and the internal responses, as well as a brief commentary on the two external reviewers with regard to their qualifications (expertise in content and program delivery, connections to industry where appropriate, expertise in teaching and learning). CVs for the reviewers will be required for submission to the Quality Council.
- 5.5.2.** Following a new Degree Program's submission to the Quality Council, and with approval of the Provost, the University may announce its intent to offer the Program, provided that clear indication is given that approval by the Quality Council is pending and that no offers of admission will be made until approval is received and, where applicable, that approval by the Ministry is pending and students in the Program will not be eligible for OSAP until approval is received.
- 5.5.3.** Once submitted to the Quality Council, the proposal will be subject to the [Initial Appraisal Process](#) and may require further development or revision prior to approval.
- 5.5.4.** After a Degree Program is approved to commence by the Quality Council, the Program will begin within thirty-six months of that date of approval, otherwise the approval will lapse. The Quality Council may require further reporting or review, which will be noted in the new program tracking summary provided to the Resource Committee and monitored by CIQE.
- 5.5.5.** If a review is required for funding purposes, the proposed Degree Program will also be submitted to the Ministry.

6. New Type 2 and 3 Graduate Diploma and Undergraduate Diploma Programs

6.1. Notice of Intent and Consultation

Faculties that wish to propose new Graduate Type 2 and 3 or Undergraduate Diploma Programs will first contact the Centre for Institutional Quality Enhancement (CIQE) to conduct a project initiation meeting and for assistance with completing a Notice of Intent (NOI) form available through the CIQE website at www.ontariotechu.ca/ciqe. The Notice of Intent will facilitate the necessary consultation at the beginning of the planning stages, but will not replace ongoing communication and consultation throughout the process.

- 6.1.1.** All NOIs must be approved by the Provost to ensure that any resource requirements are appropriately addressed before work on the proposal proceeds.

- 6.1.2.** In the planning for any New Program, the Dean, in consultation with the Provost, must also determine the human, instructional and physical resources needed to implement the program and ensure its ongoing operation. The financial impact of the New Program on existing Programs must also be examined, and consideration must be given to possible collaborations with other units.
- 6.1.3.** In addition, there must be broad consultation with members of the academic community, including faculty, staff and students who may be affected by the initiative, and with those who are key to its implementation, including the Provost, the Registrar, the Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, and the Chief Librarian. Staff and faculty wishing to develop New Programs related to Indigenization and reconciliation, or that contain Indigenous content, must also consult in a Good Way, in accordance with the current procedures for Indigenous consultation.

6.2. Proposal Briefs

Detailed proposals for all new Diploma Programs must be prepared by the proponents and feedback provided by Faculty Council(s). The proposal brief must clearly set out the rationale for the Program, including the ways in which the program advances the university's mission and mandate, and addresses the need and demand for graduates of the Program. The proposal must also detail how the Program fits within the strategic vision of the University and the Faculty(ies), the requirements of the Program, along with details of the human, physical and financial resources required. A template for the proposal will be provided through CIQE via the website at www.ontariotechu.ca/ciqe. Proposal briefs for new Diploma Programs must fully and clearly address the [Evaluation Criteria](#) as outlined in Section 2.1.2 of the [Quality Assurance Framework \(QAF\)](#), and answer all questions provided on the template. In addition to the Evaluation Criteria, proposal briefs must minimally include:

- a)** The rationale for the Program, fit with the University's and Faculty's strategic direction, background on the Program's development, a Program abstract, unique curriculum or program innovations, creative components, or significant high impact practices and evidence of student demand and societal need. It will also note any duplication with existing post-secondary programs at other institutions.
- b)** A fully developed section outlining the Program learning outcomes and alignment with the provincial degree level expectations and skills and competencies; consideration of the principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization; admission requirements; program structure; and program content including course outlines, descriptions, modes of delivery and teaching methods, and assessment with a linkage between the course learning outcomes and the program learning outcomes. The program and course learning outcomes must be developed and aligned to the provincial degree level expectations using resources provided by CIQE and the Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC). It is strongly recommended that the proponents participate in learning outcome development sessions hosted by CIQE and TLC; alternatively, the program and course learning outcomes must be

reviewed and approved by CIQE and TLC prior to the program proceeding through the Internal Approval Process. Should the curriculum contain any Indigenous content, evidence of consultation and approval in accordance with the current procedures for Indigenous consultation will be provided.

- c) A list of required faculty members, including current core faculty and required new faculty; additional academic and non-academic human resources that may be required to launch and maintain the Program; physical resource requirements, noting how current facilities will be used and what, if any, new resources may be required; and for graduate programs, any student support (funding) requirements. Faculty CVs will be provided for inclusion in the package presented to the Quality Council.
- d) Summary statements of resources required to support the Program and a statement of current resource availability.

6.3. Internal Approval Process

- 6.3.1. The proposal brief will be reviewed and approved by the Faculty Council(s).
- 6.3.2. The proposal will then be presented to the appropriate standing committee of Academic Council (GSC or USC) who will prepare a recommendation to Academic Council. The proposal will then be sent to Academic Council for review and approval. Proposals are then submitted to the University Board of Governors for final approval.

6.4. Submission of New Diploma Programs to the Quality Council and the Ministry

- 6.4.1. Once Academic Council approval for a new Type 2 or 3 Graduate Diploma Program has been obtained, the program proposal must be submitted to the Quality Council for review. The submission will include the final proposal document with the date of Academic Council approval, and the faculty CVs.
 - 6.4.1.1. Type 2 and 3 Graduate Diploma Programs are subject to Expedited Review at the Quality Council. Only the applicable [Evaluation Criteria](#) will be applied to the proposal. Furthermore, the Council's appraisal and approval processes are reduced, as outlined in the Quality Assurance Framework [Section 3.2 Protocol for Expedited Approvals](#).
 - 6.4.1.2. Following a new Type 2 or 3 Graduate Diploma Program's submission to the Quality Council, and with approval of the Provost, the University may announce its intent to offer the Program, provided that clear indication is given that approval by the Quality Council is pending and that no offers of admission will be made until approval is received and, where applicable, that approval by the Ministry is pending and students in the Program will not be eligible for OSAP until approval is received.

- 6.4.1.3.** Once submitted to the Quality Council, the proposal may require further development or revision prior to approval.
- 6.4.1.4.** After a Type 2 or 3 Graduate Diploma Program is approved to commence by the Quality Council, the Program will begin within thirty-six months of that date of approval, otherwise the approval will lapse.
- 6.4.2.** Undergraduate Diploma Programs are not subject to approval or audit by the Quality Council. The University may elect to submit a new Undergraduate Diploma proposal to the Quality Council for review, in which case the Program will be subject to Expedited Review. Only the applicable [Evaluation Criteria](#) will be applied to the proposal. Furthermore, the Council's appraisal and approval processes are reduced, as outlined in the [Quality Assurance Framework Section 3.2](#). The submission will include the final proposal document with the date of Academic Council approval, the faculty CVs, and a brief cover letter providing the context and rationale for submitting the Program for Expedited Review.
- 6.4.3.** If a review is required for funding purposes, the proposed Diploma Program will also be submitted to the Ministry.

7. New Type 1 Graduate Diploma Programs

- 7.1.** Type 1 Graduate Diplomas require approval as Major Program Modifications following the procedures outlined in the **Curriculum Changes Procedures** document.

8. New Micro-credential Programs

- 8.1.** The introduction of the option to complete a portion of a proposed new Degree or Diploma Program to receive an embedded for-academic-credit Micro-credential will be included with a New Program Proposal and follow the process outlined in Section 5 or 6 as appropriate.
- 8.2.** The creation of a new for-academic-credit Micro-credential or the introduction of the option to complete a portion of an existing Degree or Diploma Program to receive an embedded for-academic-credit Micro-credential is a Minor Program Adjustment and will follow the procedures outlined in the **Curriculum Changes Procedures** document.
- 8.3.** Those wishing to develop new, not-for-academic-credit, stand-alone Micro-credential Programs must proceed in accordance with the [Policy on Micro-Credentials and Continuous Learning Offerings](#), or equivalent.
- 8.4. Submission of New Micro-credentials to the Quality Council and the Ministry**

- 8.4.1. Micro-credentials are not subject to approval or audit by the Quality Council. Embedded Micro-credentials will be submitted with the New Program to which they are associated, when applicable.
- 8.4.2. Approved Micro-credentials will be submitted to the Ministry for designation as eligible for Ontario Student Assistance Program funding, if applicable.

9. Development of Joint or Collaborative Programs

- 9.1. Joint Programs, and other Programs offered in collaboration with other post-secondary institutions, will ensure that the required quality assurance requirements of both institutions are met.
- 9.2. When the program will be held jointly with an institution that does not have an IQAP that has been ratified by the Quality Council, the Ontario Tech IQAP Policy and associated Procedures will apply with Ontario Tech as the leading institution.
- 9.3. In cases where the program is held jointly with an institution that does have an IQAP ratified by the Quality Council, the Office of the Provost, through CIQE, will collaborate with the partner institution to develop a process and associated templates that will address all requirements of each institution's IQAP. Specifically, the collaboration will address:
 - a) The selection of external reviewers
 - b) Templates to be used for a single proposal brief and required reports from the external reviewers, program team, and Dean(s)
 - c) The location(s) of the site-visit(s), timing for Program development, and approval pathway
 - d) The development of a joint committee to develop the Program
 - e) The process for monitoring and reviewing the Program after approval
 - f) The lead institution for the purposes of submission to the Quality Council and the Ministry

10. Subsequent Monitoring and Review of Academic Programs

Degree and Diploma Programs will be reviewed and refined on an ongoing basis in accordance with the **Institutional Quality Assurance Policy** and the **Cyclical Review and Auditing Procedures**. At the time of first intake into the Program, the program will begin the monitoring process outlined in Section 7 of the **Cyclical Review and Auditing Procedures**. Approved Programs will also be entered into the schedule of cyclical program reviews and the first review

will take place no more than eight years after the start of the Program, and every eight years hence, in accordance with Section 8 of the **Cyclical Review and Auditing Procedures**.

Degree and Diploma Programs which have been approved but never launched, have been closed, or for which admission has been suspended, and stand-alone Micro-credentials are not subject to review as described in the Cyclical Review and Auditing Procedures.

QUALITY COUNCIL CYCLICAL AUDIT

11. In accordance with the Quality Assurance Framework [Audit Protocol](#), new Undergraduate and Graduate Degree programs that have been approved in accordance with Section 5 of this document, within the period since the conduct of the previous Audit, are eligible for selection for the University's next Cyclical Audit. As such, all documents related to each step of these procedures must be retained in a designated electronic filing system for retrieval and presentation as required. An audit cannot reverse the approval of a program to commence.
12. In accordance with the Quality Assurance Framework [Audit Protocol](#), new Undergraduate and Graduate Diploma programs, and Micro-credentials, that have been approved in accordance with Sections 6 and 8 of this document, are not normally subject to the University's Cyclical Audit.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

13. These Procedures will be reviewed as necessary and at least every three years. The Office of the Provost, through CIQE, coordinates the day to day management of the quality assurance process, and works in collaboration with Deans and units to implement the procedures for developing and accessing academic programs. The Provost or successor thereof, is responsible to monitor and review this Policy.

RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES & DOCUMENTS

[Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance - Quality Assurance Framework](#)

Institutional Quality Assurance Policy

Academic Resource Committee Terms of Reference

Cyclical Review and Auditing Procedures

Program Nomenclature Directives

Protocols associated with consultation/development of Indigenous curriculum

Protocols associated with the development of Micro-credentials



Classification Number	ACD 1501.01
Parent Policy	Institutional Quality Assurance Process
Framework Category	Academic
Approving Authority	Academic Council
Policy Owner	Provost
Approval Date	TBA
Review Date	TBA
Supersedes	ACD 1501 (June 2010); Quality Assurance Handbook (June 2011); Curriculum Change Procedures (June 2020); Not-for-Academic Credit Digital Badges, Microcredentials, and Stackable Credentials Policy (July 2021)

CURRICULUM CHANGE PROCEDURES

PURPOSE

1. The purpose of these Procedures is to establish a consistent process for defining and documenting changes to courses and programs that will facilitate their review and approval under the provincial quality assurance framework.

DEFINITIONS

2. For the purposes of these Procedures the following definitions in the Policy apply:

~~**Academic Council:** the most senior academic governance body of the institution~~

~~**Faculty Council:** established by Academic Council to approve new programs and courses, policies (including admissions), academic standards, curriculum and degree requirements, and long-range academic plans, at the Faculty level~~

~~**Field:** In graduate programs, an area of specialization or concentration that is related to the demonstrable and collective strengths of the program's faculty and to a new or existing program. Fields are not required at either the master's or doctoral level.~~

~~**Graduate Diploma:** A prescribed set of degree-credit courses and/or other forms of study that can be undertaken as a stand-alone program or to complement a graduate degree program, and to provide specialization, sub-specialization or inter- or multi-disciplinary~~

Commented [KM1]: Policy is now the central place for all definitions, this avoids any potential contradiction and shortens the Procedures for ease of reading.

qualification. A graduate diploma is comprised of at least 12 credit hours of graduate level study. There are three types of Graduate Diplomas as set out by the Council of Ontario Universities:

- a) **Type 1:** Awarded when a candidate admitted to a master's program leaves the program after completing a prescribed proportion of the requirements. Students are not admitted directly to these programs. When new, these programs require approval through the university's protocol for Major Modification prior to their adoption. Once approved, they will be incorporated into the institution's schedule for cyclical reviews as part of the parent program.
- b) **Type 2: A concurrent graduate diploma** is offered in conjunction with a master's or doctoral degree, the admission to which requires that the candidate be already admitted to the master's or doctoral program. This represents an additional, usually interdisciplinary, qualification and requires advanced level, usually interdisciplinary, study, at least 50% of which is in addition to the general requirements for the degree. When new, these programs require submission to the Quality Council for an Expedited Approval (no external reviewers required) prior to their adoption. Once approved, they will be incorporated into the university's schedule for cyclical reviews as part of the parent program.
- c) **Type 3: A direct entry graduate diploma** is a stand-alone, direct entry program, generally developed by a unit already offering a related master's (and sometimes doctoral) degree, and designed to meet the needs of a particular clientele or market. Ontario Tech type 3 graduate diplomas may include non-degree credit courses to a maximum of 30% of the total program credit hours. Where the program has been conceived and developed as a distinct and original entity, these programs require submission to the Quality Council for an Expedited Approval (no external reviewers required) prior to their adoption. Once approved, they will be included in the Schedule for Cyclical Reviews and will be subject to external review during the CPR process.

Graduate Studies Committee (GSC): a standing committee of Academic Council responsible for reviewing graduate curriculum proposals and documents

Major Program Modifications: those modifications that constitute a significant change to the design and delivery of an existing program. Further clarification is provided below in Section 7.

Micro-credential: A designation of achievement of a coherent set of skills and knowledge, specified by a statement of purpose, learning outcomes, and strong evidence of need by industry, employers, and/or the community. They have fewer requirements and are of shorter duration than a qualification and focus on learning outcomes that are distinct from diploma/degree programs.

Minor Curricular Changes: those changes to individual courses and curricular offerings that do not affect the overall program requirements. Further clarification is provided below in Section 5.

Minor Program Adjustments: changes to program requirements and/or learning outcomes that may require a plan for transitioning cohorts of students to meet different requirements over time. Further clarification is provided below in Section 6.

Program: A complete set and sequence of courses, combination of courses, and/or other units of study, research and practice; the successful completion of which qualifies the candidate for a formal credential (degree with or without major; diploma).

Quality Council: the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance, established by the Council of Ontario Universities in July 2010, responsible for oversight of the Quality Assurance Framework processes for Ontario Universities. The Council operates at arm's length from both Ontario's publicly assisted universities and the Ontario government.

Undergraduate Studies Committee (USC): a standing committee of Academic Council responsible for reviewing undergraduate curriculum proposals and documents

SCOPE AND AUTHORITY

3. These procedures apply to the full range of for-academic-credit curricular and programmatic endeavours at both the graduate and undergraduate levels, including Micro-credentials, whether offered in full, in part, or conjointly by any institutions federated or affiliated with the University. It also applies to Programs offered in partnership, collaboration, or other such arrangement with other post-secondary institutions including colleges, universities, or other institutes.
4. The Provost, or successor thereof, is the Policy Owner and is responsible for overseeing the implementation, administration, and interpretation of these Procedures.

PROCEDURES

Modifications to existing Programs range from changes to individual courses and curricular offerings, through minor adjustments to programs and regulations, to major modifications, such as the introduction of new specializations and fields. The Centre for Institutional Quality Enhancement will provide access to an electronic workflow tracking system and repository for curricular changes. Individuals may use the templates provided at www.ontariotechu.ca/ciqe as a guide to assist in the planning of the changes prior to creating formal electronic proposals for approval in the [electronic system](#).

5. Minor Curricular Changes

- 5.1. The following Minor Curricular Changes fall under the purview of the Faculty Council(s), normally through its curriculum committee or similar body, and include:

- The creation ~~of new elective courses and the closure deletion of elective of for-~~ academic-credit courses
- Changes to for-academic-credit courses, including:
 - ~~course titles, and course descriptions,~~
 - ~~Changes to course numbers, credit hours, weighting of elective courses, grade mode, total and contact hours, Changes to prerequisites, co-requisites, cross-listed courses, credit restrictions and/or credit exclusions,~~
 - ~~Changes in the design, mode of delivery, course learning outcomes, -core competencies, and teaching and assessment methods of an individual course~~
 - The addition or deletion of a- ~~in~~ lecture, lab, tutorial or other course components
 - ~~Changes to prerequisites, co-requisites, cross-listed courses, credit restrictions and/or credit exclusions~~
 - ~~Changes in the design, mode of delivery, course learning outcomes, teaching and assessment methods of an individual course~~
- Changes to, or the addition of, experiential learning components, which are part of the course delivery
 - ~~Other minor changes to individual course offerings that do not affect the overall program requirements~~

Commented [KM2]: Editorial revisions to Section 5, which refers to courses only, align the definition and examples with Quality Council guidelines.

5.2. The Minor Curricular Changes listed above will be approved at the relevant Faculty Council(s). Approved Minor Curricular Changes must be reported to the appropriate standing committee of Academic Council (USC or GSC) for information using the appropriate electronic proposal by the end of January each year for implementation in the upcoming Academic Calendar.

5.3. Consultation with other Faculty Councils is required if the course being modified is core to another program. Consultation, in accordance with the current procedures for Indigenous consultation, is required if the new ~~elective~~ course or course being modified will contain Indigenous content.

5.4. Course changes not listed in Section 5.1 are administrative in nature and it is the responsibility of the relevant Deans, Associate Deans, and/or Program Directors to oversee these changes in accordance with any relevant policies.

~~5.3.1, 5.4.1.~~ Changes or additions to the mode of delivery (in-person, online, hybrid) of a course must be submitted using the appropriate electronic proposal to update the official course record.

6. Minor Program Adjustments

6.1. Minor Program Adjustments will include a full electronic proposal brief and are submitted to the appropriate standing committee of Academic Council for approval. Minor Program Adjustments include:

- ~~• The introduction of new required courses~~
- ~~• The deletion of required courses~~
- Editorial changes to degree requirements, ~~or~~ program learning outcomes, or core competencies which may include those completed as a result of a cyclical review
- New academic requirements or changes to existing requirements, including the addition or deletion of required courses
- ~~• Changing the delivery mode of some courses~~
- The introduction of the option to complete a portion or portions of an existing program to receive a for-~~academic~~-credit Micro-credential
- ~~• The creation of a new, stand-alone, for-academic-credit Micro-credential related to the Program~~
- ~~• The creation of a new Minor program where an existing Major already exists~~
- A change in the name of a Diploma, Major, or Program Component (e.g. Minor, Specialization, or Field) that does not result in a change to the degree designation or the Program Learning Outcomes

For clarity, changes to degree requirements will be defined as Minor Program Adjustments when:

- ~~• The~~ introduction, deletion, or modification of courses or requirements equals no more than one-third of the total course credit hours of the Program.

6.2. Minor Program Adjustments must be presented directly to the USC or GSC for consideration and approval following their recommendation by Faculty Council. Any changes must receive ~~this committee's~~ USC or GSC approval prior to their implementation and inclusion in the academic calendars. The outcome is subsequently reported to Academic Council for information.

6.2.1. To be included in the academic calendars for the subsequent academic year, proposals must be received by ~~the Committees~~ USC or GSC no later than the end of January.

6.2.2. Proposals that include the creation or introduction of a Micro-credential will also be reported to the appropriate micro-credential committee. Approved Micro-credentials will be submitted to the Ministry for designation as eligible for Ontario Student Assistance Program funding, if applicable.

Commented [KM3]: Aligning/correcting definition and examples related to QC requirements and to provide clarity of language.

- 6.3. Minor Program Adjustment proposal briefs must minimally include the following information:
- a) A summary of the proposed change, setting out the rationale and context for it, including any consideration of the principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization.
 - b) A description of the ways in which the proposed change will enhance the academic opportunities for students, or the issues or challenges that the proposed change are intended to address.
 - c) An account of the process of consultation with other units and measures taken to minimize the impact of the change on students if the proposed change involves students/faculty from other programs or courses. An account of the process of consultation related to Indigenous content is required if the proposed change has or will contain Indigenous content.
 - d) A timeline for the implementation of the proposed change and transition plan for current students if applicable.
 - e) An analysis of the resource and enrolment implications, including support for any proposed online or hybrid delivery.
 - f) Calendar copy and program maps for the proposed change that clearly highlight the revisions to be made to the existing curriculum.
 - g) Completed proposals for all new courses and changes to existing courses that result from the change.

7. Major Program Modifications

- 7.1. The Quality Council defines Major Program Modifications as “to include: “significant changes” to existing academic programs where “the impact on the quality of the program and degree of significance can be measured qualitatively and/or quantitatively.” These include: the following Program changes:
- Requirements that differ significantly from those existing at the time of the previous cyclical program review or at the time the program was first approved
 - Significant changes to the learning outcomes that do not, however, meet the threshold of a new program
 - Significant changes to the faculty engaged in delivering the program’s delivery, including to the program’s faculty and/or to the essential physical resources as may occur, for example, where there have been changes to the existing mode(s) of delivery (e.g., different campus, online delivery, inter-institutional collaboration) and/or online/hybrid delivery)

Commented [KM4]: Changes to Section 7 align the definition and examples with QC requirements and simplify language to avoid ongoing confusion. In the majority of cases, items have been moved or wording condensed. Items that are considered Minor Program Adjustments have been removed from this section and are in the section above to align with QC requirements.

