

ACADEMIC COUNCIL REPORT

SESSION:

Public
Non-Public

ACTION REQUESTED:

Decision
Discussion/Direction
Information

TO: Academic Council

DATE: May 28, 2024

PRESENTED BY: Dr. Lori Livingston, Provost and Vice-President, Academic

SUBJECT: 2023-24 Quality Assurance Process & Program Annual Report

BACKGROUND/CONTEXT & RATIONALE:

As part of the annual reporting process, the Centre for Institutional Quality Enhancement (CIQE) provides an annual report to Academic Council and the Board for information that provides a snapshot of quality assurance frameworks and enhancements, academic program development, and a summary of the status of Ministry Program approvals of Ontario Tech programs.

The attached Quality Assurance Process and Program Annual Report outlines the quality assurance process and activities that have occurred over the past year that align our internal Quality Assurance processes with the Province's Quality Assurance principles and Framework.

IMPLICATIONS:

This is an annual report that is reported to Academic Council and the Board for information.

ALIGNMENT WITH MISSION, VISION, VALUES & STRATEGIC PLAN:

Supporting program innovations, new programs, and cyclical program review processes ensures program quality at the University is in keeping with the priorities in the Integrated Academic and Research Plan.

SUPPORTING REFERENCE MATERIALS:

2023-24 Quality Assurance Process & Program Annual Report

Quality Assurance Process and Program Annual Report

April 2023 – March 2024

Centre for Institutional Quality Enhancement (CIQE)

Summary: Quality Assurance Process

The Provost is responsible for overseeing the implementation and administration of the quality assurance process. The day-to-day management of the process resides with the Centre for Institutional Quality Enhancement (CIQE). The CIQE office along with the Deans and academic units implement the procedures that are outlined by the Quality Council's [Quality Assurance Framework](#) and Ontario Tech's [Institutional Quality Assurance Process](#) (IQAP).

As part of the annual reporting process, CIQE submits a report to Academic Council and the Board of Governors for information that provides a snapshot of quality frameworks and enhancements, academic program development, and a summary of the status of Ministry approvals of Ontario Tech programs.

The following report outlines the academic program additions and changes related to the quality assurance process that occurred from April 2023 to March 2024.

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1 Internal University Processes

1.1 Notice of Intent

For all new diploma and degree programs a Notice of Intent (NOI) must be submitted to the Provost for approval prior to development of a full program proposal.

This year, there were three new Notices of Intent submitted.

Table 1.1 Notice of Intent Internal Progress

Program	Notice of Intent Approved
BA – Sociology	Sept-23
Master of Arts - Online Creators: Professional Communications for Social Change	Dec-23
BA – Educational Psychology	Jan-24

Submission of the full new program proposal to Academic Council must be completed within two years of the NOI approval. Further information about the new program development process is available [here](#).

1.2 Minor Curricular Changes

Minor curricular changes are changes at the course level only and do not impact overall program requirements. These include changes in elective offerings, course titles, descriptions, course delivery, or credit weighting of elective courses. For the reporting timeframe there were a total of 300 minor curricular changes, these are provided by Faculty in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2 Minor Curricular Changes by Faculty

Faculty	Minor Curricular Changes
Faculty of Business and Information Technology	49
Faculty of Education	84
Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science	38
Faculty of Health Sciences	36
Faculty of Science	30
Faculty of Social Science and Humanities	63

Adjustments to course mode of delivery accounted for a significant portion of the changes submitted to allow for greater flexibility in course offerings should the need arise.

1.3 Minor Program Adjustments

Minor program adjustments impact overall program requirements but do not greatly impact the program learning outcomes. These include the introduction of new required courses, deletion of required courses, editorial changes to degree requirements or program learning outcomes, or changes or additions to new academic requirements. For the reporting timeframe there were a total 27 minor program adjustments, shown in Table 1.3.

Table 1.3 Minor Program Adjustments by Faculty

Faculty	Minor Program Adjustments
Faculty of Business and Information Technology	4
Faculty of Education	2
Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science	10
Faculty of Health Sciences	4
Faculty of Science	3
Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities	4

2 Quality Council Approval Processes

2.1 New Program Approvals

This applies to both new undergraduate and graduate degree programs and is used to secure the academic standards of new programs and to assure their ongoing improvement. The Quality Council reviews the programs and has the final authority to approve or decline new programs. This year there were two programs submitted to the Quality Council.

Table 2.1 New Programs Submitted to the Quality Council

Program	Academic Council Approval Date	Quality Council Submission Date	Quality Council Approval Date
MASc/MEng – Mechatronics	Nov-23	Jan-24	Feb-24
BASC – Sustainability	Mar-24	Apr-24	Pending

Brief descriptions of all previously [approved programs](#) from the Quality Council can be found on the Quality Council's website.