- ~~Change in program name and/or degree nomenclature, when this results in a change in learning outcomes~~
- ~~Addition of a single new field to an existing graduate program. Note that universities are not required to declare fields for either master's or doctoral programs. Note also that the creation of more than one field at one point in time or over subsequent years may need to go through the New Program Expedited Protocol~~

Examples from the Quality Council are provided in the Quality Assurance Guide.

For greater clarity, in the Ontario Tech context, the following examples illustrate changes that normally constitute a significant change and would therefore be considered a Major Program Modification:

- Significant changes to the academic requirements and program content, including the introduction, deletion, or permanent modification of courses or requirements, including changing the mode of delivery, comprising a significant that equals more than ~~(i.e., one-third of the total credit hours of the Program, but that do not meet the threshold for a new or more) proportion of the Program~~
- Other Significant changes to one or more of the program content that affect the learning outcomes that alter the meaning of the learning outcome(s) that do not, however, ~~but do not meet the threshold of a 'new Program'; changes to the course configuration that impact the learning outcomes (e.g. a course that meets a learning outcome is moved to the list of electives)~~
- Substantive changes to the Program learning outcomes, which may include those completed as a result of a cyclical review
- The merger of two ~~related or more~~ Programs in the absence of any other significant changes (e.g., no changes to the degree designation, learning outcomes, etc. that may meet the threshold for a New Program)
- New ~~bridging-formal pathways~~ options, i.e. bridging or advanced entry, to or from another ~~for college or university diploma graduates~~
- Significant change in the laboratory time of an undergraduate Program
- The introduction or deletion of an undergraduate thesis or capstone project
- The introduction or deletion of a Program-level work experience, cooperative education, internship, ~~or~~ practicum, or portfolio
- At the master's level, the introduction or deletion of a research project, research essay or thesis option, course-only option, co-operative education, internship, or practicum option
- The creation or, deletion, ~~or re-naming~~ of a Type 1 Graduate Diploma
- The creation, deletion, or re-naming of a field in a graduate Program
The Addition of a single new field to an existing graduate program. Note that universities are not required to declare fields for either master's or doctoral programs. Note also that the creation of more than one field at one point in

time or over subsequent years may need to go through the New Program Expedited Protocol

- The creation, or deletion, or re-naming of a specialization of a or minor where no corresponding Major exists
- Any Changes to or the addition or deletion of the requirements for graduate program candidacy examinations, field studies, or residency requirements, and/or comprehensive examinations
- ~~Changes to courses, including changing the mode of delivery, comprising a significant (i.e., one third or more) proportion of the Program~~
- ~~Other changes to program content that affect the learning outcomes, but do not meet the threshold of a 'new Program'~~
- ~~Substantive changes to the Program learning outcomes, which may include those completed as a result of a cyclical review~~
- Significant changes to the Program's delivery, including:
 - Changes to the Faculty delivering the Program that alter the areas of research and teaching interests (e.g. a large proportion of the faculty retires; new hires)
 - A change in the language of Program delivery
 - The introduction of inter-institutional collaboration or the establishment of an existing Program at another institution or location, including new dual Degree options
 - To the mode of delivery (e.g. re-offering of an existing Program substantially online where it had previously been offered in face-to-face mode, or vice versa) where it is the intention to permanently change the mode of delivery of the Program (or create multi-modal options) that would meaningfully affect the student experience
 - Change to, or add, full- or part-time program options, or vice versa where one did not previously exist
 - Changes to the essential resources, where these changes impair the delivery of the approved Program
- Change in the degree designation; change in the program name of a Major or Program Component (e.g. Specialization, Minor, or Field) and/or degree nomenclature, when this results in a change in learning outcomes

Program mModifications that will result in a more substantial change to ~~its~~ the Program's nature and content will require review and approval in accordance with the New Program Procedure. The final determination of whether a Program modification constitutes a significant change or a new Program will rest with the Provost. The Quality Council has final authority to decide if a Major Program Modification constitutes a new program and, therefore, must follow the New Program Procedures.

- 7.2. Major Program Modifications will include full electronic proposals and must include evidence that appropriate consultation has taken place. Once proposals are

approved by Faculty Council, they will be subject to review by the appropriate standing committee of Academic Council (USC or GSC). The standing committee will submit its recommendation for approval to ~~the Executive Committee of Academic Council, and subsequently to~~ the Academic Council for final review and approval. Major Program Modifications are reported annually to the Quality Council.

Commented [KM5]: Should have been removed in previous version, EC no longer exists. Steering Committee Terms of Reference does not include program approvals. TOR changes approved by Board on recommendation of AC.

7.2.1. To be included in the academic calendars for the subsequent academic year, Major Program Modifications must be received by USC/GSC no later than the last working day in December.

7.3. Major Program Modification electronic proposals must minimally include the following:

- a) A brief background on the existing program and rationale for the modification, including any consideration of the principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization.
- b) Overview of the modification, indicating the opportunities for graduates and evidence of fit with the mission, mandate and strategic plans of the University and the Faculty Description of how the new program component fits into the broader array of Program offerings, particularly areas of teaching and research strengths and complementary areas of study.
- c) A fully developed section outlining: any new or modified program learning outcomes; the alignment of the change with the program learning outcomes and the provincial degree level expectations and universal competencies; new or modified admission requirements; program structure Calendar copy and program maps, where relevant, for the new program component showing courses and/or research components offered each semester and indicating courses currently offered, new courses, and required courses provided by other units; the impact the modification/new component has on students and how it will improve the student experience; any experiential or other applied learning opportunities that are part of the new program component; and program content including course outlines, descriptions, modes of delivery and teaching methods, and assessment with a linkage between the course learning outcomes and the program learning outcomes.
- d) A list of required faculty members, including current core faculty and required new faculty; additional academic and non-academic human resources that may be required to launch and maintain the modifications; physical resource requirements, with how current facilities will be used and what, if any, new resources may be required; and for graduate Programs, any student support (funding) requirements.

- e) An outline of areas consulted, which must include an account of mandatory feedback from students and recent graduates, and the process of consultation regarding Indigenous content, where appropriate.
- f) A summary statement of funding required to support the Program and a statement of current resource availability.
- g) When changing the mode of delivery to online/hybrid for all or a significant portion of a Program, the following must also be addressed:
 - Describe the adequacy of the technological platform to be used for online delivery
 - Describe how the quality of education will be maintained
 - Describe how the program objectives will be met
 - Describe how the program learning outcomes will be met
 - Describe the support services and training for teaching staff that will be made available
 - Describe the sufficiency and type of supports that will be available to students

8. Admissions Changes

- 8.1. Changes made exclusively to admission requirements in the absence of other program changes will proceed through the governance structure to various levels of approval based on the nature and impact of the change.
 - 8.1.1. Changes to admission requirements at the University level require final approval by Academic Council following recommendation by the USC/GSC. Changes of this nature are normally completed as a change to the relevant policy instrument.
 - 8.1.2. Changes to admission requirements at the Faculty level require approval by the USC/GSC and are reported for information to Academic Council; this update is generally completed as a Minor Program Adjustment.
 - 8.1.3. Changes to admission requirements at the individual program level are reported to the USC/GSC for information following approval by Faculty Council(s).

All decisions concerning admissions made within the scope of existing requirements are considered administrative decisions and can be approved by the Registrar or designate in consultation with the Dean.

Commented [KM6]: Adding items in Section 8 for clarity only.

9. In accordance with the [Quality Assurance Framework](#), curricular changes as outlined in these Procedures are not normally subject to the University's Cyclical Audit.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

10. This procedure will be reviewed as necessary and at least every three years. The Provost's Office, through the Center for Institutional Quality Enhancement coordinates the day to day management of the quality assurance process, and works in collaboration with Deans and units to implement the procedures for developing and accessing academic programs. The Provost or successor thereof, is responsible to monitor and review this Policy.

RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES & DOCUMENTS

[Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance - Quality Assurance Framework](#)

Institutional Quality Assurance Policy

Program Nomenclature Directives

Protocols associated with consultation/development of Indigenous curriculum

Protocols associated with the development of Micro-credentials

Classification Number	ACD 1501.02
Parent Policy	Institutional Quality Assurance Process
Framework Category	Academic
Approving Authority	Academic Council
Policy Owner	Provost
Approval Date	June 2020
Review Date	June 2023
Supersedes	ACD 1501 (June 2010); Quality Assurance Handbook (June 2011) Cyclical Program Review Procedures (June 2020); Not-for-Academic Credit Digital Badges, Microcredentials, and Stackable Credentials Policy (July 2021)



CYCLICAL REVIEW AND AUDITING PROCEDURES

PURPOSE

1. The purpose of these Procedures is to set out the process for conducting the monitoring of new ~~degree-Degree~~ and ~~diploma-Diploma programs-Programs~~ and the cyclical review of existing ~~degree-Degree~~ and ~~diploma-Diploma programs-Programs~~ to ensure that they continue to meet provincial quality assurance requirements and to support their ongoing rigour and coherence. Further, these procedures set out the process for the cyclical audit conducted by the Quality Council, which reviews the University's institutional quality enhancement Policies, Procedures and processes. New ~~programs-Programs~~ are monitored at the time of first intake and at least one year after the launch of the ~~program-Program~~. Cyclical reviews of established ~~programs-Programs~~ and the University audit occur at least once every 8 years.

DEFINITIONS

2. For the purposes of these Procedures the ~~definitions in the Policy, following definitions apply~~:

~~**Academic Council:** the most senior academic governance body of the institution~~

~~**Degree:** An academic credential awarded upon successful completion of a prescribed set and sequence of requirements as specified by a program and that meet a standard of performance consistent with University and provincial degree-level expectations~~

Commented [KM1]: Policy is now the central place for all definitions, this avoids any potential contradiction and shortens the Procedures for ease of reading.

Diploma: An academic credential awarded upon the successful completion of a prescribed set of degree credit courses as specified by a program. Diplomas are classified as concurrent and/or direct entry

Faculty Council: established by Academic Council to approve new programs and courses, policies (including admissions), academic standards, curriculum and degree requirements, and long range academic plans, at the Faculty level

Graduate Studies Committee (GSC): A standing committee of Academic Council responsible for reviewing graduate curriculum proposals and documents.

Ministry: the Ontario Ministry governing the affairs of Colleges and Universities.

New Program: any degree, degree program, or major, currently approved by Academic Council and the Board of Governors, which has not been previously approved by the Quality Council, its predecessors, or any intra-institutional approval processes that previously applied. A change of name, only, does not constitute a new program; nor does the inclusion of a new program of specialization where another with the same designation already exists (e.g., a new honours program where a major with the same designation already exists). To clarify, for the purposes of these Procedures, a “new program” is brand new: that is to say, the program has substantially different program requirements and substantially different learning outcomes from those of any existing approved programs offered by Ontario Tech University. The final determination of whether a proposed offering constitutes a new program will rest with the Provost.

Program: A complete set and sequence of courses, combination of courses, and/or other units of study, research and practice; the successful completion of which qualifies the candidate for a formal credential (degree with or without major; diploma)

Quality Council: the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance, established by the Council of Ontario Universities in July 2010, responsible for oversight of the Quality Assurance Framework processes for Ontario Universities. The Council operates at arm’s length from both Ontario’s publicly assisted universities and the Ontario government.

Resource Committee: the university Academic Resource Committee or equivalent university body

Undergraduate Studies Committee (USC): A standing committee of Academic Council responsible for reviewing undergraduate curriculum proposals and documents.

SCOPE AND AUTHORITY

3. These Procedures apply to undergraduate and graduate ~~degree-Degree~~ and ~~De~~diploma ~~P~~programs and the associated governance processes, whether the ~~P~~programs are offered in full, in part, or conjointly by any institutions federated or affiliated with the university. It also applies to ~~D~~degree and ~~De~~diploma programs offered in partnership, collaboration or other such

arrangement with other post-secondary institutions including colleges, universities or other institutes.

4. For those ~~P~~programs that are offered in more than one mode, at different locations, or having complementary components (e.g., bridging options, experiential education options, etc.), the distinct versions of the program will be identified and reviewed during new program monitoring and cyclical program review. The self-study brief will encompass all modes, locations, and components in one report.
5. Degree and Diploma Programs which have been approved but never launched, have been closed, or for which admission has been suspended, are not subject to these Procedures. Stand-alone Micro-credentials are also not subject to these Procedures.
6. The Provost, or successor thereof, is the Policy Owner and is responsible for overseeing the implementation, administration and interpretation of these Procedures.

PROCEDURES

7. Monitoring of New Academic Programs

- 7.1. At the time of first intake into the Program, CIQE, working with the Office of Institutional Research and Analysis, will prepare an initial report that will review admissions and enrolment data and report on any changes made to the program since it was approved. This report will be reviewed by the Office of the Provost, through the Resource Committee, to assess any issues that may arise and determine if alternate plans are required to ensure the overall success of the Program.
- 7.2. One year after the launch of the Program, CIQE, working with the Academic Unit, will prepare a report that will review: enrolment and admissions data; success in realizing the program objectives, requirements, and learning outcomes; any changes made to the program since approval; and other key metrics to assess New Program effectiveness. This report will be reviewed by the ~~Office of the~~ Provost, through the Resource Committee, to assess any issues and determine if alternate plans are required to ensure the overall success of the Program.
- 7.3. Should any recommendations arise from the one-year report, additional monitoring and review may be required at the request of the ~~Office of the~~ Provost or the Resource Committee. An additional monitoring report, if required, will analyze key curricular and student data (e.g. student evaluations, GPA, retention data, etc.) as well as address the recommendations from the initial report. Pending review, further documentation may be required for ongoing monitoring.

- 7.4. Should the Quality Council require any follow-up reports, as indicated at the time of approval, these shall be completed in accordance with the requirements outlined in the approval letter from the Quality Council.
- 7.5. ~~New~~ Programs will then be reviewed and refined on an ongoing basis in accordance with the Institutional Quality Assurance Policy. Specifically, approved Programs will be entered into the schedule of academic program reviews and the first review will take place no more than eight years after the start of the Program, and every eight years hence, in accordance with Section 8 of these Procedures. The first cyclical review will take into consideration the outcomes of the intake, one-year, and any additional reports, as well as any aspects highlighted by the Quality Council as required during the program review.

8. Cyclical Review of Degree and Diploma Programs

Procedures for program reviews involve six components: the review and enhancement of program learning outcomes and assessment of core competencies; the development of a self-study brief by the program under review; external evaluation to provide recommendations on program quality improvement; internal response to review the external evaluation and recommendations; preparation and approval of a final assessment report and implementation plan; and subsequent reporting on the implementation of recommendations. Individuals may use the templates provided at www.ontariotechu.ca/ciqe as a guide to assist in the planning and implementation of the components of the cyclical review. It is expected that, unless otherwise specified below, all information, documents, and reports are not publicly accessible and will be afforded an appropriate level of confidentiality.

8.1. Appointment of Internal Assessment Team

- 8.1.1. Upon notification that a program is up for review, the Faculty Dean will appoint an Internal Assessment Team (IAT), comprised of faculty, staff and students (current or recent graduate of the program). The Dean will also appoint a faculty member from the IAT to act as Chair. A faculty co-chair may be appointed, if necessary.
- 8.1.2. The proposed IAT will be submitted to CIQE, and will be approved by the Provost.

8.2. Review and Enhancement of Program Learning Outcomes

The IAT chair, in consultation with the IAT, will review and enhance the program learning outcomes, and map them to the degree level expectations (either undergraduate or graduate) set out by the Ministry.

- 8.2.1. The IAT will engage in a program learning outcome enhancement process where they will review and revise their program learning outcomes. These

revisions will lay the groundwork for the program for the upcoming seven years. The program and course learning outcomes must be reviewed and revised using resources provided by CIQE and the Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC). It is strongly recommended that the IAT and other program faculty participate in learning outcome sessions hosted by CIQE and TLC; alternatively, the revised program learning outcomes must be reviewed and approved by CIQE and TLC prior to the scheduling of the External Review. The IAT will then map the revised program learning outcomes to the appropriate degree level expectations (DLEs) with related skills and competencies using resources provided by CIQE and the Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC).

- 8.2.2. After the map to the degree level expectations is complete, the IAT will map their current course offerings to the revised program learning outcomes and analyze the results.
- 8.2.3. The revised program learning outcomes and DLE map, once approved finalized by the IAT, will be an appendix to the self-study document.

8.3. Self-Study Briefs

The self-study brief will form the basis of the program review and must clearly set out the indicators of program quality, as outlined in the Evaluation Criteria, against which the program is to be assessed. The brief may also identify specific aspects of the program on which feedback is sought. A template for the proposal will be provided through the Centre for Institutional Quality Enhancement via the website at www.ontariotechu.ca/ciqe.

- 8.3.1. Self-study briefs for each program under review must be prepared and reviewed by a Program Review Internal Assessment Team (IAT).
- 8.3.2. The IAT will work in collaboration with the Centre for Institutional Quality Enhancement (CIQE) to pull together key institutional data and other indicators of program quality that will inform the self-study.
- 8.3.3. The brief should be broad-based, reflective and forward-looking and should demonstrate how the program advances the University's mission.
- 8.3.4. The brief must also present evidence to support an assessment of the program requirements, program learning outcomes and degree level expectations with related skills and competencies, along with the human and physical resources involved.
- 8.3.5. The brief should address any concerns and recommendations raised in previous reviews.

- 8.3.6. The brief will include a short description of the process by which the self-study was prepared, including faculty, staff, and student input and involvement.
- 8.3.7. The brief will also identify specific aspects of the program on which feedback is sought, including any consideration of the principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization; areas requiring improvement and those that hold promise for enhancement; any unique curriculum or program innovations, creative components, or significant high impact practices; as well as academic services that directly contribute to the academic quality of the program. The brief will incorporate feedback sought from representatives from industry, the professions or employers, where appropriate.
- 8.3.8. Upon its completion, the Faculty, and the Dean, will review the self-study brief to ensure that it presents the full range of evidence to support an assessment of program quality. The Dean may also highlight any areas of opportunity or institutional constraints that may need to be taken into account as part of the review.

8.4. External Review and Reporting

- 8.4.1. The Dean, in consultation with the IAT, will recommend to the Provost, at least 5 individuals to serve as external reviewers of the Program.
 - 8.4.1.1. Reviewers must be external to the University, will normally be tenured (or equivalent) and will have suitable disciplinary expertise, qualifications and program management experience at another university, including an appreciation of pedagogy and learning outcomes, ~~tenured or equivalent, have program management experience at another university~~, and be at arm's length to the program under review, as outlined in the Proposed External Reviewer's form and on the Quality Council's [website](#).
 - 8.4.1.2. For undergraduate programs, two reviewers are required, with both being external to the university. At least one of the reviewers must currently be at a Canadian post-secondary institution.
 - 8.4.1.3. For graduate programs, at least two reviewers external to the university are required. At least one of the reviewers must currently be at a Canadian post-secondary institution. A third internal reviewer, external to the program, may additionally be included.

8.4.1.4. For each External reviewer candidate, the recommendation must be accompanied by a rationale for the selection and a detailed biographical statement, ~~prepared by the IAT,~~ that outlines their academic expertise, administrative experience, accomplishments, and research.

Commented [KM2]: Codifying the current practice.

8.4.1.5. External reviewer forms are sent to CIQE to be reviewed and ~~subsequently~~ approved by the Provost. ~~CIQE-The Office of Planning and Analysis~~ will contact approved proposed reviewers to maintain arms-length process and ensure that the required number of reviewers are engaged to review the Program.

8.4.2. CIQE, in consultation with the Faculty, will organize a site visit to provide an opportunity for the reviewers to assess the standards and quality of the program and to prepare a report that addresses the University's program quality review [Evaluation Criteria](#).

8.4.2.1. External review of doctoral program must ~~incorporate~~ an on-site visit ~~except in exceptional circumstances as determined by the Provost.~~ External review of undergraduate ~~programs, and certain,~~ Master's ~~programs (e.g. professional Master's programs, fully online) and Graduate Diploma programs~~ -will normally be conducted on-site, but ~~at the request of the Dean,~~ the Provost (or delegate) may ~~propose~~ ~~approve~~ that the review be conducted by desk audit, virtual site visit, or an equivalent method if the external reviewers are satisfied that the off-site option is acceptable. The ~~Provost/Dean(or delegate)~~ will ~~also~~ provide a clear justification for the ~~decision request to use these alternatives~~ ~~conduct the review without an on-site visit. An on-site visit is required for all other proposed master's programs.~~

Commented [KM3]: Aligning with updated QC guidelines and requirements and to provide clarity on process where discretion is possible.

8.4.2.2. In advance of the site visit, or prior to the desk audit, CIQE will send to the reviewers the ~~unit's Program's~~ self-study brief, ~~a cover letter by the Dean, along with~~ ~~and~~ any additional material or information that may be needed to inform the assessment.

8.4.2.3. ~~On the first morning~~ ~~At the beginning~~ of the site visit, or prior to the desk audit, the Provost or their designate will meet with the reviewer(s) to outline the process for review and the roles and responsibilities of the reviewers.

8.4.2.4. During the site visit, reviewers will have an opportunity to meet with the IAT, and with other faculty, students, staff, senior academic administrators, and any others who can most appropriately provide informed comment, such as representatives from industry, the

professions or employers, to discuss aspects of the self-study in the context of the program quality review criteria.

- 8.4.2.5. Reviewers will be required to respect the confidentiality of all aspects of the process and recognize the institution's autonomy to determine priorities for funding, space, and faculty allocation. Commentary or recommendations on issues such as faculty complement and/or space requirements, that are within the purview of the university's budgetary decision-making processes, must be tied directly to issues of program quality or sustainability.
- 8.4.3. Reviewers will submit a report to the Dean, through CIQE, which addresses the substance of the self-study and the program quality review [Evaluation Criteria](#). A template for the report will be provided by CIQE.
 - 8.4.3.1. Normally, the report will be prepared jointly by the reviewers and will contain at least three recommendations.
 - 8.4.3.2. Reviewers will be invited to acknowledge and provide evidence of any clearly innovative aspects of the program, including in the content and/or delivery of the program relative to other such programs, together with recommendations on specific steps to be taken to improve the program, distinguishing between those the program can itself take, and those that require external action.
 - 8.4.3.3. Reviewers will also be asked to identify and commend notably strong and creative attributes of the program; describe the program's strengths, areas for improvement, and opportunities for enhancement; and identify distinctive attributes of each discrete program/mode of delivery/site, where applicable.
 - 8.4.3.4. Normally, the report will be completed within 30 days of the site visit.
 - 8.4.3.5. Upon submission, CIQE will review the external reviewers' report to ensure it meets the requirements stated in Article 8.4.3. If additional details or clarification are needed from the reviewers, CIQE will reach out to the reviewers to request this in a revised report.

8.5. Response to Report

- 8.5.1. Upon receipt of the reviewers' report(s), the Dean and the IAT will consider its recommendations, including consideration of any financial or other resource implications.

- 8.5.1.1. The IAT Chair will solicit feedback from Program faculty and, in consultation with the IAT, will prepare and send to the Dean CIQE the Program's response to the reviewers' report that will include a summary of the program strengths, opportunities for improvement and a response to the recommendations put forward by the reviewers. A template for the Program's response report will be provided through CIQE.
- 8.5.1.2. Using the Program's response report as a guideline, the Dean, using a template provided by CIQE and working in consultation with the Office of the Provost, will prepare a separate decanal response to the reviewers' report. The response will include the Dean's assessment and prioritization of the recommendations and an Implementation Plan (IP) including resource requirements, a timeline for acting on and monitoring the implementation of the recommendations, and persons/area responsible for acting on the recommendations. A template for the decanal response and Implementation Plan will be provided through CIQE. The Dean will must solicit Faculty feedback on the Implementation Plan through Faculty Council.
- 8.5.1.3. The Implementation Plan will be reviewed by the Provost, through the Resource Committee, to examine resource implications and allocations. The Resource Committee will create a brief summary report of its review.

Commented [KM4]: Clarifying process and showing alignment with QC in Section 8.5, no changes to existing requirements.

8.6. Approval Process

- 8.6.1. Using the self-study brief, together with the reviewers' report(s), the Dean's and Program's responses, the Implementation Plan, and the Resource Committee's summary report, CIQE will prepare a Final Assessment Report (FAR). If confidential or sensitive information is presented in any of the documentation used to prepare the FAR this information will be included only in an appendix. The appendix will be afforded the appropriate level of confidentiality within the Office of the Provost and the Faculty and will be withheld from distribution.
 - 8.6.1.1. The FAR will synthesize the reports and recommendations resulting from the review and, identify the strengths of the program as well as the opportunities for program improvement and enhancement.
 - 8.6.1.2. The FAR will list all recommendations of the external reviewers and the associated separate internal responses and assessments from the Program and the Dean. The list of recommendations and/or responses may be paraphrased and combined under themes to facilitate clear tracking and monitoring. Explanation for reviewer

Commented [KM5]: Adjustment of unclear language in Sections 8.6 and 8.7 to provide more clarity in document titling and content and to avoid confusing approval paths; ensures proper alignment with QC wording.

recommendations not selected for further action ~~in the Implementation Plan~~, as well as any additional recommendations that the Program, the Dean and/or the university may have identified as requiring action ~~as a result of the program's review~~, will be included in the FAR.

8.6.1.3. ~~CIQE The FAR will include an will also prepare an~~ Executive Summary ~~to the FAR~~ as to be suitable for publication.

8.6.2. The FAR (excluding the confidential appendix, if applicable), ~~Executive Summary~~, and Implementation Plan IP, will be presented to the appropriate standing committee of Academic Council (USC or GSC) for approval. The role of the committee is to verify that the FAR and IP are an accurate and transparent synthesis of the Program's review.

8.6.3. In those cases where the program review cycle includes both undergraduate and graduate programs, separate reviews will be conducted and reports will be submitted to the USC and GSC concerning the reviews relevant to the mandate of each committee.

~~8.6.3.~~ 8.6.4. The Executive Summary to the FAR and the IP are then posted on the Ontario Tech corporate website.

~~8.6.4.~~ It is expected that the reports and recommendations will be afforded an appropriate level of confidentiality.

8.6.5. The Executive SA summary of all reviews including each FAR (excluding the confidential appendices) and IP and Implementation Plan is provided will be distributed to Academic Council and the Board of Governors for information.

~~8.6.5.~~ 8.6.6. The FAR, Executive Summary, and Implementation Plan A summary report of all reviews completed during the year, with a link to the Executive Summaries and IPs, will be sent to the Quality Council as required under the Quality Assurance Framework.

~~8.6.6.~~ 8.6.7. The approved FAR, including confidential information, and the final IP Implementation Plan will be provided to the Faculty (ies), through the Dean (s), as primary owner. These will serve as the basis for the continuous improvement and monitoring of the program. The Faculty is responsible for subsequent reporting and monitoring of the ~~Implementation Plan~~ IP, as outlined in Section 8.7.

8.7. Subsequent Reporting and Monitoring of the Implementation of Recommendations

8.7.1. Eighteen months following the completion of the review, the Office of the Provost will request from the Dean ~~of the Faculty~~ a brief follow-up report that outlines the progress that has been made in implementing the agreed upon plans for improvement. The report will be sent to the Resource Committee for review.

~~8.7.2.~~ If outstanding items remain ~~from the Implementation Plan~~ at the time of the ~~eighteen-month follow-up~~ report, the Resource Committee will review these outstanding items with the Dean ~~of the Faculty~~. The Resource Committee may recommend further monitoring of these items on a case-by-case basis.

~~8.7.2-8.7.3.~~ The follow-up report, excluding any confidential or sensitive information, is then posted on the Ontario Tech corporate website.

~~8.7.3-8.7.4.~~ A summary of the progress reports will be distributed to the appropriate standing committee of Academic Council (USC/GSC), to Academic Council, and to the Board of Governors, for information. ~~approved by the appropriate standing committee of Academic Council (USC or GSC).~~

~~8.7.4-8.7.5.~~ A summary of the progress report will be included in the reporting to Academic Council on program reviews.

~~8.7.5-8.7.6.~~ The summary report is then posted on the Ontario Tech corporate website. A summary report of all follow-up reporting completed during the year, with a link to the reports, will be sent to the Quality Council as required under the Quality Assurance Framework.

8.8. Review of Joint or Collaborative Programs

8.8.1. Joint programs, and other programs offered in collaboration with other post-secondary institutions, will ensure that the required quality assurance requirements of both institutions are met.

8.8.2. When the program is held jointly with an institution that does not have an IQAP that has been ratified by the Quality Council, the Ontario Tech IQAP Policy and associated Procedures will apply with Ontario Tech as the leading institution.

8.8.3. In cases where the program is held jointly with an institution that does have an IQAP ratified by the Quality Council, the Office of the Provost, through CIQE, will collaborate with the partner institution to develop a process and

Commented [KM6]: The only substantive change to the procedures. There is no requirement for the 18-month report to be approved by USC/GSC under the QC requirements, nor is there an ability to change a progress report at the committee level. This is often confusing to committee. It is important that updates from the action plan be provided for information.

associated templates that will address all requirements of each institution's IQAP. Specifically, the collaboration will address:

- a) The selection of external reviewers
- b) Templates to be used for a single self-study and required reports from the external reviewers, program team, and Dean(s)
- c) The location(s) or the site visit(s), timing for program review, and subsequent reporting
- d) The development of a joint committee to review the program
- e) The process for monitoring and reporting on the implementation of recommendations after the review
- f) The lead institution for the purposes of submission to the Quality Council

9. Quality Council Cyclical Audit

In accordance with the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF), the University is subject to a Cyclical Audit by the Quality Council, at least once every eight years. The Quality Council has established the schedule of institutional participation in the audit process within the eight-year cycle and publishes the agreed [schedule](#) on its website. The Cyclical Audit provides necessary accountability to post-secondary education's principal stakeholders by assessing the degree to which the University's internally-defined quality assurance processes, procedures, and practices align with and satisfy the agreed upon standards, as set out in the QAF.

Specifically, the Cyclical Audit will:

- Review institutional changes made in policy, process, and practice in response to the recommendations from the previous audit
- Confirm the University's practice is in compliance with its IQAP as ratified by the Quality Council and note any misalignment of its IQAP with the Quality Assurance Framework; and
- Review institutional quality enhancement practices that contribute to continuous improvement of programs, especially the processes for New Program Approvals and Cyclical Program Reviews

9.1. The Audit Team

Normally three auditors, selected from the Audit Committee's membership by the Quality Assurance Secretariat, conduct the Cyclical Audit. These auditors will be at arm's length from the University undergoing the audit. Members of the Quality

Assurance Secretariat accompany the auditors on their site visit and constitute the remainder of the Audit Team.

9.2. Scope of the Audit

- 9.2.1. The Audit Team will independently select a sample of programs for audit that represent the development of new Degree programs under the New Program Procedures (normally two examples of new programs) and Section 8 of the Cyclical Review and Auditing Procedures (normally three or four examples of programs that have undergone a Cyclical Program Review). New Degree programs and Cyclical Program Reviews undertaken within the period since the previous Audit are eligible for selection.
- 9.2.2. Diploma Programs and Micro-credentials that have been developed under the New Program Procedures and changes made under the Curriculum Change Procedures or Program Closure Procedures will not normally be subject to audit.
- 9.2.3. A small sample of new programs still in development and/or cyclical program reviews that are still in progress may also be selected, in consultation with the University. If so, documentation associated with these in-progress processes will not be required for submission for audit. Instead, the auditors will ask to meet with the program representatives to gain a better understanding of current quality practices.
- 9.2.4. Specific areas of focus may also be added to the audit when an immediately previous audit has documented Causes for Concern, or when the Quality Council so requests. The University will be informed of the specific areas of focus in the letter from the Quality Assurance Secretariat that also details the programs selected for audit. The University itself may also request that specific programs and/or quality enhancement elements be audited.

9.3. Pre-Audit Orientation and Briefing

The Quality Assurance Secretariat will schedule an in-person, half-day briefing approximately one year prior to the University's scheduled Cyclical Audit. During this briefing, the Quality Assurance Secretariat and a member of the Audit Team will provide an orientation on what to expect from the Cyclical Audit to the University Key Contact, key CIQE staff members, and any other relevant stakeholder(s) as determined by the Provost or designate.

9.4. Self-Study

- 9.4.1. In consultation with the Provost, CIQE will prepare a self-study, which reflects on past and current policies and practices and the extent to which

the University demonstrates a focus on continuous improvement in the development of new programs and the cyclical review of existing ones. The self-study will present and assess the quality enhancement processes, including challenges and opportunities, within its own institutional context and pay particular attention to issues, if any, flagged in the previous Audit.

- 9.4.2. CIQE will also prepare a package of all relevant documentation for each program selected for audit, including all items related to each step outlined in the Procedures. The self-study and document packages are submitted by CIQE to the Quality Assurance Secretariat in advance of the desk audit.
- 9.4.3. The documentation to be submitted for audit will include, but is not limited to:
 - All templates, proposal briefs/self-studies, reports and responses, minutes of meetings, and any other relevant documents and other information related to the programs selected for audit, as requested by the Audit Team;
 - A record of any revisions of the university's IQAP, as ratified by the Quality Council; and
 - The annual report of any minor revisions of the university's IQAP that did not require Quality Council re-ratification.

9.5. Audit Team Review

9.5.1. Desk Audit

The auditors will first undertake a desk audit of the University's quality enhancement practices, which will determine whether the University's practice is in compliance with the IQAP and will also note any misalignment of the IQAP with the QAF. The desk audit serves to raise specific issues and questions to be pursued during the on-site visit and to facilitate an effective and efficient audit. The auditors will undertake to preserve the confidentiality required for all documentation and communications and to meet all applicable requirements of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA).

9.5.2. Site Visit

After the desk audit, auditors will normally visit the University over two or three days. The principal purpose of the on-site visit is for the auditors to get a sufficiently complete and accurate understanding of the University's application of the IQAP in the pursuit of continuous improvement of programs. Further, the site visit will serve to answer questions and address information gaps that arose during the desk audit and assess the degree to

which the institution's quality enhancement practices contribute to continuous improvement.

- 9.5.2.1. CIQE, in consultation with the Office of the Provost and the auditors, will establish the program and schedule for the site visit. In the course of the site visit, the auditors speak with the university's senior academic leadership including those who the IQAP identifies as having important roles in the governance process.
- 9.5.2.2. The auditors also meet with representatives from those programs selected for audit, students, and representatives of units that play an important role in ensuring program quality and success.

9.6. Audit Report

- 9.6.1. Following the conduct of an audit, the auditors will prepare a report that will be approved by the Quality Council. The report, which is to be suitable for publication, comments on the institution's commitment to the culture of engagement with quality assurance and continuous improvement and will meet the requirements as outlined in Section 6.2.7 of the QAF. The report shall not contain any confidential information.
- 9.6.2. A separate addendum will provide the University with detailed findings related to the audited programs. This addendum is not subject to publication. The report may include findings in the form of Suggestions, Recommendations, and/or Causes for Concern.
- 9.6.3. The Audit Report also includes recommendations for the Quality Council to take one or more steps, as appropriate, as outlined in Section 6.2.7 of the QAF. This may include participation in a Focused Audit, as described in Section 9.10 below.
- 9.6.4. The Quality Assurance Secretariat submits the Audit Report to the Audit Committee for consideration. Once the Audit Committee is satisfied with the Report, it makes a conditional recommendation to the Quality Council for approval of the Report, subject only to minor revisions resulting from the fact checking stage.
- 9.6.5. The Quality Assurance Secretariat provides a copy to the University, via the Provost, for fact checking. This consultation is intended to ensure that the report does not contain errors or omissions of fact but not to discuss the substance or findings of the report. CIQE will prepare a report, for submission by the Provost, on the factual accuracy of the draft report within 30 days. If needed, the Provost can request an extension of this deadline by contacting the Quality Assurance Secretariat and providing a rationale for

the request. This response becomes part of the official record and the audit team may use it to revise their report. However, the fact checking response will not be published on the Quality Council's website. When substantive changes are required, the draft report will be taken back to the Audit Committee.

- 9.6.6. Upon approval by the Quality Council, the Quality Assurance Secretariat sends the approved report to the university with an indication of the timing for any required follow-up.

9.7. University Response to Report

- 9.7.1. When a Follow-up Response Report is required, the University, through CIQE, will submit the Report within the specified timeframe, detailing the steps it has taken to address the recommendations and/or Cause(s) for Concern.
- 9.7.2. If the Audit Team is satisfied with the University's Follow-up Response Report, it will draft a report on the sufficiency of the response. The auditors' report, suitable for publication, is then submitted to the Audit Committee for consideration.
- 9.7.3. If the Audit Team is not satisfied with the response, the Audit Team will consult with the University, through the Quality Assurance Secretariat, to ensure the follow-up response is modified to satisfy the requirements of the Audit Report. In so doing, the University will be asked to make any necessary changes to the follow-up response within a specified timeframe.
- 9.7.4. The Audit Committee will submit a recommendation to the Quality Council to accept the university's follow-up response and associated auditors' report.

9.8. Publication of the Results of the Audit

- 9.8.1. The Quality Assurance Secretariat will publish the approved report of the overall findings, absent the addendum that details the findings related to the audited programs, together with a record of the recommendations on the Quality Council's website.
- 9.8.2. The University will also publish the report (absent the previously specified addendum) on its website.
- 9.8.3. The Quality Assurance Secretariat publishes any Follow-up Response Report and the auditors' report on the scope and adequacy of the university's

response on the Quality Council website and sends a copy to the University for publication on its website.

- 9.8.4. A report on all audit-related activity is provided to the Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents (OCAV), the Council of Ontario Universities (COU), and the Ministry through the Quality Council's Annual Report.

9.9. Outcomes of the Cyclical Audit

The Audit Report describes the extent to which the University is compliant with the IQAP and approximates best practice. Based on the findings in its Report, the Audit Committee will make recommendations about future oversight by the Quality Council and/or one or more of its Committees.

- 9.9.1. When the Audit Report finds relatively high to very high degrees of compliance and good to best practices, the Audit Committee may recommend reduced Quality Council oversight in one or more areas of the University's quality enhancement practices. The recommendation may include, but is not limited to, the elimination of the requirement for a Follow-up Response Report to the Audit Report and possibly a reduced set of documentation required for a subsequent audit.
- 9.9.2. Alternatively, when the Audit Report identifies deficiencies in several areas of the University's practices and/or systemic challenges, the Audit Committee may recommend increased oversight by the Quality Council. The nature of this oversight will be determined by the Quality Council and may include one or more of the following outcomes, which are less formal than the Cyclical Audit and, thus, will not replace it:
- Increased reporting requirements;
 - A focused audit (Section 9.10, below); and/or
 - Any other action deemed appropriate by the Quality Council.

9.10. Focused Audit

- 9.10.1. When an Audit Report has identified at least one Cause for Concern, the Audit Committee will recommend to the Quality Council that the specific area(s) of concern may require closer scrutiny and further support through a Focused Audit.
- 9.10.2. A Focused Audit may also be triggered by the Quality Council when it has some concerns about the quality assurance processes at a particular university.

9.10.3. A Focused Audit may take the form of a desk audit and/or an additional site visit. The Audit Committee will also recommend to the Quality Council a proposed timeframe within which the Focused Audit should take place.

9.10.4. The Focused Audit Report

9.10.4.1. Following the conduct of a Focused Audit, the auditors will prepare a report that will be approved by the Quality Council. The report will be suitable for subsequent publication, and will meet the requirements as outlined in Section 6.3 of the QAF.

9.10.4.2. The Focused Audit Report may also include Suggestions, Recommendations, and/or Cause(s) for Concern.

9.10.4.3. The report will be published on both the Quality Council and University websites. Other standard elements associated with a Cyclical Audit, such as the requirement for a one-year response, will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

10. These procedures will be reviewed as necessary and at least every three years. The Office of the Provost, through the Center for Institutional Quality Enhancement, coordinates the day to day management of the quality assurance process, and works in collaboration with Deans and units to implement the procedures for developing and accessing academic programs. The Provost or successor thereof, is responsible to monitor and review this Policy.

RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES & DOCUMENTS

[Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance - Quality Assurance Framework](#)

Institutional Quality Assurance Policy

Academic Resource Committee Terms of Reference

Program Nomenclature Directives

Protocols associated with consultation/development of Indigenous curriculum

Classification Number	ACD 1501.03
Parent Policy	Institutional Quality Assurance Process
Framework Category	Academic
Approving Authority	Academic Council
Policy Owner	Provost
Approval Date	June 2020
Review Date	June 2023
Supersedes	ACD 1501.03 (June 2012); Quality Assurance Handbook (June 2011); New Program Procedures (June 2020); Not for Academic Credit Digital Badges, Microcredentials, and Stackable Credentials Policy (July 2021)



NEW PROGRAM PROCEDURES

PURPOSE

1. The purpose of these Procedures is to establish a consistent process for the planning and establishment for any new degree or diploma program at the University.

DEFINITIONS

2. For the purposes of these Procedures the following definitions in the Policy apply:

~~**Academic Council:** the most senior academic governance body of the institution~~

~~**Academic Unit:** a Faculty or combination of Faculties offering a Program~~

~~**Cyclical Program Review (CPR):** to critically examine the components of a program with the assistance of outside reviewers with the goal of improving the quality of the program for students. A program review's purpose is not solely to demonstrate the positive aspects of the program, but also to outline the challenges and concerns that will lead to improvements for the future~~

Commented [KM1]: Policy is now the central place for all definitions, this avoids any potential contradiction and shortens the Procedures for ease of reading.

Degree Program: a complete set and sequence of courses, combination of courses and/or other units of study, research and practice prescribed by the university to fulfill the requirements for a particular degree

Diploma Program: a complete set and sequence of courses, combination of courses and/or other units of study and practice prescribed by the university to fulfill the requirements for a particular diploma

Faculty Council: established by Academic Council to approve new programs and courses, policies (including admissions), academic standards, curriculum and degree requirements, and long-range academic plans, at the Faculty level

Graduate Diploma: A prescribed set of degree-credit courses and/or other forms of study that can be undertaken as a stand-alone program or to complement a graduate degree program, and to provide specialization, sub-specialization or inter- or multi-disciplinary qualification. A graduate diploma is comprised of at least 12 credit hours of graduate-level study. There are three types of Graduate Diplomas as set out by the Council of Ontario Universities:

- a) **Type 1:** Awarded when a candidate admitted to a master's program leaves the program after completing a prescribed proportion of the requirements. Students are not admitted directly to these programs. When new, these programs require approval through the university's protocol for Major Modification prior to their adoption. Once approved, they will be incorporated into the institution's schedule for cyclical reviews as part of the parent program.
- b) **Type 2: A concurrent graduate diploma** is offered in conjunction with a master's or doctoral degree, the admission to which requires that the candidate be already admitted to the master's or doctoral program. This represents an additional, usually interdisciplinary, qualification and requires advanced level, usually interdisciplinary, study, at least 50% of which is in addition to the general requirements for the degree. When new, these programs require submission to the Quality Council for an Expedited Approval (no external reviewers required) prior to their adoption. Once approved, they will be incorporated into the university's schedule for cyclical reviews as part of the parent program.
- c) **Type 3: A direct entry graduate diploma** is a stand-alone, direct-entry program, generally developed by a unit already offering a related master's (and sometimes doctoral) degree, and designed to meet the needs of a particular clientele or market. Ontario Tech type 3 graduate diplomas may include non-degree credit courses to a maximum of 30% of the total program credit hours. Where the program has been conceived and developed as a distinct and original entity, these programs require submission to the Quality Council for an Expedited Approval (no external reviewers required) prior to their adoption. Once approved, they will be included in the Schedule for

Cyclical Reviews and will be subject to external review during the CPR process.

— **Graduate Studies Committee (GSC):** a standing committee of Academic Council responsible for reviewing graduate curriculum proposals and documents

Micro-credential: A designation of achievement of a coherent set of skills and knowledge, specified by a statement of purpose, learning outcomes, and strong evidence of need by industry, employers, and/or the community. They have fewer requirements and are of shorter duration than a qualification and focus on learning outcomes that are distinct from diploma/degree programs.

Ministry: the Ontario Ministry governing the affairs of Colleges and Universities

New Program: any degree, degree program, or major, currently approved by Academic Council and the Board of Governors, which has not been previously approved by the Quality Council, its predecessors, or any intra-institutional approval processes that previously applied. A change of name, only, does not constitute a new program; nor does the inclusion of a new program of specialization where another with the same designation already exists (e.g., a new honours program where a major with the same designation already exists). To clarify, for the purposes of these Procedures, a “new program” is brand new: that is to say, the program has substantially different program requirements and substantially different learning outcomes from those of any existing approved programs offered by Ontario Tech University. The final determination of whether a proposed offering constitutes a new program will rest with the Provost.