2.2 Expedited Reviews

This applies to graduate diplomas and may apply to undergraduate diplomas. The Quality Council can also request this type of review for a new field in a graduate program, or request based on proposed major modifications of an existing program.

There were no programs submitted to the Quality Council for expedited review approval during the annual reporting timeframe.

2.3 Major Modifications (Program Renewal and Significant Change)

Major program modifications result in substantive changes to the nomenclature, program requirements, and/or program learning outcomes. These include significant changes to the learning outcomes, faculty engaged in the delivery of the program, or the addition of a new field to an existing graduate program. Table 2.2 below presents by Faculty all major modifications completed during the reporting period. A report of all major modifications is provided to the Quality Council annually in July.

Table 2.2 Major Modifications Governance Progress

Faculty	Program	Faculty Council	USC/GSC	Academic Council
Faculty of Business and Information Technology	Information Technology Security, MITS	Nov-23	Feb-24	Mar-24
Faculty of Education	MA, MEd, UG and GR Diploma, Education	Nov-23	Jan-24	Feb-24
	B.ED (PJ/IS)	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24
	BA, Educational Studies	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24
Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science	BEng, Manufacturing Engineering	Dec-22	Sept-23	Oct-23
	BEng, Mechanical Engineering	Nov -23	Jan-24	Feb-24
	BEng, Mechatronics Engineering	Nov-23	Jan-24	Feb-24
Faculty of Health Sciences	Kinesiology	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24
Faculty of Science	Biological Science – Biomedical Science specialization	Jun-23	Sept-23	Oct-23
	Computer Science	Dec-23	Jan-24	Jan-24
	Neuroscience	Oct-23	Oct-23	Nov-23
	Physics – Nanophysics	Jan-24	Jan-24	Feb-24
Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities	Criminology and Justice	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24
	Liberal Studies	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24
	Sociology minor	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24
	BA/BSc – Psychology	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24

2.4 Cyclical Program Reviews

As set by the Quality Council, all existing undergraduate and graduate degree and diploma programs are subject to review once every eight years.

The cyclical program review allows for an in-depth, critical look at the program and follows an [internal two-year timeframe](#). The review involves the following six components:

- Review and enhancement of program learning outcomes;
- Development of a self-study brief;
- External evaluation to provide recommendations on program quality improvement;
- Internal responses to the external review and recommendations;
- Preparation and approval of a [Final Assessment Report \(FAR\)](#) and implementation plan; and
- Subsequent reporting on the implementation of recommendations (18-Month reports discussed under Follow-Up Process, Section 3.2 below).

Table 2.3 presents the number of programs at each significant step of the review process presented by Faculty and degree/diploma level. The [program review schedule](#) is posted on the CIQE website for reference at any time.

Table 2.3 Cyclical Program Review Process Stage Summary

Level/Faculty	Self-Study	External Review	Total
Undergraduate	9	2	11
Faculty of Business and Information Technology	1	2	3
Faculty of Education			
Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science	4		4
Faculty of Health Sciences	1		1
Faculty of Science	1		1
Faculty of Social Science and Humanities	2		2
Graduate	8	3	11
Faculty of Business and Information Technology	1	1	2
Faculty of Education			
Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science	4		4
Faculty of Health Sciences	1		1
Faculty of Science		2	2
Faculty of Social Science and Humanities	2		2

Programs that have finalized their internal portions of the process and have now submitted their FAR to University governance are listed in Table 2.4 below. Once all of the university governing bodies have been provided the report for information, it is then submitted to the Quality Council.