— **Program:** A complete set and sequence of courses, combination of courses, and/or other units of study, research and practice; the successful completion of which qualifies the candidate for a formal credential (degree with or without major; diploma)

Quality Council: the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance, established by the Council of Ontario Universities in July 2010, responsible for oversight of the Quality Assurance Framework processes for Ontario Universities. The Council operates at arm’s length from both Ontario’s publicly assisted universities and the Ontario government

Resource Committee: the university Academic Resource Committee or equivalent university body

Undergraduate Diploma: A prescribed set of degree credit courses and/or other forms of study that can be undertaken as a stand-alone program or to complement an undergraduate degree program. An undergraduate diploma is comprised of 18-30 credit hours of undergraduate level study

- a) — **A concurrent undergraduate diploma** is offered in conjunction with an undergraduate degree, which requires that the candidate be already admitted to an undergraduate degree

~~b) A direct entry undergraduate diploma is a stand-alone, direct-entry program, developed by a unit already offering a related undergraduate or graduate program~~

~~Undergraduate Studies Committee (USC): a standing committee of Academic Council responsible for reviewing undergraduate curriculum proposals and documents~~

SCOPE AND AUTHORITY

3. These procedures apply to new cost-recovery or government-funded undergraduate and graduate Degree or Diploma Programs, and may apply to new Micro-credentials ~~(which may be for academic credit or not for academic credit)~~, whether offered in full, in part, or conjointly by any institutions federated or affiliated with the University. -It also applies to new Programs offered in partnership, collaboration or other such arrangement with other post-secondary institutions including colleges, universities, or other institutes.
4. The Provost, or successor thereof, is the Policy Owner and is responsible for overseeing the implementation, administration and interpretation of these Procedures.

Commented [KM2]: Removing redundant language; M-Cs are defined in the relevant policy instruments.

PROCEDURES

Procedures for new Degree Programs involve seven components which will be undertaken in order: ~~a~~ project initiation discussion and submission of a Notice of Intent to be approved by the Provost that demonstrates the program's fit with the Strategic Mandate Agreement, Integrated Academic and Research Plan (or equivalent) of the university, and the Academic, academic and strategic plans Plan of the Faculty(ies) offering the program; development of a proposal brief by the initiating program; external evaluation to provide an assessment of program quality; internal response to assessment; internal approval of proposal; submission of proposal to the Quality Council and Ministry as appropriate; and subsequent review of the program as part of the university's program review process in accordance with the Institutional Quality Assurance Policy and the Cyclical Review and Auditing Procedures.

Commented [KM3]: Adding initiation, which has been done in practice to assist with development of the NOI and in guiding direction of proposals to ensure institutional memory.

Adding the name of the IARP, which outlines University priorities, for specificity and ensuring the planning process at the Faculty level is clear.

New Diploma Programs are normally not subject to external review. Procedures for new Diploma Programs involve five components which will be undertaken in order: a project initiation discussion and submission of a Notice of Intent to be approved by the Provost that demonstrates the program's fit with the Strategic Mandate Agreement, Integrated Academic and Research Plan (or equivalent) of the university, and the Academic and Plan strategic plans of the Faculty(ies) offering the program; development of a proposal brief by the initiating program; internal approval of proposal; submission of proposal to the Quality Council and Ministry as appropriate; and subsequent review of the program as part of the university's program review process in accordance with the Institutional Quality Assurance Policy and the Cyclical Review and Auditing Procedures.

Procedures for new Micro-credential programs are outlined in Section 8.

Individuals may use the templates provided at www.ontariotechu.ca/ciqe to assist in the planning and implementation of the components of New Program development.

5. New Degree Programs

5.1. Notice of Intent and Consultation

Faculties that wish to propose new Degree Programs will first contact the Centre for Institutional Quality Enhancement (CIQE) to conduct a project initiation meeting and for assistance with completing ~~complete~~ a Notice of Intent (NOI) form available through the ~~Centre for Institutional Quality Enhancement (CIQE)~~ website at www.ontariotechu.ca/ciqe. The Notice of Intent will facilitate the necessary consultation at the beginning of the planning stages, but will not replace ongoing communication and consultation throughout the process.

Commented [KM4]: Updates throughout Sections 5 and 6 for added clarity/accuracy with established practice.

- 5.1.1. All ~~New Program developments~~ NOIs must be approved by the Provost ~~through the NOI~~ to ensure that any resource requirements are appropriately addressed before work on the proposal proceeds. Once an NOI has been approved, the new Program must be developed and approved at Academic Council within two years, or the approval will lapse and a new NOI must be submitted.
- 5.1.2. In the planning for any New Program, the Dean, in consultation with the Provost, must also determine the human, instructional and physical resources needed to implement the program and ensure its ongoing operation. The financial impact of the New Program on existing Programs must also be examined, and consideration must be given to possible collaborations with other units.
- 5.1.3. In addition, there must be broad consultation with members of the academic community, including faculty, staff and students who may be affected by the initiative, and with those who are key to its implementation, including the Provost, the Registrar, ~~or~~ the Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, and the Chief Librarian. Staff and faculty wishing to develop New Programs related to Indigenization and reconciliation, or that contain Indigenous content, must also consult in a Good Way, in accordance with the current procedures for Indigenous consultation.

5.2. Proposal Briefs

Detailed proposals for all new Degree Programs must be prepared by the proponents and feedback provided by the Faculty Council(s). The proposal brief must clearly set out the rationale for the Program, including the ways in which the program advances the university's mission and mandate, and addresses the need and demand for graduates of the Program. The proposal must also detail how the Program fits within Strategic Mandate Agreement and Integrated Academic and Research Plan (or equivalent) ~~the strategic vision~~ of the University and the academic and strategic plans of the Faculty(ies), the requirements of the Program, along with details of the human, physical and financial resources required. A template for the proposal will be provided through CIQE via the website at www.ontariotechu.ca/ciqe. Proposal briefs for new Degree Programs must fully and clearly address the Evaluation Criteria as outlined in Section 2.1.2 of the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF), and answer all questions

provided on the template. In addition to the Evaluation Criteria, proposal briefs must minimally include:

- a) The rationale for the Program, fit with the University's and Faculty's strategic direction, background on the Program's development, a Program abstract, unique curriculum or program innovations, creative components, or significant high impact practices, and evidence of student demand and societal need. It will also note any duplication with existing post-secondary programs at other institutions.
- b) A fully developed section outlining the Program learning outcomes and alignment with the provincial degree level expectations and skills and competencies; any consideration of the principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization; admission requirements; program structure; and program content including course outlines, descriptions, modes of delivery and teaching methods, and assessment with a linkage between the course learning outcomes and the program learning outcomes. The program and course learning outcomes must be developed and aligned to the provincial degree level expectations using resources provided by CIQE and the Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC). It is strongly recommended that the proponents participate in learning outcome development sessions hosted by CIQE and TLC; alternatively, the program and course learning outcomes must be reviewed and approved by CIQE and TLC prior to the scheduling of the External Review. Should the curriculum contain any Indigenous content, evidence of consultation and approval in accordance with the current procedures for Indigenous consultation will be provided.
- c) A list ~~will be provided~~ of required faculty members, including current core faculty and required new faculty; additional academic and non-academic human resources that may be required to launch and maintain the Program; physical resource requirements, with noting how current facilities will be used and what, if any, new resources may be required; and for graduate programs, any student support (funding) requirements. ~~Faculty Curricula Vitae (CV) CVs~~ for all required faculty members will be provided for inclusion in the proposal package presented to external reviewers.
- d) Summary statements of resources required to support the Program and a statement of current resource availability ~~will be included~~.
- e) For Programs offered jointly by more than one Faculty, the protocol for review and approval of program and course changes after the launch of the Program. This established protocol may be revised by agreement of all parties.

Commented [KM5]: Adding what is done in practice for transparency.

5.3. External Review and Reports

5.3.1. Prior to external review, the Office of the Provost, through the Resource Committee, will review the draft proposal to ensure that all operational and financial issues and Evaluation Criteria ([QAF Section 2.1.2](#)) have been adequately considered and addressed.

5.3.2. External Reviewers

For new Degree Programs, the Dean, in consultation with the Faculty ~~curriculum~~ committee ~~responsible for developing the Program~~, will recommend to the Provost, ~~through CIQE~~, the names of at least 5 individuals who may serve as reviewers of the Program. Two reviewers will be engaged to review new ~~Degree P~~ programs. ~~All-These~~ reviewers must be external to the University, will normally be tenured (or equivalent) and will have suitable disciplinary expertise, qualifications and program management experience, including an appreciation of pedagogy and learning outcomes, and be at arm's length to the program under review. CIQE will provide guidance on meeting the arm's length requirement, which is defined in the Guidelines section of the Proposed External Reviewers Nomination Form and on the Quality Council's [website](#). Recommendations for external reviewers must be accompanied by a rationale for the selection and a brief, ~~comprehensive~~ biographical statement ~~and/or curriculum vitae~~ for each ~~candidate~~.

Commented [KM6]: If maintaining arms-length in the process, the Faculty will not normally have access to the CVs.

5.3.3. Site Visit

~~The Office of the Provost, through the The Faculty, in consultation with~~ CIQE, will organize a ~~two-day~~ site visit to provide an opportunity for the reviewers to assess the standards and quality of the proposed Program. ~~External review of a new doctoral program must incorporate an on-site visit.~~ External review of new ~~undergraduate p~~ programs, ~~and certain new Master's programs (e.g. professional Master's programs, fully online)~~ will normally be conducted on-site, but, ~~at the request of the Dean~~, the Provost (or delegate) may ~~propose-approve~~ that the review be conducted by ~~desk audit, virtual site visit~~, or an equivalent method if the external reviewers are satisfied that the off-site option is acceptable. The ~~Provost-Dean (or delegate)~~ will ~~also~~ provide a clear justification for the decision to ~~use these alternatives~~ ~~conduct the review without an on-site visit~~. ~~An on-site visit is required for all other proposed master's programs.~~ At the beginning of the site visit, or prior to the desk audit, the Provost or their designate will meet with the reviewer(s) to outline the process for review and the roles and responsibilities of the reviewers.

Commented [KM7]: Updated to align with Quality Council guidelines and requirements and to provide clarity on process where discretion is possible.

5.3.4. External Reviewers' Report

5.3.4.1. The reviewer(s) will submit to the Dean, through CIQE, using a template provided, a report that appraises the standards and quality of the proposed program and addresses the Evaluation Criteria ~~and other requirements~~ ([QAF Section 2.1.2](#) and [QAF Section 2.2.2](#)). Reviewers will be invited to acknowledge any clearly innovative aspects of the proposed program together with recommendations on

any essential or otherwise desirable modifications to the program. -Normally, the report will be prepared within 30 days of the site visit.

- 5.3.4.2.** -Upon submission of the reviewers' report, CIQE will review the report to ensure it meets the requirements stated in Article 5.3.4.1. If additional details or clarification are needed from the reviewers, CIQE will reach out to the reviewers to request this in a revised report.

5.3.5. Response to Report

- 5.3.5.1.** Upon receipt of the reviewers' assessment, the Dean and the program proponents will consider the recommendations of the report.
- 5.3.5.2.** The program proponents will respond and comment on the recommendations from the external reviewer(s)' report. This program response will also include a list of changes that can be made to the proposal based on the reviewer(s)' recommendations.
- 5.3.5.3.** The Dean will respond and comment on the recommendations and the program's responses, considering overall Faculty and University plans.
- 5.3.5.4.** The program proponents, working with the Dean, will amend the proposal and append to it a final list of changes made based on the recommendations and the program committee's and Dean's responses to the external report.

5.4. Internal Approval Process

- 5.4.1.** The amended proposal brief, together with the reviewers' report and the Dean's and program committee's responses will be reviewed and approved by the Faculty Council(s). If there are additional resource implications resulting from the external review, the amended proposal brief will also be reviewed by the Resource Committee.
- 5.4.2.** The proposal brief, together with the reviewers' report and the Dean's and program committee's response will then be presented to the appropriate standing committee of Academic Council (GSC or USC) who will prepare a recommendation to Academic Council. The proposal brief will then be sent to Academic Council for review and approval. Proposals are then submitted to the University Board of Governors for final approval.

Commented [KM8]: When new resource expectations are added after the external review, the Committee will have another look at the proposal. This has been the practice, adding here for clarity.

5.5. Submission of New Degree Programs to the Quality Council and the Ministry

- 5.5.1.** Once ~~internal Academic Council~~ approvals for ~~a~~ new Degree Programs ~~have-has~~ been obtained, the program proposal must be submitted to the Quality Council for review. The submission will include the final proposal document with the date of Academic Council approval, the external reviewers' report, and the internal responses, as well as a

brief commentary on the two external reviewers with regard to their qualifications (expertise in content and program delivery, connections to industry where appropriate, expertise in teaching and learning). CVs for the reviewers will be required for submission to the Quality Council.

- 5.5.2. Following a new Degree Program's submission to the Quality Council, and with approval of the Provost, the University may announce its intent to offer the Program, provided that clear indication is given that approval by the Quality Council is pending and that no offers of admission will be made until approval is received and, where applicable, that approval by the Ministry is pending and students in the Program will not be eligible for OSAP until approval is received.
- 5.5.3. Once submitted to the Quality Council, the proposal will be subject to the [Initial Appraisal Process](#) and may require further development or revision prior to approval.
- 5.5.4. After a Degree Program is approved to commence by the Quality Council, the Program will begin within thirty-six months of that date of approval, otherwise the approval will lapse. The Quality Council may require further reporting or review, which will be noted in the new program tracking summary provided to the Resource Committee and monitored by CIQE.
- 5.5.5. If a review is required for funding purposes, the proposed Degree Program will also be submitted to the Ministry.

Commented [KM9]: Has always been required, adding for clarity.

6. New Type 2 and 3 Graduate Diploma and Undergraduate Diploma Programs

6.1. Notice of Intent and Consultation

Faculties that wish to propose new Graduate Type 2 and 3 or Undergraduate Diploma Programs will first contact the Centre for Institutional Quality Enhancement (CIQE) to conduct a project initiation meeting and for assistance with completing complete a Notice of Intent (NOI) form available through the ~~Centre for Institutional Quality Enhancement (CIQE)~~ website at www.ontariotechu.ca/ciqe. The Notice of Intent will facilitate the necessary consultation at the beginning of the planning stages, but will not replace ongoing communication and consultation throughout the process.

- 6.1.1. All ~~New Programs development~~NOIs must be approved by the Provost ~~through the NOI~~ to ensure that any resource requirements are appropriately addressed before work on the proposal proceeds.
- 6.1.2. In the planning for any New Program, the Dean, in consultation with the Provost, must also determine the human, instructional and physical resources needed to implement the program and ensure its ongoing operation. The financial impact of the New Program on existing Programs must also be examined, and consideration must be given to possible collaborations with other units.

6.1.3. In addition, there must be broad consultation with members of the academic community, including faculty, staff and students who may be affected by the initiative, and with those who are key to its implementation, including the Provost, the Registrar, ~~or~~ the Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, and the Chief Librarian. Staff and faculty wishing to develop New Programs related to Indigenization and reconciliation, or that contain Indigenous content, must also consult in a Good Way, in accordance with the current procedures for Indigenous consultation.

6.2. Proposal Briefs

Detailed proposals for all new Diploma Programs must be prepared by the proponents and feedback provided by Faculty Council(s). The proposal brief must clearly set out the rationale for the Program, including the ways in which the program advances the university's mission and mandate, and addresses the need and demand for graduates of the Program. The proposal must also detail how the Program fits within the strategic vision of the University and the Faculty(ies), the requirements of the Program, along with details of the human, physical and financial resources required. A template for the proposal will be provided through CIQE via the website at www.ontariotechu.ca/ciqe. Proposal briefs for new Degree-Diploma Programs must fully and clearly address the [Evaluation Criteria](#) as outlined in Section 2.1.2 of the [Quality Assurance Framework \(QAF\)](#), and answer all questions provided on the template. In addition to the Evaluation Criteria, proposal briefs must minimally include:

- a) The rationale for the Program, fit with the University's and Faculty's strategic direction, background on the Program's development, a Program abstract, unique curriculum or program innovations, creative components, or significant high impact practices and evidence of student demand and societal need. It will also note any duplication with existing post-secondary programs at other institutions.
- b) A fully developed section outlining the Program learning outcomes and alignment with the provincial degree level expectations and skills and competencies; consideration of the principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization; admission requirements; program structure; and program content including course outlines, descriptions, modes of delivery and teaching methods, and assessment with a linkage between the course learning outcomes and the program learning outcomes. The program and course learning outcomes must be developed and aligned to the provincial degree level expectations using resources provided by CIQE and the Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC). It is strongly recommended that the proponents participate in learning outcome development sessions hosted by CIQE and TLC; alternatively, the program and course learning outcomes must be reviewed and approved by CIQE and TLC prior to the program proceeding through the Internal Approval Process. Should the curriculum contain any Indigenous content, evidence of consultation and approval in accordance with the current procedures for Indigenous consultation will be provided.

- c) A list ~~will be provided~~ of required faculty members, including current core faculty and required new faculty; additional academic and non-academic human resources that may be required to launch and maintain the Program; physical resource requirements, ~~with noting~~ how current facilities will be used and what, if any, new resources may be required; and for graduate programs, any student support (funding) requirements. Faculty CVs will be provided for inclusion in the package presented to the Quality Council.
- d) Summary statements of resources required to support the Program and a statement of current resource availability ~~will be included~~.

6.3. Internal Approval Process

- 6.3.1. The proposal brief will be reviewed and approved by the Faculty Council(s).
- 6.3.2. The proposal will then be presented to the appropriate standing committee of Academic Council (GSC or USC) who will prepare a recommendation to Academic Council. The proposal will then be sent to Academic Council for review and approval. Proposals are then submitted to the University Board of Governors for final approval.

6.4. Submission of New Diploma Programs to the Quality Council and the Ministry

- 6.4.1. Once ~~internal Academic Council~~ approvals for a new Type 2 ~~and-or~~ 3 Graduate Diploma Programs ~~has~~ have been obtained, the program proposal must be submitted to the Quality Council for review. The submission will include the final proposal document with the date of Academic Council approval, and the faculty CVs.
 - 6.4.1.1. Type 2 and 3 Graduate Diploma Programs are subject to Expedited Review at the Quality Council. Only the applicable [Evaluation Criteria](#) will be applied to the proposal. Furthermore, the Council's appraisal and approval processes are reduced, as outlined in the Quality Assurance Framework [Section 3.2 Protocol for Expedited Approvals](#).
 - 6.4.1.2. Following a new [Type 2 or 3](#) Graduate Diploma Program's submission to the Quality Council, ~~and with approval of the Provost~~, the University may announce its intent to offer the Program, provided that clear indication is given that approval by the Quality Council is pending and that no offers of admission will be made until approval is received ~~and, where applicable, that approval by the Ministry is pending and students in the Program will not be eligible for OSAP until approval is received~~.
 - 6.4.1.3. Once submitted to the Quality Council, the proposal may require further development or revision prior to approval.

6.4.1.4. After a [Type 2 or 3](#) Graduate Diploma Program is approved to commence by the Quality Council, the Program will begin within thirty-six months of that date of approval, otherwise the approval will lapse.

6.4.2. Undergraduate Diploma Programs are not subject to approval or audit by the Quality Council. The University may elect to submit ~~the a new Undergraduate Diploma~~ proposal to the Quality Council for review, in which case the Program will be subject to Expedited Review. Only the applicable [Evaluation Criteria](#) will be applied to the proposal. Furthermore, the Council's appraisal and approval processes are reduced, as outlined in the [Quality Assurance Framework Section 3.2](#). The submission will include the final proposal document with the date of Academic Council approval, the faculty CVs, and a brief cover letter providing the context and rationale for submitting the Program for Expedited Review.

6.4.3. If a review is required for funding purposes, the proposed Diploma Program will also be submitted to the Ministry.

7. New Type 1 Graduate Diploma Programs

7.1. Type 1 Graduate Diplomas require approval as Major Program Modifications following the procedures outlined in the [Curriculum Changes Procedures](#) document.

8. New Micro-credential Programs

8.1. The introduction of the option to complete a portion of a proposed new Degree or Diploma Program to receive an embedded ~~for-academic-credit~~ Micro-credential will be included with a New Program Proposal and follow the process outlined in Section 5 or 6 as appropriate.

Commented [KM10]: Aligns with definition in M-C policy.

8.2. The creation of a new ~~for-academic-credit~~ Micro-credential or the introduction of the option to complete a portion of an existing Degree or Diploma Program to receive an embedded ~~for-academic-credit~~ Micro-credential is a Minor Program Adjustment and will follow the procedures outlined in the [Curriculum Changes Procedures](#) document.

8.3. Those wishing to develop new, not-~~for-academic-credit~~, stand-alone Micro-credential Programs must proceed in accordance with the [Policy on Micro-Credentials and Continuous Learning Offerings](#), or equivalent.

8.4. Submission of New Micro-credentials to the Quality Council and the Ministry

8.4.1. Micro-credentials are not subject to approval or audit by the Quality Council. Embedded Micro-credentials will be submitted with the New Program to which they are associated, when applicable.

8.4.2. Approved Micro-credentials will be submitted to the Ministry for designation as eligible for Ontario Student Assistance Program funding, if applicable.

9. Development of Joint or Collaborative Programs

- 9.1. Joint Programs, and other Programs offered in collaboration with other post-secondary institutions, will ensure that the required quality assurance requirements of both institutions are met.
- 9.2. When the program will be held jointly with an institution that does not have an IQAP that has been ratified by the Quality Council, the Ontario Tech IQAP Policy and associated Procedures will apply with Ontario Tech as the leading institution.
- 9.3. In cases where the program is held jointly with an institution that does have an IQAP ratified by the Quality Council, the Office of the Provost, through CIQE, will collaborate with the partner institution to develop a process and associated templates that will address all requirements of each institution's IQAP. Specifically, the collaboration will address:
 - a) The selection of external reviewers
 - b) Templates to be used for a single proposal brief and required reports from the external reviewers, program team, and Dean(s)
 - c) The location(s) of the site-visit(s), timing for Program development, and approval pathway
 - d) The development of a joint committee to develop the Program
 - e) The process for monitoring and reviewing the Program after approval
 - f) The lead institution for the purposes of submission to the Quality Council and the Ministry

10. Subsequent Monitoring and Review of Academic Programs

Degree and Diploma Programs will be reviewed and refined on an ongoing basis in accordance with the **Institutional Quality Assurance Policy** and the **Cyclical Review and Auditing Procedures**. At the time of first intake into the Program, the program will begin the monitoring process outlined in Section 7 of the **Cyclical Review and Auditing Procedures**. Approved Programs will also be entered into the schedule of cyclical program reviews and the first review will take place no more than eight years after the start of the Program, and every eight years hence, in accordance with Section 8 of the **Cyclical Review and Auditing Procedures**.

Degree and Diploma Programs which have been approved but never launched, have been closed, or for which admission has been suspended, and stand-alone Micro-credentials are not subject to review as described in the Cyclical Review and Auditing Procedures.

QUALITY COUNCIL CYCLICAL AUDIT

11. In accordance with the Quality Assurance Framework [Audit Protocol](#), new Undergraduate and Graduate Degree programs that have been approved in accordance with Section 5 of this document, within the period since the conduct of the previous Audit, are eligible for selection for the University's next Cyclical Audit. As such, all documents related to each step of these procedures must be retained in a designated electronic filing system for retrieval and presentation as required. An audit cannot reverse the approval of a program to commence.
12. In accordance with the Quality Assurance Framework [Audit Protocol](#), new Undergraduate and Graduate Diploma programs, and Micro-credentials, that have been approved in accordance with Sections 6 and 8 of this document, are not normally subject to the University's Cyclical Audit.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

13. These Procedures will be reviewed as necessary and at least every three years. The Office of the Provost, through CIQE, coordinates the day to day management of the quality assurance process, and works in collaboration with Deans and units to implement the procedures for developing and accessing academic programs. The Provost or successor thereof, is responsible to monitor and review this Policy.

RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES & DOCUMENTS

[Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance - Quality Assurance Framework](#)
Institutional Quality Assurance Policy
Academic Resource Committee Terms of Reference
Cyclical Review and Auditing Procedures
Program Nomenclature Directives
Protocols associated with consultation/development of Indigenous curriculum
Protocols associated with the development of Micro-credentials

Classification Number	ACD 1501
Framework Category	Academic
Approving Authority	Academic Council
Policy Owner	Provost
Approval Date	
Review Date	
Supersedes	ACD 1501) Institutional Quality Assurance Process Policy (June 2023)



INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS

PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this policy is to inform and guide undergraduate and graduate program development and continuous improvement at the University with regard to the approval of new programs, program modifications, program closures, and the cyclical review of existing programs.
2. The statements in this policy as approved by Academic Council, define the University’s commitment to the different aspects of quality assurance and the broad level responsibilities for carrying out this commitment.

DEFINITIONS

3. For the purposes of this policy the following definitions apply:

Academic Council: the most senior academic governance body of the institution

Accreditation Review: to evaluate and measure a program against a set of principles and standards set by an external professional accreditation body

Cyclical Program Review: to critically examine the components of a program with the assistance of outside reviewers with the goal of continuous improvement. A program review’s purpose is not solely to demonstrate the positive aspects of the program, but also to outline opportunities that will lead to improvements for the future.

Degree: An academic credential awarded upon successful completion of a prescribed set and sequence of courses, combination of courses, and/or other units of study, research, and practice as specified by a Program and that meet a standard of performance consistent with University and provincial degree level expectations.

Diploma: An academic credential awarded upon the successful completion of a prescribed set and sequence of courses, combination of courses, and/or other units of study and practice as specified by a Program. Diplomas are classified as concurrent and/or direct-entry.

Faculty Council: established by Academic Council to approve new programs and courses, policies (including admissions), academic standards, curriculum and degree requirements, and long-range academic plans, at the Faculty level.

Field: In graduate programs, an area of specialization or concentration that is related to the demonstrable and collective strengths of the program's faculty and to a new or existing program. Fields are not required at either the master's or doctoral level.

Graduate Diploma: A prescribed set of degree credit courses and/or other forms of study that can be undertaken as a stand-alone program or to complement a graduate degree program, and to provide specialization, sub-specialization or inter- or multi- disciplinary qualification. A graduate diploma is comprised of at least 12 credit hours of graduate level study. There are three types of Graduate Diplomas as set out by the Council of Ontario Universities:

- a) **Type 1:** Awarded when a candidate admitted to a master's program leaves the program after completing a prescribed proportion of the requirements. Students are not admitted directly to these programs. When new, these programs require approval through the university's protocol for Major Modification prior to their adoption. Once approved, they will be incorporated into the institution's schedule for cyclical reviews as part of the parent program.
- b) **Type 2: A concurrent graduate diploma** is offered in conjunction with a master's or doctoral degree, the admission to which requires that the candidate be already admitted to the master's or doctoral program. This represents an additional, usually interdisciplinary, qualification and requires advanced level, usually interdisciplinary, study, at least 50% of which is in addition to the general requirements for the degree. When new, these programs require submission to the Quality Council for an Expedited Approval (no external reviewers required) prior to their adoption. Once approved, they will be incorporated into the university's schedule for cyclical reviews as part of the parent program.
- c) **Type 3: A direct-entry graduate diploma** is a stand-alone, direct-entry program, generally developed by a unit already offering a related master's (and sometimes doctoral) degree and designed to meet the needs of a particular clientele or market. Ontario Tech type 3 graduate diplomas may include non-degree credit courses to a maximum of 30% of the total program credit hours. Where the program has been conceived and developed as a distinct and original entity, these programs require submission to the Quality Council for an Expedited Approval (no external reviewers required) prior to their adoption. Once approved, they will be included in the Schedule for Cyclical Reviews and will be subject to external review during the CPR

process.

Graduate Studies Committee (GSC): a standing committee of Academic Council responsible for reviewing graduate curriculum proposals.

Major Program Modifications: modifications that constitute a significant change to the design and delivery of an existing program. The Quality Council defines major modifications to include the following program changes:

- a) Requirements that differ significantly from those existing at the time of the previous cyclical program review or at the time the program was first approved;
- b) Significant changes to the learning outcomes that do not, however, meet the threshold of a New Program;
- c) Significant changes to the faculty engaged in delivering the program and/or to the essential resources as may occur, for example, where there have been changes to the existing mode(s) of delivery (e.g., different campus, online and/or hybrid delivery, inter-institutional collaboration);

For greater clarity, the Quality Council has provided examples to illustrate changes that normally constitute a significant change. These examples are provided in their [Guide to Quality Assurance Processes](#) and their application in the Ontario Tech context is outlined in Section 7 of the **Curriculum Change Procedures**.

Micro-credential: A designation of achievement of a coherent set of skills and knowledge, specified by a statement of purpose, learning outcomes, and strong evidence of need by industry, employers, and/or the community. They have fewer requirements and are of shorter duration than a qualification and focus on learning outcomes that are distinct from diploma/degree programs.

Ministry: the Ontario Ministry governing the affairs of Colleges and Universities.

Minor Curricular Changes: generally, those changes to individual courses and curricular offerings that do not affect the overall program requirements. Further clarification and examples are provided in Section 5 of the **Curriculum Change Procedures**.

Minor Program Adjustments: changes to degree requirements and/or learning outcomes that may require a plan for transitioning cohorts of students to meet different requirements over time, but that do not constitute a significant change to the design and delivery of an existing program reaching the threshold of a Major Program Modification. Further clarification and examples are provided in Section 6 of the **Curriculum Change Procedures**.

New Program: any degree or diploma program, or major, approved by Academic Council and the Board of Governors, which has not been previously approved by the Quality Council, its predecessors, or any intra-institutional approval processes that previously applied. A change of name, only, does not constitute a new program. To clarify, for the purposes of this Policy, a

“new program” is brand new: that is to say, the program has substantially different program objective, program requirements, and program learning outcomes from those of any existing approved programs offered by Ontario Tech University. The final determination of whether a proposed offering constitutes a new program will rest with the Provost.

Program: A complete set and sequence of courses, combination of courses, and/or other units of study, research and practice, that achieve a unique set of learning outcomes and competencies required for the full or partial fulfillment of a degree or diploma.

Program Component: A set and sequence of courses, combination of courses, and/or other units of study, research and practice, that may or may not achieve a unique set of learning outcomes. Program Components do not stand-alone for the full or partial fulfillment of a degree or diploma. Examples include specializations, minors, fields, or other items as determined by the University’s established nomenclature.

Quality Council: the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance, established by the Council of Ontario Universities in July 2010, responsible for oversight of the Quality Assurance Framework processes for Ontario Universities. The Council operates at arm’s length from both Ontario’s publicly assisted universities and the Ontario government.

Resource Committee: the university Academic Resource Committee or equivalent university body.

Undergraduate Diploma: A prescribed set of degree credit courses and/or other forms of study that can be undertaken as a stand-alone program or to complement an undergraduate degree program. An undergraduate diploma is comprised of 18-30 credit hours of undergraduate-level study

- a) A **concurrent undergraduate diploma** is offered in conjunction with an undergraduate degree, which requires that the candidate be already admitted to an undergraduate degree
- b) A **direct-entry undergraduate diploma** is a stand-alone, direct-entry program, developed by a unit already offering a related undergraduate or graduate

Undergraduate Studies Committee (USC): a standing committee of Academic Council responsible for reviewing undergraduate curriculum proposals.

SCOPE AND AUTHORITY

4. This policy applies to the full range of for credit curricular and programmatic endeavours at both the graduate and undergraduate levels, including Micro-credentials. It extends to new and continuing undergraduate and graduate degree programs whether offered in full, in part, or jointly by any institutions federated or affiliated with the university. It also applies to programs offered in partnership, collaboration or other such arrangement with other post-secondary institutions including colleges, universities, or other institutes.
5. The Provost, or successor thereof, is the Policy Owner and is responsible for overseeing the implementation, administration, and interpretation of this Policy and its associated Procedures,

as well as ensuring that Quality Assurance policies and procedures be established and are carried out. The Provost will be the authoritative contact between the University and the Quality Council.

6. Deans ensure that established policies and procedures are carried out at the Faculty level. Under the leadership of the Dean, Programs and Faculties are responsible for initiating and maintaining Program development, planning for the compilation and analysis of information, improvement and review of Programs, designing curricular changes, and readying them for consideration through the various levels of collegial review.
7. The Provost or designate, through the Center for Institutional Quality Enhancement (CIQE), coordinates the day-to-day management of the quality assurance process, and works in collaboration with Deans and units to implement the procedures for developing and assessing Programs, including coordinating internal and external appraisals and pulling together key institutional data and other indicators of program quality. The Provost or designate will also maintain all documentation associated with curricular changes, program modifications, new program proposals, accreditation reports, and program reviews, for a period of ten years. The documentation will then be entered into the university archives, per the Records Retention Policy, exclusive of any personal or confidential information.
8. Academic Council holds delegated authority from the Board to establish and regulate the curricular policies and procedures of the University, and the contents and curricula of all courses of study. Curriculum proposals are considered by the appropriate governing body for approval or information in accordance with Sections 13 - 15 of this Policy. The establishment and oversight of both the policy and procedural aspects relating to the approval of new programs, program revisions, and program review are the responsibility of the Academic Council.
9. The Board of Governors is responsible for planning, determining policies for and providing for the overall development of the university, including approving strategic plans, budgets and expenditure plans. In this context, all proposals that lead to the establishment or termination of degree programs, the establishment or de-establishment of Faculties, institutes and chairs and councils within those Faculties, and university strategic plans are subject to approval by the Board.
10. The Quality Council ratifies the Institutional Quality Assurance Process Policy and associated Procedures, and any substantive change to these procedures, and undertakes [regular audits](#) of these processes for compliance with the [Provincial Framework](#) on an eight year cycle. In addition, the Quality Council reviews and approves all proposals for new degree and diploma programs, as applicable, and reviews Final Assessment Reports of Program Reviews. It also receives an annual report of major modifications to existing programs. The Quality Council has final authority to decide if a Major Program Modification constitutes a new program and, therefore, must follow the **New Program Procedures**.
11. The Ministry reviews new programs and provides external funding approval following approval by the Quality Council.

12. The Office of the Registrar is responsible for the implementation of records relating to new programs and curricular changes once approved or reported to Academic Council, ensuring that students meet the admission requirements, and that requirements for the degree or diploma have been fulfilled upon graduation. This responsibility is shared with the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies for graduate programs.

POLICY

The University is dedicated to ensuring the highest quality learning experience for students while maintaining the highest integrity of its academic programs. As such, the University is committed to the [Quality Assurance Principles for Ontario Universities and the Quality Council](#) (the Principles).

In meeting the Principles, the University will ensure that all academic programs:

- Align with University's mission, values and strategic plans
- Remain coherent, rigorous and relevant
- Make the best use of resources available to them
- Are subject to continuous quality improvement based on empirical evidence and collegial judgment
- Draw upon and enhance existing strengths at the university

The University will ensure ongoing academic integrity in its curricula while remaining rigorous and consistent in the expansion and refinement of program offerings.

The University will promote quality assurance in the ongoing review and improvement of curriculum and courses, the periodic review of program offerings, and the development of new programs.

In the planning for the ongoing review and improvement of curriculum, proposers must take into consideration the impact the changes may have on the human, instructional, physical and financial resources of the University and provide a plan to address them.

In addition, there must be broad consultation with members of the academic community, including faculty, staff and students who may be affected by the initiative, and with those who are key to its implementation. Consultation is particularly critical in cases where the changes involve offerings that are shared among programs and/or which may affect different groups of students (e.g. changes to courses that are core courses in other programs, cross-listed courses, changes to pre-requisites, co-requisites, and degree credit exclusions). Staff and faculty wishing to develop projects and initiatives related to Indigenization and reconciliation must consult in a Good Way, in accordance with the current procedures for Indigenous consultation.

Where there are possibilities for efficiencies to be achieved in the design and delivery of programs by collaboration among units, it is expected that these opportunities will be fully explored prior to their review by Faculty Council and that all possible avenues of cooperation will be fully considered in the initial stages. The nature and outcomes of these discussions will be included within program proposals.

The University will develop and continue to improve quality assurance policies, procedures and processes that incorporate provincial degree level expectations, and that are consistent with the Ontario Quality Assurance Framework and with the institution's own mission and mandate. CIQE will provide access to an electronic workflow tracking system for curriculum changes, and a repository for curriculum changes, program development, and cyclical program review. Individuals may use the templates and information provided at www.ontariotechu.ca/ciqe as a guide to the implementation of the quality assurance policies and procedures.

13. Curriculum Changes

- 13.1. Deans and Faculties must plan for the ongoing refinement and improvement of new and continuing programs and for making major and minor modifications to them when it is considered appropriate to do so. These changes may be prompted by, but not limited to, the following: feedback from students, faculty and staff participating in the program; matters arising through the course of its delivery; evolution of the discipline and/or new developments in a particular field; improvements in teaching and learning strategies; changing needs of students, society, industry, etc.; improvements in technology; or as a result of a full examination of the curriculum through accreditation or the cyclical program review process.
- 13.2. All modifications to existing Programs, including the introduction of the option to complete a portion of the program to receive a Micro-credential, will be subject to approval in accordance with the **Curriculum Changes Procedures**. Major modifications to programs will be subject to review by the provincial Quality Council.
- 13.3. Program review and improvement takes place on an ongoing basis and can result in curricular changes at three different levels: Minor Curricular Changes, Minor Program Adjustments and Major Modifications.

Minor Curricular Changes normally fall under the purview of the Faculty. Changes to courses that are core in Programs from other Faculties must be reviewed by each Faculty Council responsible for the affected Programs. New courses and course changes must receive approval and be reported in accordance with the **Curriculum Change Procedures** prior to their implementation and inclusion in the academic calendars. The protocol for approval of new courses and changes to courses offered jointly by more than one area will be determined during New Program or course development and revised by agreement of all parties.

Minor Program Adjustments are reported for information to Academic Council through its appropriate standing committee (USC/GSC). These changes must be presented to the standing committee for quality review and approval following their approval by the appropriate Faculty Council. The committee will conduct a quality review of the program proposal in accordance with this Policy and its associated Procedures as well as the committee's terms of reference. Changes must receive the standing committee's approval prior to their implementation and inclusion in the academic calendars.

Major modifications to existing programs are subject to review and approval by Academic Council upon the recommendation of USC/GSC and following approval by the appropriate Faculty Council. Changes must receive Academic Council approval prior to their implementation and inclusion in the academic calendars. These changes are also reported annually to the Quality Council under the provincial Quality Assurance Framework.

Reporting of curricular changes must follow the procedures outlined in the **Curriculum Changes Procedures** document.

- 13.4.** Program modifications that will result in a more substantial change to its nature and content will require review and approval in accordance with this policy and the **New Program Procedures**. The final institutional determination of whether a program modification constitutes a significant change or a new program will rest with the Provost. The Quality Council has final authority to decide if a Major Program Modification constitutes a new program and, therefore, must follow the **New Program Procedures**.

14. Review of Degree and Diploma Programs

- 14.1.** All existing Undergraduate Degree Programs, Graduate Degree Programs, and Diploma Programs will be subject to periodic cyclical review conducted at a minimum once every eight years that is consistent with the requirements set by the Quality Council. Deans and Faculties must plan for the review of their academic Programs, including the preparation of a self-study, and will follow the processes outlined in the **Cyclical Review and Auditing Procedures**.
- 14.2.** The Provost, or designate, in consultation with the Deans, will maintain a university-wide schedule to ensure that each academic Program is subject to review once every eight years. For each eight-year review cycle, CIQE will identify the specific program or programs that will be reviewed and, where there is more than one mode or site involved in the delivery of a specific program, the distinct versions of each program to be reviewed. Accreditation Reviews will be completed separately and involve separate processes and reviewers to ensure that all criteria are met. Elements of an accreditation review will not replace parallel requirements of the cyclical review.
- 14.3.** In the planning for the review, the process must provide for input from members of the academic community associated with the program, including faculty, staff, students, and graduates. Where appropriate, comment from the broader community, such as representatives from industry, the professions, or employers may also be sought.
- 14.4.** Where a Program involves more than one Faculty, the Deans involved must confirm to the Provost the Faculty that will hold the locus of responsibility for the review. In addition, for those Programs that are offered in more than one mode, at different locations, or having complementary components (e.g., bridging options, experiential

learning options, etc.), the distinct versions of the Program will be identified and reviewed.

- 14.5. Joint Programs, and other programs offered in collaboration with other post-secondary institutions will ensure that both the quality assurance requirements set out in this policy are met, as well as that of partner institutions.
- 14.6. Program reviews are subject to quality review by reviewers external and at arm's length to the program under review, in accordance with prescribed procedures and documentation requirements set in the **Cyclical Review and Auditing Procedures**.
- 14.7. Final Assessment Reports (FAR), which summarize the review, are prepared by CIQE and presented for review and approval in accordance with the **Cyclical Review and Auditing Procedures**.

15. New Diploma and Degree Programs

- 15.1. Deans and Faculties must plan for ongoing development of new program initiatives, including the design and delivery of the curriculum, the refinement of program requirements, the determination of learning outcomes consistent with the provincial degree level expectations, and the assessment of student achievement of the learning outcomes.
- 15.2. In the planning for any new program, the Dean, in consultation with the Provost in the initial stages, must also determine the human, instructional and physical resources needed to implement the program and ensure its ongoing operation. The financial impact of the new program on existing programs must also be examined, and consideration must be given to possible collaborations with other units and the possibility of obtaining additional funds from internal or external sources. Proposals must also address the alignment with the University and Faculty strategic plans.
- 15.3. Joint programs, and other programs offered in collaboration with other post-secondary institutions will ensure that both the quality assurance requirements set out in this policy are met, as well as that of partner institutions, as outlined in the **New Program Procedures**.
- 15.4. A Notice of Intent (NOI) must be submitted for all potential new diploma and degree programs as described in the **New Program Procedures**. NOIs will be reviewed and posted for comment from the university community. Once approved, the Faculty can proceed to develop the full proposal.
- 15.5. New Degree Program proposals are subject to quality review by external appraisers under the provincial quality assurance framework, and in accordance with prescribed procedures and documentation requirements set out in the **New Program Procedures**. Upon the completion of the external appraisal, the proposal will be approved by the relevant Faculty Council(s). These proposals are subsequently reviewed by the appropriate Academic Council standing committee

(USC or GSC) and must be approved by Academic Council upon the recommendation of USC/GSC. Proposals must also be approved by the Board of Governors (BOG) of the University. In addition, new Degree Programs are subject to review and approval by the provincial Quality Council under the Quality Assurance Framework. Programs seeking provincial funding are also subject to review by the Ministry.

15.6. New Diploma Program proposals are subject to quality review in accordance with prescribed procedures and documentation requirements set out in the **New Program Procedures**. Proposals are subject to presentation and approval by the relevant Faculty Council(s). These proposals are then subject to approval by Academic Council upon the full review and recommendation of USC/GSC. Proposals must also be approved by the BOG. In addition, new Graduate Diploma Program proposals are also appraised by the Quality Council under the provincial quality assurance framework through the [Expedited Approval Process](#) as described in the **New Program Procedures**. New Undergraduate Diploma Programs may also be submitted for Expedited Approval. New Undergraduate and Graduate Diploma Programs may also require review by the Ministry for funding purposes.

15.7. In accordance with the University's **Cyclical Review and Auditing Procedures**, all new Programs will be subject to periodic reviews subsequent to their implementation. An initial assessment will occur at first intake into the program, with an additional assessment one year after the launch of the Program. Additional monitoring may be required. At the time of program launch, the program will be entered into the schedule of academic program reviews and the first full review will take place no more than eight years after the start Program.

15.8. Normally, new Diploma programs will be scheduled for review to align with the appropriate parent program to maintain a reasonable use of Faculty resources. As such, Diploma programs may be scheduled for first review earlier than eight years from program launch, or first review may be delayed should the parent program be scheduled for review before a reasonable amount of data is available.

16. New Micro-credential Programs

16.1. Deans, Faculties, and non-academic units must plan for ongoing development of new Micro-credential program initiatives, including the design and delivery of the curriculum, the refinement of program requirements, the determination of any learning outcomes, and any assessment of student achievement of the learning outcomes.

16.2. In the planning for any new Micro-credential, the human, instructional and physical resources needed to implement the program and ensure its ongoing operation must be considered. The financial impact of the new program on existing programs must also be examined, and consideration must be given to possible collaborations and the possibility of obtaining additional funds from internal or external sources.

- 16.3. Development of new Micro-credentials will be in accordance with the protocol described in the **New Program Procedures** or **Curriculum Change Procedures** and are subject to internal quality review. Proposals are not appraised by the Quality Council under the provincial quality assurance framework.

17. Closure of a Program

- 17.1. Program Closures can be initiated by the Dean of a Faculty.
- 17.2. Program closures can also be initiated by the Provost due to issues related to substandard academic quality as determined through a number of different assessments such as Cyclical Program Review, Key Performance Indicators, self-examination, financial exigency, admission pause for over two years, and/or a Program has not been reviewed in accordance with the Institutional Quality Assurance Policy.
 - 17.2.1. The Provost will consult with the Faculty Dean(s) of the affected program(s) to outline the reasons for closure.
- 17.3. In the case of Graduate Programs, the Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies will also be consulted.
- 17.4. In this case of Programs that contain Indigenous content, consultation in accordance with the current procedures for Indigenous consultation, is required.
- 17.5. After all required consultation is completed, a proposal to close the Program will then proceed in accordance with the **Program Closure Procedures**.
- 17.6. **Students in a Closed Program**
 - 17.6.1. Program closure proposals must include a detailed plan for students who are enrolled in, or who may have reasonably expected to enroll in, the closed Program, as outlined in the **Program Closure Procedures**.
 - 17.6.2. Students in a closed program will be informed of the program closure according to the requirements outlined in the **Program Closure Procedures**.
 - 17.6.3. Closure should not result in students being unable to complete, if they so wish, the program they are registered in within the standard time to completion for that program.
 - 17.6.4. In the specific case of students enrolled in Graduate Programs, the closure must not prevent them from completing their courses, examinations, training, and research necessary to graduate, or interfere with their commitments of financial support.