Table 2.4 Cyclical Program Review Governance Progress

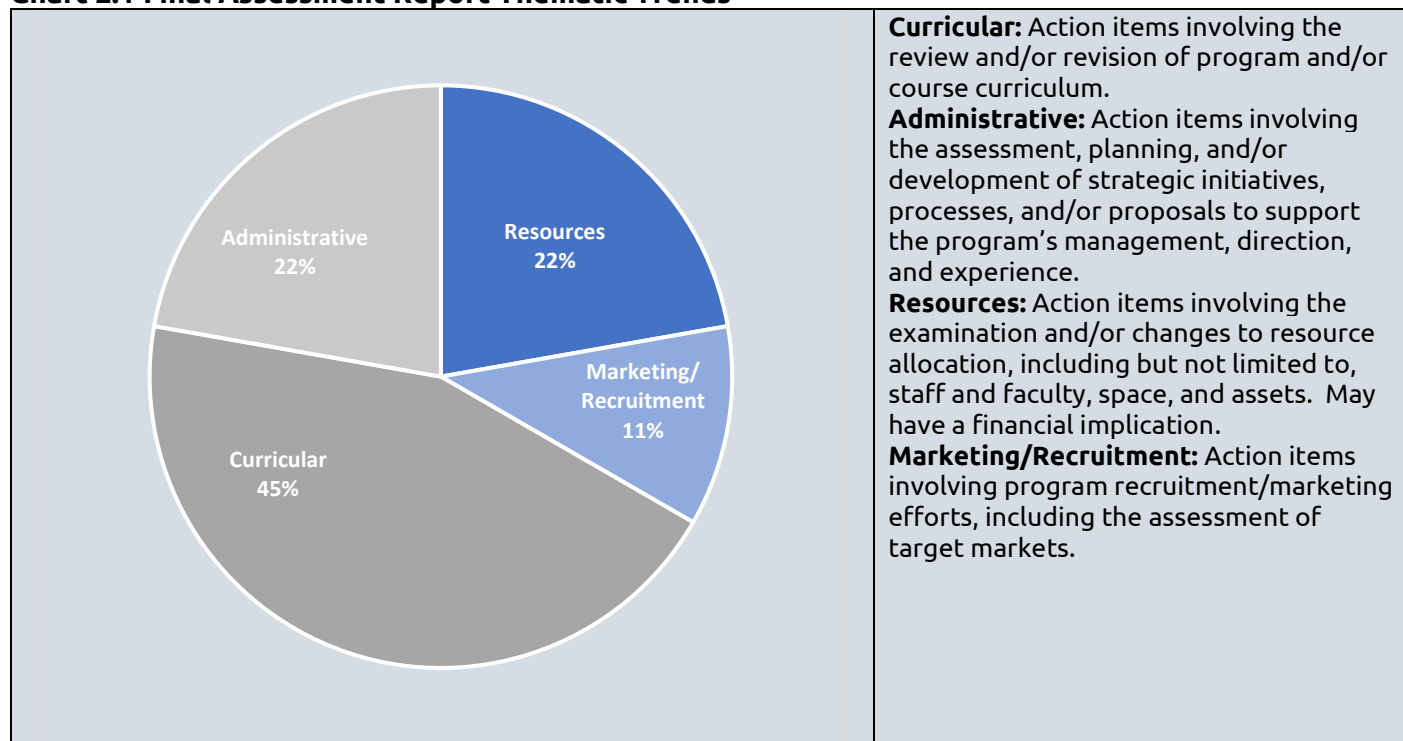
Program	Faculty Council	Academic Resource Committee	CPRC/USC/GSC	Academic Council	Board of Governors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bachelor of Health Science – Medical Laboratory Science 	Oct-23	Sept-23	Nov-23	Jan-24	Feb-24
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Master of Health Science 	Oct-23	Aug-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Feb-24
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bachelor of Arts – Legal Studies 	Aug-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Jan-24	Feb-24

A breakdown of the FAR thematic trends is outlined in Chart 2.1 below.

A total of 17 action items were reported at both the program and course level. A sample of action items are:

- Identify areas where clinical partnerships need to be cultivated to better avail students of a greater breadth of placement opportunities.
- Inventory curriculum regarding Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility (EDIA) opportunities.
- Revise current required courses to reduce overlap and reflect broader overview of research process etc.
- Explore the development of a course-based Masters’ degree with a capstone experience/practicum requirement [vs. research project pathway].
- Create a taskforce to identify the challenges advanced entry students face, develop a plan to address the challenges, and monitor/report on the results.

Chart 2.1 Final Assessment Report Thematic Trends



2.5 Cyclical Audit

The Quality Council approves each university's [IQAP](#) and conducts a periodic audit of how the IQAP is administered to ensure that the manner in which each university facilitates curricular change and its program reviews conforms both to the university's IQAP and the Quality Assurance Framework. Ontario Tech had its last audit in the [winter of 2019-20](#), and we are scheduled to have our next audit in the winter of 2029-30.

3 Follow-Up Processes

3.1 New Program Monitoring

In the first year of intake and one year after the launch of a program, a report is prepared for the Academic Resource Committee (ARC) that will review enrolment data, admission averages, and other key metrics to assess the new program's effectiveness.

In 2023-2024 intake reports were received from the following programs:

- Bachelor of Engineering – Energy Engineering
- Bachelor of Engineering – Industrial Engineering
- Master of Applied Science/Master of Engineering – Software Engineering
- Master of Arts – Social Practice and Innovation
- Master of Financial Data Analytics
- Graduate Diploma – Police Leadership
- Undergraduate Diploma - Public Policy

One-year follow-up reports were received for the following programs:

- Doctor of Education
- Master of Business Analytics and AI
- Bachelor of Health Administration
 - ARC has requested further monitoring of intake to be completed in one year.