17.6.5. Notwithstanding-the-above, students wishing to graduate from a closed program must apply to do so within four years of the program closure.

17.7. Faculty in a Closed Program

17.7.1. Procedures for Tenured, Tenure Track, and Teaching Faculty who are part of a bargaining unit will be in accordance with the relevant Articles of the Collective Agreement in force at the time of Program closure.

17.7.2. Procedures for Associate Deans or Teaching Staff Governors who are temporarily outside of the bargaining unit will be in accordance with the relevant Articles of the Collective Agreement in force at the time of Program closure.

17.7.3. Procedures for sessional instructors and other contract faculty who are part of a bargaining unit will be in accordance with the relevant Articles of the Collective Agreement in force at the time of Program closure. Should no relevant Article exist, sessional instructors and other contract faculty will be entitled to severance in accordance with Provincial or Federal legislation or may apply for other positions in the University for which they are qualified.

17.7.4. Teaching staff not part of a bargaining unit will be entitled to severance in accordance with Provincial or Federal legislation or may apply for other positions in the University for which they are qualified.

17.8. Staff in a Closed Program

17.8.1. Procedures for staff who are part of a bargaining unit will be in accordance with the relevant Articles of the Collective Agreement in force at the time of Program closure.

17.8.2. Staff who are not part of a bargaining unit will be entitled to severance in accordance with Provincial or Federal legislation or may apply for other positions in the University for which they are qualified.

18. Quality Council Cyclical Audit

Quality enhancement is a function of and balance between internal and external processes and procedures. As part of the University's dedication to ensuring the highest quality learning experience for students and maintaining the highest integrity of its academic programs, Ontario Tech manages the development and continuous improvement of curricula through a rigorous governance process. External quality assurance involves the processes and procedures defined by the [Quality Assurance Framework](#) (QAF). In accordance with this Framework, the University is subject to a Cyclical Audit by the Quality Council, at least once every eight years. The Quality Council has established the schedule of institutional participation in the audit process within the eight-year cycle and publishes the agreed [schedule](#) on its website. The Cyclical Audit provides necessary accountability to post-secondary education's principal stakeholders by assessing the

degree to which the University's internally defined quality assurance processes, procedures, and practices align with and satisfy the agreed upon standards, as set out in the QAF. The Audit will be conducted in accordance with the protocol as outlined in the **Cyclical Review and Auditing Procedures**.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

19. This policy will be reviewed as necessary and at least every three years. The Provost or successor thereof, is responsible to monitor and review this Policy.

RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES & DOCUMENTS

[Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance - Quality Assurance Framework](#)

Curriculum Change Procedures

Cyclical Review and Auditing Procedures

New Program Procedures

Program Closure Procedures

Program Nomenclature Directives

Faculty and Staff Collective Agreements

Protocols associated with consultation/development of Indigenous curriculum

Protocols associated with Micro-credential development



Classification Number	ACD 1501.04
Parent Policy	Institutional Quality Assurance Process
Framework Category	Academic
Approving Authority	Academic Council
Policy Owner	Provost
Approval Date	June 2020
Review Date	June 2020
Supersedes	ACD 1501 (June 2010); LCG 1127 Section 1 (August 2005); Quality Assurance Handbook (June 2011) Program Closure Procedures (June 2020); Not-for-Academic Credit Digital Badges, Microcredentials, and Stackable Credentials Policy (July 2021)

PROGRAM CLOSURE PROCEDURES

PURPOSE

1. The purpose of these Procedures is to establish a consistent process for defining and documenting the closure of a Program as outlined in the Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP).

DEFINITIONS

2. For the purposes of these Procedures the definitions in the Policy apply.

SCOPE AND AUTHORITY

3. These procedures apply to undergraduate and graduate Degree and Diploma Programs whether offered in full, in part, or conjointly by any institutions federated or affiliated with the University. It also applies to Degree or Diploma Programs offered in partnership, collaboration or other such arrangement with other post-secondary institutions including colleges, universities, or other institutes.
4. These procedures do not apply to the closure of a Program Component, Type 1 Graduate Diploma, which fall under the **Curriculum Change Procedures**, nor do they apply to Micro-credentials whether stand-alone or embedded within a Program.
5. The Provost, or successor thereof, is the Policy Owner and is responsible for overseeing the implementation, administration and interpretation of these Procedures.

PROCEDURES

The Centre for Institutional Quality Enhancement (CIQE) will provide access to an electronic workflow tracking system and electronic repository of required proposals. Individuals may use the templates provided at www.ontariotechu.ca/ciqe as a guide to assist in the planning of the changes prior to implementing proposals in the electronic system.

6. Program Closure

- 6.1.** When, in accordance with the Institutional Quality Assurance Policy, it has been determined that a Program should be closed, the Dean or Provost will consult with and receive feedback from the applicable Faculty Council(s).
- 6.2.** Once the Dean or Provost has received feedback, a Major Program Modification – Program Closure electronic proposal is required to be completed in its entirety by the Dean or designate.
- 6.3.** The Major Program Modification – Program Closure will include evidence that appropriate consultation has taken place, and electronic proposals must minimally include the following:
 - a)** A brief summary of rationale for the program removal.
 - b)** A brief description of the program being removed and the current Calendar copy.
 - c)** A brief background on the existing program and detailed rationale for its removal; the proposed implementation date and detailed internal transition plan including impact on faculty members, other academic and non-academic human resources, or external agencies; and planned administrative steps and communication.
 - d)** Detailed transition plan for current and potential students; planned communication; maximum number of semesters for current students to complete the program; alternative programs and process for student transfer.
 - e)** A complete list of any courses being closed and the transition plan for each; a list of courses which will undergo required changes but are not being removed, a transition plan for each, and attached Course Change proposals.
 - f)** An outline of areas consulted, including an account of the process of consultation related to Indigenous content, where appropriate.

- 6.4. Completed proposals must be presented to the Faculty Council(s) for information and then submitted to CIQE. CIQE will prepare a detailed report of the impacts of the Program closure for presentation to the appropriate standing committee of Academic Council (USC or GSC) for discussion as part of the consultation process.
- 6.5. CIQE will record any concerns raised by the standing committee and prepare a report of impacts and concerns for the Provost. The Provost will also receive a copy of the Major Program Modification – Program Closure proposal.
- 6.6. The Provost will then submit their recommendation for Program closure, detailing the process and transition recommendations to the Academic Council for final review and approval.
- 6.7. When the Program closure has been approved by the Academic Council, the President will then inform the Board of Governors of the decision and the reasons for it. Major Program Modifications – Program Closure are reported annually to the Quality Council and the Ministry.

7. If Academic Council Does not Approve the Program Closure

- 7.1. When, in accordance with the Institutional Quality Assurance Policy, Academic Council does not approve the program closure, Academic Council will strike a three-person Committee of its members to be chaired by the President or designate.
- 7.2. The Committee will seek the views of the Faculty Council(s), the Dean of the Faculty or School, the Dean(s) of any related Faculty or School, the Dean of the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, if applicable, the Provost, the Registrar, and at least one assessor internal to the University but external to the Faculty(ies). The Committee will also invite all faculty members who teach in the program to comment if they wish to do so.
- 7.3. The Committee will, within 60 days, issue a report to the Board of Governors that presents the results of the investigation and makes one or more recommendations.
 - 7.3.1 The Committee will discuss its conclusions with the Provost and the appropriate Dean(s) before forwarding its report to the Board of Governors.
- 7.4. The Board will review the Committee's report and reach a decision. The decision of the Board on the closure of the program is final.

8. Procedures for the Phase-Out of Closed Programs

- 8.1.** In consultation with the Dean of the Faculty in which the program resides, the Registrar, or designate, will prepare an official list of all students currently enrolled in the program.
- 8.2.** The Dean will prepare correspondence to notify all enrolled students of the closure and provide information on the following:
 - a)** The date by which the program must be completed in order to receive the specified degree from the University;
 - b)** A brief description of the program being removed and the current Calendar copy. The last semester and year in which each course required for the program will be offered;
 - c)** The availability of closely related programs offered by the University to which the student may transfer;
 - d)** The extent to which transfer credits, substitutions, etc., may be considered in meeting the requirements of the program.
- 8.3.** Once the decision to close the program has been made, the program will no longer accept applicants and it will be removed from the website and academic calendar.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 9.** This procedure will be reviewed as necessary and at least every three years. The Provost's Office, through the Center for Institutional Quality Enhancement, coordinates the day-to-day management of the quality assurance process, and works in collaboration with Deans and units to implement the procedures for developing and accessing academic programs. The Provost, or successor thereof, is responsible to monitor and review this Policy.

RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES & DOCUMENTS

[Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance - Quality Assurance Framework](#)

Institutional Quality Assurance Policy

Program Nomenclature Directives

Faculty and Staff Collective Agreements

Protocols associated with consultation/development of Indigenous curriculum



Classification Number	ACD 1501
Framework Category	Academic
Approving Authority	Academic Council
Policy Owner	Provost
Approval Date	June 202 30
Review Date	June 2023
Supersedes	ACD 1501 (June 2010); LCG 1127 Section 1 (August 2005); Quality Assurance Handbook (June 2011); Institutional Quality Assurance Process Policy (June 20230); Not for Academic Credit Digital Badges, Microcredentials, and Stackable Credentials Policy (July 2021)

Institutional Quality Assurance Process

PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this policy is to inform and guide undergraduate and graduate program development and continuous improvement at the University with regard to the ~~review and~~ approval of new programs, program modifications, program closures, and the cyclical review of existing programs.
2. The statements in this policy as approved by Academic Council, define the University's commitment to the different aspects of quality assurance and the broad level responsibilities for carrying out this commitment.

DEFINITIONS

3. For the purposes of this policy the following definitions apply:

Academic Council: the most senior academic governance body of the institution

Accreditation Review: to evaluate and measure a program against a set of principles and standards set by an external professional accreditation body

Cyclical Program Review: to critically examine the components of a program with the assistance of outside reviewers with the goal of continuous improvement. A program review's purpose is

not solely to demonstrate the positive aspects of the program, but also to outline opportunities that will lead to improvements for the future.

Degree: An academic credential awarded upon successful completion of a prescribed set and sequence of courses, combination of courses, and/or other units of study, research, and practice as specified by a ~~Degree~~-Program and that meet a standard of performance consistent with University and provincial degree level expectations.

Diploma: An academic credential awarded upon the successful completion of a prescribed set and sequence of courses, combination of courses, and/or other units of study and practice as specified by a ~~Diploma~~-Program. Diplomas are classified as concurrent and/or direct-entry.

Faculty Council: established by Academic Council to approve new programs and courses, policies (including admissions), academic standards, curriculum and degree requirements, and long-range academic plans, at the Faculty level.

Field: In graduate programs, an area of specialization or concentration that is related to the demonstrable and collective strengths of the program's faculty and to a new or existing program. Fields are not required at either the master's or doctoral level.

Commented [KM1]: Moved from Procedures. All definitions housed in Policy.

Graduate Diploma: A prescribed set of degree credit courses and/or other forms of study that can be undertaken as a stand-alone program or to complement a graduate degree program, and to provide specialization, sub-specialization or inter- or multi- disciplinary qualification. A graduate diploma is comprised of at least 12 credit hours of graduate level study. There are three types of Graduate Diplomas as set out by the Council of Ontario Universities:

- a) **Type 1:** Awarded when a candidate admitted to a master's program leaves the program after completing a prescribed proportion of the requirements. Students are not admitted directly to these programs. When new, these programs require approval through the university's protocol for Major Modification prior to their adoption. Once approved, they will be incorporated into the institution's schedule for cyclical reviews as part of the parent program.
- b) **Type 2: A concurrent graduate diploma** is offered in conjunction with a master's or doctoral degree, the admission to which requires that the candidate be already admitted to the master's or doctoral program. This represents an additional, usually interdisciplinary, qualification and requires advanced level, usually interdisciplinary, study, at least 50% of which is in addition to the general requirements for the degree. When new, these programs require submission to the Quality Council for an Expedited Approval (no external reviewers required) prior to their adoption. Once approved, they will be incorporated into the university's schedule for cyclical reviews as part of the parent program.
- c) **Type 3: A direct-entry graduate diploma** is a stand-alone, direct-entry program, generally developed by a unit already offering a related master's (and sometimes doctoral) degree, and designed to meet the needs of a

particular clientele or market. Ontario Tech type 3 graduate diplomas may include non-degree credit courses to a maximum of 30% of the total program credit hours. Where the program has been conceived and developed as a distinct and original entity, these programs require submission to the Quality Council for an Expedited Approval (no external reviewers required) prior to their adoption. Once approved, they will be included in the Schedule for Cyclical Reviews and will be subject to external review during the CPR process.

Graduate Studies Committee (GSC): a standing committee of Academic Council responsible for reviewing graduate curriculum proposals.

Major Program Modifications: modifications that constitute a significant change to the design and delivery of an existing program. The Quality Council defines major modifications to include the following program changes:

- a) Requirements that differ significantly from those existing at the time of the previous cyclical program review or at the time the program was first approved;
- b) Significant changes to the learning outcomes that do not, however, meet the threshold of a New Program;
- c) Significant changes to the faculty engaged in delivering the program and/or to the essential ~~physical~~ resources as may occur, for example, where there have been changes to the existing mode(s) of delivery (e.g., different campus, online and/or hybrid delivery, inter-institutional collaboration);
- ~~c) —~~
- ~~d) — The addition of a new field to an existing graduate program. Note that institutions are not required to declare fields for either master's or doctoral programs.~~

For greater clarity, the Quality Council has provided examples to illustrate changes that normally constitute a significant change. These examples are provided in their Guide to Quality Assurance Processes and their application in the Ontario Tech context is outlined in Section 7 of the Curriculum Change Procedures document.

Micro-credential: A designation of achievement of a coherent set of skills and knowledge, specified by a statement of purpose, learning outcomes, and strong evidence of need by industry, employers, and/or the community. They have fewer requirements and are of shorter duration than a qualification and focus on learning outcomes that are distinct from diploma/degree programs.

Ministry: the Ontario Ministry governing the affairs of Colleges and Universities.

Minor Curricular Changes: generally, those changes to individual courses and curricular offerings that do not affect the overall program requirements. Further clarification and examples are provided in Section 5 of the outlined in the Curriculum Change Procedures document.

Minor Program Adjustments: changes to degree requirements and/or learning outcomes that may require a plan for transitioning cohorts of students to meet different requirements over time, but that do not constitute a significant change to the design and delivery of an existing program reaching the threshold of a Major Program Modification. Further clarification and examples are provided in Section 6 of the outlined in the Curriculum Change Procedures document.

New Program: any ~~degree,~~ degree or diploma program, or major, ~~currently~~ approved by Academic Council and the Board of Governors, which has not been previously approved by the Quality Council, its predecessors, or any intra-institutional approval processes that previously applied. A change of name, only, does not constitute a new program; ~~nor does the inclusion of a new program of specialization where another with the same designation already exists (e.g., a new honours program where a major with the same designation already exists).~~ To clarify, for the purposes of this Policy, a “new program” is brand new: that is to say, the program has substantially different program objective, program requirements, and program ~~and~~ substantially different learning outcomes from those of any existing approved programs offered by Ontario Tech University. The final determination of whether a proposed offering constitutes a new program will rest with the Provost.

Program: A complete set and sequence of courses, combination of courses, and/or other units of study, research and practice, that achieve a unique set of learning outcomes and competencies; the successful completion of which qualifies the candidate for a formal credential (degree with or without major, diploma); required for the full or partial fulfillment of a degree or diploma.

Program Component: A set and sequence of courses, combination of courses, and/or other units of study, research and practice, that may or may not achieve a unique set of learning outcomes. Program Components do not stand-alone for the full or partial fulfillment of a degree or diploma. Examples include specializations, minors, fields, or other items as determined by the University's established nomenclature.

Quality Council: the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance, established by the Council of Ontario Universities in July 2010, responsible for oversight of the Quality Assurance Framework processes for Ontario Universities. The Council operates at arm's length from both Ontario's publicly assisted universities and the Ontario government.

Resource Committee: the university Academic Resource Committee or equivalent university body.

Undergraduate Diploma: A prescribed set of degree credit courses and/or other forms of study that can be undertaken as a stand-alone program or to complement an undergraduate degree

program. An undergraduate diploma is comprised of 18-30 credit hours of undergraduate-level study

- a) A **concurrent undergraduate diploma** is offered in conjunction with an undergraduate degree, which requires that the candidate be already admitted to an undergraduate degree
- b) A **direct-entry undergraduate diploma** is a stand-alone, direct-entry program, developed by a unit already offering a related undergraduate or graduate

Undergraduate Studies Committee (USC): a standing committee of Academic Council responsible for reviewing undergraduate curriculum proposals.

SCOPE AND AUTHORITY

4. This policy applies to the full range of for credit curricular and programmatic endeavours at both the graduate and undergraduate levels, including Micro-credentials ~~(which may be for credit or not for credit)~~. It extends to new and continuing undergraduate and graduate degree programs whether offered in full, in part, or conjointly by any institutions federated or affiliated with the university. It also applies to programs offered in partnership, collaboration or other such arrangement with other post-secondary institutions including colleges, universities, or other institutes.
5. The Provost, or successor thereof, is the Policy Owner and is responsible for overseeing the implementation, administration, and interpretation of this Policy and its associated Procedures, as well as ensuring that Quality Assurance policies and procedures be established and are carried out. The Provost will be the authoritative contact between the University and the Quality Council.
6. ~~Faculty~~ Deans ensure that established policies and procedures are carried out at the Faculty level. Under the leadership of the Dean, ~~p~~Programs and Faculties are responsible for initiating and maintaining ~~P~~program development, planning for the compilation and analysis of information, improvement and review of ~~P~~programs, designing curricular changes, and readying them for consideration through the various levels of collegial review.
7. The Provost or designate, through the Center for Institutional Quality Enhancement (CIQE), coordinates the ~~day-to-day~~ day-to-day management of the quality assurance process, and works in collaboration with Deans and units to implement the procedures for developing and assessing ~~academic~~ ~~P~~programs, including coordinating internal and external appraisals and pulling together key institutional data and other indicators of program quality. The Provost, or designate will also maintain all documentation associated with curricular changes, program modifications, new program proposals, accreditation reports, and program reviews, for a period of ten years. The documentation will then be entered into the university archives, per the Records Retention Policy, exclusive of any personal or confidential information.
8. Academic Council holds delegated authority from the Board to establish and regulate the curricular policies and procedures of the University, and the contents and curricula of all courses of study. ~~All Curriculum proposals put forward by Faculty Councils~~ are considered by the appropriate ~~standing committee of Academic Council, such as the GSC or the USC, which in~~

~~turn presents them to Academic Council governing body~~ for approval or ~~for~~ information in accordance with Sections 13 - 15 of this Policy as appropriate. The establishment and oversight of both the policy and procedural aspects relating to the approval of new programs, program revisions, and program review are the responsibility of the Academic Council.

9. The Board of Governors is responsible for planning, determining policies for and providing for the overall development of the university, including approving strategic plans, budgets and expenditure plans. In this context, all proposals that lead to the establishment or termination of degree programs, the establishment or de-establishment of Faculties, institutes and chairs and councils within those Faculties, and university strategic plans are subject to approval by the Board.
10. The Quality Council ratifies the Institutional Quality Assurance Process Policy and associated Procedures, and any substantive change to these procedures, and undertakes regular audits of these processes for compliance with the Provincial Framework on an eight year cycle. In addition, the Quality Council reviews and approves all proposals for new degree and diploma programs, as applicable, and reviews Final Assessment Reports of Program Reviews. It also receives an annual report of major modifications to existing programs. The Quality Council has final authority to decide if a Major Program Modification constitutes a new program and, therefore, must follow the **New Program Procedures**.
11. The Ministry reviews new programs and provides external funding approval following approval by the Quality Council.
12. The Office of the Registrar is responsible for the implementation of records relating to new programs and curricular changes once approved or reported to Academic Council, ensuring that students meet the admission requirements, and that requirements for the degree or diploma have been fulfilled upon graduation. This responsibility is shared with the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies for graduate programs.

POLICY

The University is dedicated to ensuring the highest quality learning experience for students while maintaining the highest integrity of its academic programs. As such, the University is committed to the Quality Assurance Principles for Ontario Universities and the Quality Council (the Principles).

In meeting the Principles, the University will ensure that all academic programs:

- Align with University's mission, values and strategic plans
- Remain coherent, rigorous and relevant
- Make the best use of resources available to them
- Are subject to continuous quality improvement based on empirical evidence and collegial judgment
- Draw upon and enhance existing strengths at the university

The University will ensure ongoing academic integrity in its curricula while remaining rigorous and consistent in the expansion and refinement of program offerings.

The University will promote quality assurance in the ongoing review and improvement of curriculum and courses, the periodic review of program offerings, and the development of new programs.

In the planning for the ongoing review and improvement of curriculum, proposers must take into consideration the impact the changes may have on the human, instructional, physical and financial resources of the University and provide a plan to address them.

In addition, there must be broad consultation with members of the academic community, including faculty, staff and students who may be affected by the initiative, and with those who are key to its implementation. Consultation is particularly critical in cases where the changes involve offerings that are shared among programs and/or which may affect different groups of students (e.g. changes to courses that are core courses in other programs, cross-listed courses, changes to pre-requisites, co-requisites, and degree credit exclusions). Staff and faculty wishing to develop projects and initiatives related to Indigenization and reconciliation must consult in a Good Way, in accordance with the current procedures for Indigenous consultation.

Where there are possibilities for efficiencies to be achieved in the design and delivery of programs by collaboration among units, it is expected that these opportunities will be fully explored prior to their review by Faculty Council and that all possible avenues of cooperation will be fully considered in the initial stages. The nature and outcomes of these discussions will be included within program proposals.

The University will develop and continue to improve quality assurance policies, procedures and processes that incorporate provincial degree level expectations, and that are consistent with the Ontario Quality Assurance Framework and with the institution's own mission and mandate. CIQE will provide access to an electronic workflow tracking system for curriculum changes, and a repository for curriculum changes, program development, and cyclical program review. Individuals may use the templates and information provided at www.ontariotechu.ca/ciqe as a guide to the implementation of the quality assurance policies and procedures.

13. Curriculum Changes

- 13.1.** Deans and Faculties must plan for the ongoing refinement and improvement of new and continuing programs and for making major and minor modifications to them when it is considered appropriate to do so. These changes may be prompted by, but not limited to, the following: feedback from students, faculty and staff participating in the program; matters arising through the course of its delivery; evolution of the discipline and/or new developments in a particular field; improvements in teaching and learning strategies; changing needs of students, society, industry, etc.; improvements in technology; or as a result of a full examination of the curriculum through accreditation or the cyclical program review process.

13.2. All modifications to existing ~~degree p~~ programs, including the introduction of the option to complete a portion of the program to receive a Micro-credential, will be subject to approval ~~by the unit's Faculty Council(s) and subsequent review and approval by the appropriate Academic Council standing committee (USC or GSC) or approval by Academic Council where appropriate,~~ in accordance with the Curriculum Changes Procedures ~~prescribed procedures.~~ In addition, ~~m~~ Major modifications to programs will ~~also~~ be subject to review by the provincial Quality Council.

13.3. Program review and improvement takes place on an ongoing basis and can result in curricular changes at three different levels: Minor Curricular Changes, Minor Program Adjustments and Major Modifications.

Minor Curricular Changes normally fall under the purview of the Faculty Council purview, normally through its curriculum committee, and must be reported to USC or GSC for information. Changes to courses that are core in ~~other p~~ programs from other Faculties must be reviewed by each Faculty Council responsible for the affected ~~p~~ programs. New courses and course changes must receive approval and be reported in accordance with the Curriculum Change Procedures prior to their implementation and inclusion in the academic calendars. The protocol for approval of new courses and changes to courses offered jointly by more than one area will be determined during New Program or course development and revised by agreement of all parties.

Minor Program Adjustments are reported for information to Academic Council through its appropriate standing committee (USC/GSC). These changes must be presented to the standing committees for quality review and approval following their approval by the appropriate Faculty Council. ~~The committee will conduct a quality review of the program proposal using the University's Program Quality Review Criteria in accordance with this Policy and its associated Procedures as well as the committee's terms of reference.~~ Changes must receive ~~this the~~ standing committee's approval prior to their implementation and inclusion in the academic calendars.

Major modifications to existing programs are subject to ~~full~~ review and approval by Academic Council upon the recommendation of USC/GSC and following approval by the appropriate Faculty Council. Changes must receive Academic Council approval prior to their implementation and inclusion in the academic calendars. These changes are also reported annually to the Quality Council under the provincial Quality Assurance Framework.

Reporting of curricular changes must follow the procedures outlined in the **Curriculum Changes Procedures** document.

13.4. Program modifications that will result in a more substantial change to its nature and content will require review and approval in accordance with this policy and the **New Programs Procedures**. The final institutional determination of whether a program modification constitutes a significant change or a new program will rest with the Provost. The Quality Council has final authority to decide if a Major Program

Modification constitutes a new program and, therefore, must follow the **New Program Procedures**.

14. Review of Degree and Diploma Programs

- 14.1. All existing ~~U~~ndergraduate ~~D~~egree ~~P~~rograms, ~~G~~raduate ~~D~~egree ~~P~~rograms, and ~~for-credit-d~~iploma ~~P~~rograms will be subject to periodic cyclical review conducted at a minimum once every eight years that is consistent with the requirements set by the Quality Council. Deans and Faculties must plan for the review of their academic ~~p~~rograms, including the preparation of a self-study, and will follow the processes outlined in the **Cyclical ~~—~~Review and Auditing Procedures**.
- 14.2. The Provost, or designate, in consultation with the Deans, will maintain a university-wide schedule to ensure that each academic ~~P~~rogram is subject to review once every eight years. For each eight-year review cycle, CIQE will identify the specific program or programs that will be reviewed and, where there is more than one mode or site involved in the delivery of a specific program, the distinct versions of each program to be reviewed. Accreditation Reviews will be completed separately and involve separate processes and reviewers to ensure that all criteria are met. Elements of an accreditation review will not replace parallel requirements of the cyclical review.
- 14.3. In the planning for the review, the process must provide for input from members of the academic community associated with the program, including faculty, staff, students, and graduates. Where appropriate, comment from the broader community, such as representatives from industry, the professions, or employers may also be sought.
- 14.4. Where a ~~P~~rogram involves ~~faculty and courses from~~ more than one ~~Faculty unit~~, the ~~D~~eans involved must confirm to the Provost the ~~Faculty unit~~ that will hold the locus of responsibility for the review. In addition, for those ~~P~~rograms that are offered in more than one mode, at different locations, or having complementary components (e.g., bridging options, experiential ~~education-learning~~ options, etc.), the distinct versions of the ~~P~~rogram will be identified and reviewed.
- 14.5. Joint ~~P~~rograms, and other programs offered in collaboration with other post-secondary institutions will ensure that both the quality assurance requirements set out in this policy are met, as well as that of partner institutions.
- 14.6. Program reviews are subject to quality review by reviewers external and at arm's length to the program under review, in accordance with prescribed procedures and documentation requirements set in **the Cyclical Review and Auditing Procedures**.
- 14.7. Final Assessment Reports (FAR), which summarize the review, are prepared by CIQE, ~~using the self-study brief, the reviewers' report, the Program and Decanal response documents, and Implementation Plan and presented for review and approval in accordance with the Cyclical Review and Auditing Procedures. Following a review~~

~~of resource implications by the Resource Committee, the FAR and associated Implementation Plan, are sent to the appropriate standing committee of Academic Council (USC/GSC) for approval. Once approved, the report an Executive Summary and the Implementation Plan are is sent to Academic Council and the Board of Governors for information. The Quality Council then receives the Final Assessment Report, Executive Summary, and associated Implementation Plan. Summary Executive Summaries reports are posted on the University website.~~

15. New Diploma and Degree Programs

- 15.1. Deans and Faculties must plan for ongoing development of new program initiatives, including the design and delivery of the curriculum, the refinement of program requirements, the determination of learning outcomes consistent with the provincial degree level expectations, and the assessment of student achievement of the learning outcomes.
- 15.2. In the planning for any new program, the Dean, in consultation with the Provost in the initial stages, must also determine the human, instructional and physical resources needed to implement the program and ensure its ongoing operation. The financial impact of the new program on existing programs must also be examined, and consideration must be given to possible collaborations with other units and the possibility of obtaining additional funds from internal or external sources. Proposals must also address the alignment with the University and Faculty strategic plans.
- 15.3. Joint programs, and other programs offered in collaboration with other post-secondary institutions will ensure that both the quality assurance requirements set out in this policy are met, as well as that of partner institutions, as outlined in the **New Program Procedures**.
- 15.4. A Notice of Intent (NOI) must be submitted for all potential new diploma and degree programs as described in the **New Program Procedures**. NOIs will be reviewed and posted for comment from the university community. Once approved, the Faculty can proceed to develop the full proposal.
- 15.5. New ~~D~~egree ~~p~~Program proposals are subject to quality review by external appraisers under the provincial quality assurance framework, and in accordance with prescribed procedures and documentation requirements set out in the **New Program Procedures**. Upon the completion of the external appraisal, the proposal will be approved by the ~~relevant~~ Faculty Council ~~(s) of the sponsoring unit~~. These proposals are subsequently reviewed by the appropriate Academic Council standing committee (USC or GSC), and must be approved by Academic Council upon the recommendation of USC/GSC. Proposals ~~leading to the establishment of new degree programs~~ must also be approved by the Board of Governors (BOG) of the University. In addition, new ~~d~~egree ~~p~~Programs are subject to review and approval by the provincial Quality Council under the ~~q~~Quality ~~a~~Assurance ~~f~~Framework. Programs seeking provincial funding are also subject to review by the Ministry.

15.6. New ~~for-credit~~ ~~Diploma~~ ~~P~~ program proposals are subject to quality review in accordance with prescribed procedures and documentation requirements set out in the **New Program Procedures**. Proposals are subject to presentation and approval by the relevant Faculty Council(s). These proposals are then subject to approval by Academic Council upon the full review and recommendation of USC/GSC. Proposals must also be approved by the BOG. In addition, new ~~graduate~~ Graduate diploma ~~Diploma~~ ~~P~~ Program proposals are also appraised by the Quality Council under the provincial quality assurance framework through the Expedited Approval Process as described in the **New Program Procedures**. New Undergraduate Diploma Programs may also be submitted for Expedited Approval. New ~~undergraduate~~ Undergraduate and ~~graduate~~ Graduate diploma ~~Diploma~~ ~~P~~ Programs may also require review by the Ministry for funding purposes.

15.7. In accordance with the University's **Cyclical Review and Auditing Procedures**, all new ~~academic~~ ~~P~~ programs will be subject to periodic reviews subsequent to their implementation. An initial assessment will occur at first intake into the program, with an additional assessment one year after the launch of the Program. Additional monitoring may be required. At the time of program launch, the program will be entered into the schedule of academic program reviews and the first full review will take place no more than eight years after the start Program.

~~15.7.~~ **15.8.** Normally, new Diploma programs will be scheduled for review to align with the appropriate parent program to maintain a reasonable use of Faculty resources. As such, Diploma programs may be scheduled for first review earlier than eight years from program launch, or first review may be delayed should the parent program be scheduled for review before a reasonable amount of data is available.

16. New Micro-credential Programs

16.1. Deans, Faculties, and non-academic units must plan for ongoing development of new Micro-credential program initiatives, including the design and delivery of the curriculum, the refinement of program requirements, the determination of any learning outcomes, and any assessment of student achievement of the learning outcomes.

16.2. In the planning for any new Micro-credential, the human, instructional and physical resources needed to implement the program and ensure its ongoing operation must be considered. The financial impact of the new program on existing programs must also be examined, and consideration must be given to possible collaborations and the possibility of obtaining additional funds from internal or external sources.

16.3. Development of new Micro-credentials will be in accordance with the protocol described in the **New Program Procedures** or **Curriculum Change Procedures** and are subject to internal quality review. Proposals are not appraised by the Quality Council under the provincial quality assurance framework.

17. Closure of a Program

- 17.1.** Program Closures can be initiated by the Dean of a Faculty.
- 17.2.** Program closures can also be initiated by the Provost due to issues related to substandard academic quality as determined through a number of different assessments such as Cyclical Program Review, Key Performance Indicators, self-examination, financial exigency, admission pause for over two years, and/or a Program has not been reviewed in accordance with the Institutional Quality Assurance Policy.
- 17.2.1.** The Provost will consult with the Faculty Dean(s) of the affected program(s) to outline the reasons for closure.
- 17.3.** In the case of Graduate Programs, the Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies will also be consulted.
- 17.4.** In this case of pPrograms that contain Indigenous content, consultation in accordance with the current procedures for Indigenous consultation, is required.
- 17.5.** After all required consultation is completed, a proposal to close the Program will then proceed in accordance with the **Program Closure Procedures**~~s~~document.
- 17.6. Students in a Closed Program**
- 17.6.1.** Program closure proposals must include a detailed plan for students who are enrolled in, or who may have reasonably expected to enroll in, the closed Program, as outlined in the **Program Closure Procedures**~~s~~document.
- 17.6.2.** Students in a closed program will be informed of the program closure according to the requirements outlined in the **Program Closure Procedures**~~s~~.
- 17.6.3.** Closure should not result in students being unable to complete, if they so wish, the program they are registered in within the standard time to completion for that program.
- 17.6.4.** In the specific case of students enrolled in Graduate Programs, the closure must not prevent them from completing their courses, examinations, training, and research necessary to graduate, or interfere with their commitments of financial support.
- 17.6.5.** Notwithstanding the above, Students~~students~~ wishing to graduate from a closed program must apply to do so within four years of the program closure.
- 17.7. Faculty in a Closed Program**

- 17.7.1.** Procedures for Tenured, Tenure Track, and Teaching Faculty who are part of a bargaining unit will be in accordance with the relevant Articles of the Collective Agreement in force at the time of Program closure.
- 17.7.2.** Procedures for Associate Deans or Teaching Staff Governors who are temporarily outside of the bargaining unit will be in accordance with the relevant Articles of the Collective Agreement in force at the time of Program closure.
- 17.7.3.** Procedures for sessional instructors and other contract faculty who are part of a bargaining unit will be in accordance with the relevant Articles of the Collective Agreement in force at the time of Program closure. Should no relevant Article exist, sessional instructors and other contract faculty will be entitled to severance in accordance with Provincial or Federal legislation or may apply for other positions in the University for which they are qualified.
- 17.7.4.** Teaching staff not part of a bargaining unit will be entitled to severance in accordance with Provincial or Federal legislation or may apply for other positions in the University for which they are qualified.

17.8. Staff in a Closed Program

- 17.8.1.** Procedures for staff who are part of a bargaining unit will be in accordance with the relevant Articles of the Collective Agreement in force at the time of Program closure.
- 17.8.2.** Staff who are not part of a bargaining unit will be entitled to severance in accordance with Provincial or Federal legislation or may apply for other positions in the University for which they are qualified.

18. Quality Council Cyclical Audit

Quality enhancement is a function of and balance between internal and external processes and procedures. As part of the University's dedication to ensuring the highest quality learning experience for students and maintaining the highest integrity of its academic programs, Ontario Tech manages the development and continuous improvement of curricula through a rigorous governance process. External quality assurance involves the processes and procedures defined by the [Quality Assurance Framework](#) (QAF). In accordance with this Framework, the University is subject to a Cyclical Audit by the Quality Council, at least once every eight years. The Quality Council has established the schedule of institutional participation in the audit process within the eight-year cycle and publishes the agreed [schedule](#) on its website. The Cyclical Audit provides necessary accountability to post-secondary education's principal stakeholders by assessing the degree to which the University's internally defined quality assurance processes, procedures, and practices align with and satisfy the agreed upon standards, as set out in the QAF. The Audit will be conducted in accordance with the protocol as outlined in the **Cyclical Review and Auditing Procedures**.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

19. This policy will be reviewed as necessary and at least every three years. The Provost or successor thereof, is responsible to monitor and review this Policy.

RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES & DOCUMENTS

[Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance - Quality Assurance Framework](#)

Curriculum Change Procedures

Cyclical Review and Auditing Procedures

New Program Procedures

Program Closure Procedures

Program Nomenclature Directives

Faculty and Staff Collective Agreements

Protocols associated with consultation/development of Indigenous curriculum

Protocols associated with Micro-credential development



Classification Number	ACD 1501.04
Parent Policy	Institutional Quality Assurance Process
Framework Category	Academic
Approving Authority	Academic Council
Policy Owner	Provost
Approval Date	June 2020
Review Date	June 2020
Supersedes	ACD 1501 (June 2010); LCG 1127 Section 1 (August 2005); Quality Assurance Handbook (June 2011) Program Closure Procedures (June 2020); Not-for-Academic Credit Digital Badges, Microcredentials, and Stackable Credentials Policy (July 2021)

PROGRAM CLOSURE PROCEDURES

PURPOSE

1. The purpose of these Procedures is to establish a consistent process for defining and documenting the closure of a Program as outlined in the Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP).

DEFINITIONS

2. For the purposes of these ~~p~~rocedures the ~~following~~ definitions ~~in the Policy~~ apply:

~~**Faculty Council:** established by Academic Council to approve new programs and courses, policies (including admissions), academic standards, curriculum and degree requirements, and long range academic plans, at the Faculty level~~

~~**Graduate Studies Committee (GSC):** a standing committee of Academic Council responsible for reviewing graduate curriculum proposals and documents.~~

~~**Program:** A complete set and sequence of courses, combination of courses, and/or other units of study, research and practice; the successful completion of which qualifies the candidate for a formal credential (degree with or without major; diploma).~~

~~**Major Program Modifications:** those modifications that constitute a significant change to the design and delivery of an existing program.~~

~~**Ministry:** the Ontario Ministry governing the affairs of Colleges and Universities.~~

Commented [KM1]: Policy is now the central place for all definitions, this avoids any potential contradiction and shortens the Procedures for ease of reading.

~~Quality Council: the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance, established by the Council of Ontario Universities in July 2010, responsible for oversight of the Quality Assurance Framework processes for Ontario Universities. The Council operates at arm's length from both Ontario's publicly assisted universities and the Ontario government.~~

~~Undergraduate Studies Committee (USC): a standing committee of Academic Council responsible for reviewing undergraduate curriculum proposals and documents.~~

SCOPE AND AUTHORITY

3. These procedures apply to undergraduate and graduate ~~D~~egree and ~~D~~iploma ~~P~~rograms whether offered in full, in part, or conjointly by any institutions federated or affiliated with the University. It also applies to ~~D~~egree or ~~D~~iploma ~~P~~rograms offered in partnership, collaboration or other such arrangement with other post-secondary institutions including colleges, universities, or other institutes.
4. These procedures do not apply to the closure of a ~~Program Component specialization, minor, Type 1 Graduate Diploma, or Micro-credential,~~ which fall under the **Curriculum Change Procedures**, ~~nor do they apply to Micro-credentials whether stand-alone or embedded within a Program.~~
5. The Provost, or successor thereof, is the Policy Owner and is responsible for overseeing the implementation, administration and interpretation of these Procedures.

Commented [KM2]: Using definition for clarity.

Commented [KM3]: Curriculum Change Procedures do not discuss removal of M-Cs, these are handled through M-C policy. Adding clarification here based on the separately approved policy.

PROCEDURES

The Centre for Institutional Quality Enhancement (**CIQE**) will provide access to an electronic workflow tracking system and electronic repository of required proposals. Individuals may use the templates provided at www.ontariotechu.ca/ciqe as a guide to assist in the planning of the changes prior to implementing proposals in the electronic system.

6. Program Closure

- 6.1. When, in accordance with the Institutional Quality Assurance Policy, it has been determined that a Program should be closed, the Dean ~~or Provost~~ will consult with ~~and receive feedback from~~ the applicable Faculty Council(s).
- 6.2. Once the Dean ~~or Provost~~ has received feedback ~~from Faculty Council~~, a Major Program Modification – Program Closure electronic proposal is required to be completed in its entirety by the Dean or designate ~~within the Faculty~~.
- 6.3. The Major Program Modification – Program Closure will include evidence that appropriate consultation has taken place, and electronic proposals must minimally include the following:

Commented [KM4]: Per the IQAP Policy, the Provost may also initiate the decision.

- a) A brief summary of rationale for the program removal.
- b) A brief description of the program being removed and the current Calendar copy.
- c) A brief background on the existing program and detailed rationale for its removal; the proposed implementation date and detailed internal transition plan including impact on faculty members, other academic and non-academic human resources, or external agencies; and planned administrative steps and communication.
- d) Detailed transition plan for current and potential students; planned communication; maximum number of semesters for current students to complete the program; alternative programs and process for student transfer.
- e) A complete list of any courses being closed and the transition plan for each; a list of courses which will undergo required changes but are not being removed, a transition plan for each, and attached Course Change proposals.
- f) An outline of areas consulted, including an account of the process of consultation related to Indigenous content, where appropriate.

~~6.3.1. To be removed from the academic calendars for the subsequent academic year, the Major Program Modification – Program Closure must be received by the Centre for Institutional Quality Enhancement (CIQE) no later than the end of November.~~

Commented [KM5]: There is no deadline for this, 6.3.1 was included in error.

- 6.4. Completed proposals must be presented to the Faculty Council(s) for information and then submitted to CIQE. CIQE will prepare a detailed report of the impacts of the Program closure for presentation to the appropriate standing committee of Academic Council (USC or GSC) for discussion as part of the consultation process.
- 6.5. CIQE will record any concerns raised by the standing committee and prepare a report of impacts and concerns for the Provost. The Provost will also receive a copy of the Major Program Modification – Program Closure proposal.
- 6.6. The Provost will then submit their recommendation for Program closure, detailing the process and transition recommendations, ~~to the Executive Committee of Academic Council, and subsequently~~ to the Academic Council for final review and approval.

- 6.7. When the Program closure has been approved by the Academic Council, the President will then inform the Board of Governors of the decision and the reasons for it. Major Program Modifications – Program Closure are reported annually to the Quality Council and the Ministry.

7. If Academic Council Does not Approve the Program Closure

- 7.1. When, in accordance with the Institutional Quality Assurance Policy, Academic Council does not approve the program closure, Academic Council will strike a three-person Committee of its members to be chaired by the President or designate.
- 7.2. The Committee will seek the views of the Faculty Council(s), the Dean of the Faculty or School, the Dean(s) of any related Faculty or School, the Dean of the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, if applicable, the Provost, the Registrar, and at least one ~~external~~ assessor internal to the University but external to the Faculty(ies). The Committee will also invite all faculty members who teach in the program to comment if they wish to do so.
- 7.3. The Committee will, within 60 days, issue a report to the Board of Governors that presents the results of the investigations and makes one or more recommendations.
- 7.3.1 The Committee will discuss its conclusions with the Provost and the appropriate Dean(s) before forwarding its report to the Board of Governors.
- 7.4. The Board will review the Committee's report and reach a decision. The decision of the Board on the closure of the program is final.

Commented [KM6]: Added for clarity, old language potentially implied someone external to the University.

8. Procedures for the Phase-Out of Closed Programs

- 8.1. In consultation with the Dean of the Faculty in which the program resides, the Registrar, or designate, will prepare an official list of all students currently enrolled in the program.
- 8.2. The Dean will prepare correspondence to notify all enrolled students of the closure and provide information on the following:
- a) The date by which the program must be completed in order to receive the specified degree from the University;
 - b) A brief description of the program being removed and the current Calendar copy. The last semester and year in which each course required for the program will be offered;

- c) The availability of closely related programs offered by the University to which the student may transfer;
- d) The extent to which transfer ~~work~~credits, substitutions, etc., may be considered in meeting the requirements of the program.

8.3. Once the decision to close the program has been made, the program will no longer accept applicants and it will be removed from the website and academic calendar.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 9. This procedure will be reviewed as necessary and at least every three years. The Provost's Office, through the Center for Institutional Quality Enhancement, coordinates the ~~day-to~~ ~~dayday-to-day~~ management of the quality assurance process, and works in collaboration with Deans and units to implement the procedures for developing and accessing academic programs. The Provost, or successor thereof, is responsible to monitor and review this Policy.

RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES & DOCUMENTS

[Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance - Quality Assurance Framework](#)

Institutional Quality Assurance Policy

Program Nomenclature Directives

Faculty and Staff Collective Agreements

Protocols associated with consultation/development of Indigenous curriculum

GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE REPORT

SESSION:

Public
Non-Public

ACTION REQUESTED:

Decision
Discussion/Direction
Information

Financial Impact Yes No

Included in Budget Yes No

TO: Graduate Studies Committee

DATE: April 28, 2026

FROM: Pejman Mirza-Babaei, SGPS Dean

SUBJECT: Outstanding Thesis Award Amendments

COMMITTEE MANDATE:

In accordance with the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) Terms of Reference with respect to academic awards, the following updates to the Outstanding Thesis Award are provided to GSC for approval.

MOTION FOR CONSIDERATION:

That GSC hereby approves the amendments to the Outstanding Thesis Award, as presented.

BACKGROUND/CONTEXT & RATIONALE:

The Outstanding Thesis Award is conferred each year to graduate students in recognition of exceptional research work. Historically, one award has been given for each of the Master's and Doctoral levels across the University.

Due to increasing diversity in our graduate programs, growing graduate enrollment, and challenges in accurately comparing impact across disparate disciplines, there has been an interest in expanding these awards to one per Faculty at each degree level.

Following consultation with Faculties, SGPS has updated the award to reflect this change.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES:

- The total number of awards is now one per Faculty at each of the Master's and Doctoral levels.
- Nominations are now made collectively by the thesis examination committee following the defence and noted in the Chair's Report. (Previously, nominations were only made by the External/Thesis Examiner prior to the defence.)
- Guidelines for Faculty-level selection committees have been added.

- Additional editorial changes have been made to improve organization, clarity, and flow.

CONSULTATION:

- ✓ Discussion with Faculty Deans: March-April 2026
- Graduate Studies Committee (Approval): April 28, 2026

NEXT STEPS:

- Amendments to the award are to be shared with Faculties for administration of the Outstanding Thesis Award for 2025-2026
 - The amended award is to be presented at Academic Council for information: May 26, 2026
-

SUPPORTING REFERENCE MATERIALS:

- Outstanding Thesis Award (clean copy)
- Outstanding Thesis Award (tracked changes)

Outstanding Thesis Award

The Ontario Tech University **Outstanding Thesis Award** was established in 2016 to recognize students graduating from thesis-based master's or doctoral programs at the university whose thesis work represents an original and substantial contribution to their discipline.

Public recognition and value of the award

One award from each Faculty will be presented annually in each of the Master's and Doctoral categories. Students in eligible cross-Faculty joint programs will be considered within the Faculty of their registration and convocation for the purposes of this process.

The thesis awards will normally be publicly announced at the Spring Convocation ceremony. The winners will be listed in the Convocation program and receive a certificate.

Award categories

Master's Thesis

This award recognizes a Master's student who has conducted outstanding Master's thesis research and whose thesis has made (or is expected to make) a significant contribution to their field.

Doctoral Thesis

This award recognizes a doctoral student who has conducted outstanding doctoral thesis research that represents a remarkably impactful contribution to their field.

Selection process and award criteria

Awards will be selected by the Outstanding Thesis Committee (OTC) within each Faculty.

Each OTC is normally chaired by a Graduate Program Director from the Faculty. The committee should also have a diverse representation of graduate programs from the Faculty.

The committee will submit one selected recipient for each award (Master's and Doctoral) and a decision summary to the SGPS Dean for final approval as outlined in the nomination review process.

Eligibility criteria

The award is open to all students who have completed a thesis-based graduate program at the university. Nominations are made by the examining committee following the thesis defence and must be indicated in the examination Chair's Report alongside a justification for the nomination.

Additionally, nominees must meet all of the following criteria:

- a) Obtained a GPA of 3.7 or higher in their program.
- b) The outcome of the student's thesis defense was either Acceptable without Required Revisions or Acceptable with Minor Revisions.
- c) The student has completed their defence, fulfilled all degree requirements, and submitted their thesis within the eligibility window, which extends from the day after the [posted Winter thesis submission deadline](#) in the previous academic year to the day of the current year's deadline.
- d) The student has no academic offenses on their record.

Note: Students who submit their thesis to SGPS after the [posted Winter thesis submission deadline](#) will be considered in the following year's competition.

Selection criteria

The OTC from each Faculty will evaluate the candidates' nominations using the following criteria:

- a) The evaluation of the thesis by examining committee members, including the Supervisor Notes and justification for nomination given in the Chair's Report.
- b) The scholarly accomplishments that have arisen from the thesis research. This can include peer-reviewed articles, research monographs, patents, and other creative works.
- c) The significance of any research breakthrough or major advancements made by the nominee's thesis research.
- d) Awards and other forms of recognition for research accomplishments by professional societies.
- e) The current and future impact of the thesis research on society.

Nomination review process

Each Faculty at the university may recommend one winner at each of the Master's and Doctoral levels.

1. Nomination package

Following the [posted Winter thesis submission deadline](#) each year, SGPS will provide a nomination package for each Faculty's nominees to the corresponding OTC which will include:

- a) A copy of the thesis.
- b) A copy of the Thesis/External Examiner's Report on the thesis. Doctoral-level nomination packages will also include the University Examiner's Report on the thesis.
- c) A copy of the Chair's Report on Thesis Examination.

2. OTC decision submission

The award will be conferred on an annual cycle corresponding with Spring Convocation. SGPS will include the current year's OTC decision deadline (normally the first week of May) when distributing nomination packages to Faculties.

Each Faculty OTC must submit a decision summary to the SGPS Dean for final approval which will include:

- The selected nominee for the Faculty Master's award
- The selected nominee for the Faculty Doctoral award
- A list of OTC members (including who chaired the committee)
- A summary of the decision-making process including scoring (if applicable)
- A summary of any identified conflicts of interest and their resolution

Winners will be notified by SGPS through a public announcement.

Outstanding Thesis Award

The Ontario Tech University **Outstanding Thesis Award** was established in 2016 to recognize ~~a student~~s graduating from ~~a~~ thesis-based master's or doctoral programs at the university whose thesis work represents an original ~~work that makes a~~and substantial contribution to their discipline.

Public recognition and value of the award

~~A maximum of one award~~One award from each Faculty will be presented annually in each of the Master's and Doctoral categories. Students in eligible cross-Faculty joint programs will be considered within the Faculty of their registration and convocation for the purposes of this process.

~~Each thesis award consists of a recognition plaque.~~ The thesis awards will normally be publicly announced ~~during the convocation ceremony at the Spring Convocation ceremony.~~ The winners will be listed in the Convocation program and receive a certificate.

Award categories

Master's Thesis

This award recognizes a Master's student who has ~~written an~~conducted outstanding Master's thesis research and whose thesis has made (or is expected to make) a significant contribution to their field.

Doctoral Thesis

This award recognizes a ~~PhD~~doctoral student who has ~~written an~~conducted outstanding doctoral thesis research that represents a remarkably impactful contribution to their field ~~of research.~~

Selection process and award criteria

~~The award will be selected by the Graduate Studies Awards Committee. This committee is chaired by the Dean of Graduate Studies or their designate.~~ Awards will be selected by the Outstanding Thesis Committee (OTC) within each Faculty.

Each OTC is normally chaired by a Graduate Program Director from the Faculty. The committee should also have a diverse representation of graduate programs from the Faculty.

~~The committee will normally consist of one member from each Faculty Selection Committee who does not have a conflict of interest with any nominee. The membership should also have a diverse representation of research disciplines.~~

The committee will ~~recommend~~ submit one selected nominee recipient for each award (Master's and Doctoral) and a decision summary to the SGPS Dean for final approval of Graduate Studies as outlined in the nomination review process.

Eligibility criteria

The award is open to all students who have completed a thesis-based graduate program at the university, ~~and whose thesis was recommended for an award by the thesis/external examiner, and who meet the following criteria: Nominations are made by the examining committee following the thesis defence and must be indicated in the examination Chair's Report alongside a justification for the nomination.~~

Additionally, nominees must meet all of the following criteria:

- a) Obtained a GPA of 3.7 or higher in their program.;
- b) The outcome of the student's thesis defense was either Acceptable without Required Revisions or Acceptable with Minor Revisions.;
- b)c) The student has completed their defence, fulfilled all degree requirements, and submitted their thesis within the eligibility window, which extends from the day after the posted Winter thesis submission deadline in the previous academic year to the day of the current year's deadline.
- c)d) The student has no academic offenses on their record.

Note: ~~students~~ Students who submit their thesis to SGPS after the ~~winter~~ posted Winter thesis submission deadline (April 17, 2025) will be considered in the following year's competition.

Selection criteria

The ~~awards committee~~ OTC from each Faculty will evaluate the candidates' nominations using the following criteria:

- a) The evaluation of the thesis by examining committee members, including the Supervisor Notes and justification for nomination given in the Chair's Report.

- b) The scholarly accomplishments that have arisen from the thesis research. This can include peer-reviewed articles, research monographs, patents, and other creative works.
- c) The significance of any research breakthrough or major advancements made by the nominee's thesis research.
- d) Awards and other forms of recognition for research accomplishments by professional societies.
- e) The current and future impact of the thesis research on society.

~~Note: students who submit their thesis to SCPS after the winter submission deadline (April 17, 2025) will be considered in the following year's competition.~~

~~Award categories~~

~~Master's Thesis~~

~~This award recognizes a Master's student who has written an outstanding Master's thesis and whose thesis has made (or is expected to make) a significant contribution to their field.~~

~~Doctoral Thesis~~

~~This award recognizes a PhD student who has written an outstanding doctoral thesis that represents a remarkably impactful contribution to their field of research.~~

Nomination ~~Review-review Processprocess~~

Each Faculty at the university may recommend one winner at each of the Master's and Doctoral levels. ~~is permitted **one nomination** in each category. Eligible graduate programs that are considered cross-Faculty can also directly nominate a student in each category.~~

1. Application-Nomination package

~~The nomination package for each faculty candidate must include:~~

- ~~a) The nomination form~~
- ~~b) A nomination letter (2 pages maximum) written by the **Faculty Selection Committee nominator(s)** summarizing why the candidate's thesis is outstanding and outlining the significance of the candidate's scholarly work. The letter must clearly identify how the~~

~~nominee meets the award evaluation criteria (committee may use chart completed by supervisor to write letter).~~

- ~~○ The letter may also comment on the normal number of publications for the field/degree and should mention the journal quartile for any published papers.~~
- ~~○ Note that the total number papers for a Master's student will be used as a tie breaker if necessary, rather than as an essential factor in determining if the thesis is the most outstanding.~~

Following the posted Winter thesis submission deadline each year, SGPS will provide a nomination package for each Faculty's nominees to the corresponding OTC which will include:The following items must be included in the nomination package, but will be provided in a folder by SGPS:

- ~~a) The curriculum vitae of the nominee~~
- ~~b)a) _____ A copy of the thesis.~~
- ~~c) A copy of the Recommendation for Awards Form completed by the thesis/external examiner of the thesis~~
- ~~d)b) _____ A copy of the Thesis/External Examiner's Report on the thesis. Doctoral-level candidates must nomination packages will also include the University Examiner's Report on the thesis.~~
- ~~c) A copy of the Chair's Report on Thesis Examination.~~

~~All nominees will be notified of their status after public announcement of the award recipients.~~

2. Nomination deadline OTC decision submission

The award will be given out~~conferred~~ on an annual cycle ~~to correspond with June convocation~~corresponding with Spring Convocation. As such, the submission deadline for faculty selection committee nomination packages will **normally be the last day** in the winter semester. All eligible candidates must have defended their thesis, and completed all degree requirements no more than 1 year prior to the final thesis submission deadline. Each year the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies SGPS will ~~circulate~~include the current year's OTC decision deadline (normally the first week of May) date as part of call for nominations announcements sent to each Faculty when distributing nomination packages to Faculties.

Each Faculty OTC must submit a decision summary to the SGPS Dean for final approval which will include:

- The selected nominee for the Faculty Master's award
- The selected nominee for the Faculty Doctoral award

- A list of OTC members (including who chaired the committee)
- A summary of the decision-making process including scoring (if applicable)
- A summary of any identified conflicts of interest and their resolution

Winners will be notified by SGPS through a public announcement.

~~**This year's nominations must be emailed to
gradthesis@ontariotechu.ca no later than 4:00 p.m. on April 24,
2025.**~~

~~**Late nominations will not be considered.**~~

For any questions, please email gradthesis@ontariotechu.ca.

**ACADEMIC COUNCIL
GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE (GSC)**

**Minutes of the Public Session of the February 24, 2026 Meeting
via Videoconference
9:02 a.m. - 9:31 a.m.**

Graduate Studies Committee Agenda & Materials 2025-2026

Present:

Pejman Mirza-Babaei,
Chair
Jennifer Abbass Dick
JoAnne Arcand
Akramul Azim
Krystina Clarke
Amanda Cooper
Nicola Crow
Catherine Davidson

Leigh Harkins
Shahram Heydari
Mehdi Hossein-Nejad
Sayyed Ali Hosseini
Dima Jawad
Karolina Krystyniak
Holly MacPherson
Olga Marques
Kimberley McCartney

Diana Petrarca
Faisal Qureshi
Ghaus Rizvi
Andrea Slane
Lennaert van Veen
Nick Wattie
Ken Wilson
Adam Wingate

Regrets:

Dario Bonetta
Carla Cesaroni
Franco Gaspari
Les Jacobs

Hossam Kishawy (on leave)
Xianke Lin
Lori Livingston
Carolyn McGregor

Scott Nokleby
Carol Rodgers
Peter Stoett
Akira Tokuhiro

Staff and Guests:

Sandra Grouette (Secretary)

1. Call to Order and Land Acknowledgement

The Chair called the Public Session of the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) Meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. and provided their personal Land Acknowledgement.

2. Approval of Agenda

Upon a motion duly made by J. Arcand and seconded by N. Wattie, the GSC Agenda was approved as presented, including approving and receiving the Consent Agenda and its contents.

3. Chair's Remarks

The Chair provided updates on a wide range of graduate initiatives, including the Graduate Excellence Awards' call for nominations, upcoming events such as the Postdoc Fireside Chat on March 11 and the 3MT Showcase on March 18 & 19; as well as the ongoing work on the Banner student system. They further advised that the memo outlining new central graduate funding for 2026-2027 has been released and expressed appreciation for the continued support provided centrally to support graduate students. They also noted strong applicant interest in the CIRTA program. The

Chair also took the opportunity to acknowledge Dean Peter Stoett as he steps down as Dean of the Faculty of Social Science and Humanities and begins a research leave.

As part of the Chair's update on the Banner student system, the Chair reminded Members about using this system to support accurate reporting. The importance of a system that provides clear, consistent, and easily accessible information for deans, associate deans, and program directors, was noted by some Members and discussed. The Chair also noted an increase in late requests for student status changes, reminding Members that delays affect Ministry reporting and emphasized the importance of adhering to published deadlines.

4. Minor Program Adjustments (Decision)

4.1 Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science: Electrical and Computer Engineering, MAsc/MEng/PhD* (M)

A. Azim noted that the proposed courses have previously been offered multiple times as special topics within the Faculty. In accordance with Faculty policy, he advised that graduate courses demonstrating strong enrollment through repeated special-topics offerings are advanced for permanent course status. As such, these courses are now being formalized with dedicated course codes for regular inclusion in the curriculum.

Upon a motion duly made by A. Azim and seconded by D. Jawad, the GSC hereby approves the Minor Program Adjustment to add three new courses in the Electrical and Computer Engineering MAsc, MEng, and PhD graduate programs.

4.2 Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science: Nuclear Design Engineering, Graduate Diploma* (M)

In the absence of A. Tokuhira, the Committee did not have any questions regarding this proposal.

Upon a motion duly made by J. Arcand and seconded by D. Jawad, the GSC hereby approves the Minor Program Adjustment to the Nuclear Design Engineering, Graduate Diploma program to adjust core courses.

4.3 Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science: Software Engineering, MAsc and MEng* (M)

A. Azim noted that the course, AI-Enabled Smart Grid, recently added to the Electrical and Computer Engineering (ECE) program, has also attracted interest from Software Engineering students. As Software Engineering is a separate program, he advised a minor program adjustment is required to formally include this course in its curriculum. A. Azim shared that the proposed change serves only to extend the course option to Software Engineering students.

Upon a motion duly made by A. Azim and seconded by G. Rizvi, the GSC hereby approves the Minor Program Adjustment to add ENGR 5675G AI-Enabled Smart Grid Systems Engineering to the graduate course listings in the Software Engineering MAsc and MEng graduate programs.

5. Cyclical Program Review (Approval)

5.1 18 Month Follow-Up Report: Modelling and Computational Science, MSc and PhD* (M)

K. McCartney noted that following each cyclical program review, the program and Dean prepare a response and the Dean develops an action plan. The 18-month follow-up presented is the Dean's progress report on that plan. No administrative concerns were identified. Several items are appropriately marked as ongoing, and one item remains on hold with a clear rationale provided.

Upon a motion duly made by O. Marques and seconded by F. Qureshi, the GSC hereby approves the 18-Month Follow-Up Report from the Master of Science (MSc) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Modelling and Computational Science Cyclical Program Review, as presented

6. Consent Agenda* (M)

The Chair confirmed that the contents of the Consent Agenda were approved and received under Agenda Item # 2.

6.1 Public Minutes of the January 27, 2026 Meeting* (M)

6.2 Memoranda: (I)

- i) Faculty of Social Science and Humanities - [Course prefix for Master of Social Media Communication in Online Creators](#)
- ii) Faculty of Health Sciences - [MHSc Admission Changes](#)

6.3 Minor Curricular Changes: (I)

Course Change:

[ENGR 5590G](#)

6.4 Associate Graduate Faculty Appointments (I)

- Computer Science, Jennifer Abbass Dick, Faculty of Health Sciences
- Computer Science, Winnie Sun, Faculty of Health Sciences
- Health Sciences, Denise Connelly, Faculty of Health Sciences
- Health Sciences, Susan Bookey-Bassett, Faculty of Health Sciences
- Nursing, Susan Bookey-Bassett, Faculty of Health Sciences
- Nursing, Ann Mary Celestini, Faculty of Health Sciences
- Nursing, Beryl Cable-Williams, Faculty of Health Sciences
- Nursing, Cyndi Gilmer, Faculty of Health Sciences
- Nursing, Ellen Buck-McFadyen, Faculty of Health Sciences
- Nursing, Kimberly Ritchie, Faculty of Health Sciences
- Nursing, Kirsten Woodend, Faculty of Health Sciences
- Nursing, Victoria Reid-de Jong, Faculty of Health Sciences

6.5 Graduate Faculty Appointments (I)

- Education, Karla Dhungana Sainju, Faculty of Social Science and Humanities
- Education, Peter Lewis, Faculty of Business and Information Technology
- Education, Igor Kotlyar, Faculty of Business and Information Technology
- Social Practice and Innovation, Joelle Rodway, Frazer Faculty of Education

7. Termination

There being no other business, and upon a motion to terminate by A. Azim, the GSC Meeting terminated at 9:31 a.m.

Sandra Grouette, Assistant University Secretary

GRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE REPORT

SESSION:

Public
Non-Public

ACTION REQUESTED:

Decision
Discussion/Direction
Information

Financial Impact Yes No

Included in Budget Yes No

TO: Graduate Studies Committee

DATE: April 28, 2026

FROM: Pejman Mirza-Babaei, SGPS Dean

SUBJECT: Graduate Thesis Completion Course

COMMITTEE MANDATE:

In accordance with the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) Terms of Reference, the following process update and academic calendar addition relevant to research-based graduate students is provided to GSC for information.

BACKGROUND/CONTEXT & RATIONALE:

SGPS has received feedback from students, supervisors, and staff indicating that the current *Early Completion Refund* process is cumbersome, unclear, and a significant source of anxiety and stress at the end of a student's academic journey.

Under the current process, research-based students are charged full tuition until their final thesis package is formally submitted to SGPS. Students who submit their thesis for examination near the end of a semester often require additional time in the following term to complete the examination process and make revisions.

Students are charged full tuition for this subsequent semester but are offered a refund based on the deadlines in the academic schedule. This timeline often pressures students to rush their work to meet refund deadlines, potentially compromising thesis quality and significantly increasing stress levels. To request a refund, students must navigate the *Early Completion Refund* process, which involves multiple forms, emails, approvals, and manual steps. This complexity, combined with uncertainty and ongoing negotiations around timing, often becomes their last interaction with the university, leaving them with an unnecessarily stressful and negative student experience. It also creates an administrative burden heavily reliant on manual work, which will scale onerously with growth in enrollment.

In response to this feedback, and in anticipation of continued growth in graduate enrolment, SGPS conducted an environmental scan of fourteen Canadian universities. The review identified three primary models currently in use:

1. A refund deadline model
2. A pro-rated tuition model
3. A completion course / flat-fee model

After assessing these options in the context of Ontario Tech's structure and student needs, the completion course model emerged as the most suitable and equitable approach for our institution.

PROPOSED PROCESS UPDATE:

When a research-based student submits their draft thesis, they will remain registered in their regular program for that semester. **Beginning in the following semester** and for each semester thereafter, if the thesis examination process is still active (for example, if the defence is scheduled for the semester following the draft submission or the student is completing revisions which extend into a subsequent semester):

- Students within their standard program length (normally 2 years for a Master's degree and 4 years for a Doctoral degree) will remain registered in the program's continuance course.
- Students beyond their standard program length will be moved into the thesis completion course (SGPS 5000G).

This process will eliminate the need for the current *Early Completion Refund* process.

Only research-based thesis students will be eligible for the thesis completion course; it will not be applicable to students in course-based programs completing a project or major paper. The current 2M and 2D forms will be revised to indicate the draft submission date and examination date.

Students will not need to take any action. Once SGPS receives the draft thesis, the submission will be recorded on a shared tracking sheet with the Office of the Registrar. At the start of the following semester, if the examination process is still active, the Office of the Registrar will update the student's registration to the Thesis Completion course if applicable. This ensures the change happens at the correct point in the process and is seamless for the student.

The thesis completion course is zero billing and zero credit hours. **The course will have a proposed flat rate fee of \$500 (for 2026-2027).** The student will retain full-time status while in the Thesis Completion course. If the student wishes to change to part-time status, they must complete the usual process and form.

This revised model removes administrative friction, reduces student stress during a critical period, ensures fair treatment across student categories, and better positions Ontario Tech to support growing graduate enrolment in a sustainable way.

ACADEMIC CALENDAR CHANGE:

Information on the Thesis Completion course (SGPS 5000G) will be added to the Graduate Academic Calendar under Academic Regulations: Registration policies and regulations.

Proposed addition:

Thesis Completion Course

When a research-based student submits their draft thesis, they will remain registered in their regular program for that semester. If the student is beyond the standard program length (normally 2 years for a Master's degree and 4 years for a Doctoral degree), and the thesis examination process is still active in the following semester (for example, if the defence is scheduled for the semester following the draft submission or the student is completing revisions which extend into a subsequent semester), the student will be moved into a universal thesis completion course, SGPS 5000G.

CONSULTATION:

- ✓ CIQE: Kimberley McCartney, Manager
- ✓ Office of the Registrar: Adam Wingate, Associate Registrar
- ✓ Student Awards and Financial Aid: Debra White, Manager
- ✓ International Office: Matt Devlin, Manager
- ✓ SGPS: Graduate Affairs Officers & Specialist
- ✓ GSC Colleagues' Exchange
- ✓ Tuition Working Group
- Graduate Studies Committee (for information)

COMPLIANCE WITH POLICY/LEGISLATION:

No policy amendments are required to implement this change.

NEXT STEPS:

SGPS will work with the Office of the Registrar and the university governance process to enact the change for the Spring 2026 semester.