3.2 18-month Reports

Eighteen-month follow-up reports comment on the completion of action items outlined in the implementation plans resulting from the cyclical program reviews. ARC reviews these reports to gain insight into how many actions have been completed and, if not, for what reasons.

Reviewing the completion level assists the Committee in resource planning how to support current programs under review not yet at the 18-month mark. It also allows for discussions with the program about the feasibility of action items outlined at the FAR stage of the review to ensure success 18-months later.

For 2023-2024, there were seven 18-month follow-up reports as part of the cyclical program review process:

- [Bachelor of Allied Health Science](#)
- [Master of Health Sciences](#)
- [Bachelor of Arts in Educational Studies and Digital Technology; Designing Adult Learning for the Digital Age undergraduate diploma](#)
- [Bachelor of Engineering in Automotive Engineering](#)
- [Bachelor of Engineering in Electrical Engineering](#)
- [Bachelor of Engineering in Nuclear Engineering](#)
- [Bachelor of Engineering in Software Engineering](#)

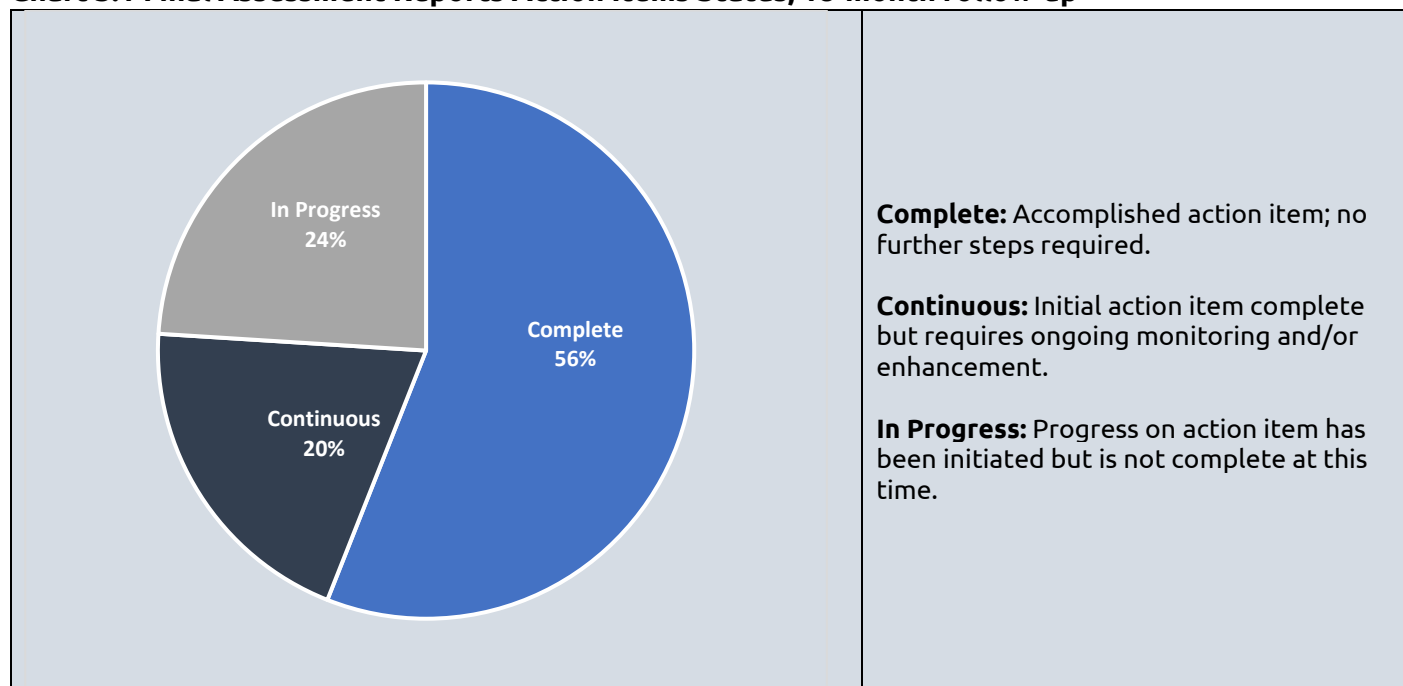
A copy of all [18-month reports](#) are available on the CIQE website for reference.

Upon reviewing the follow-up reports, the majority of action items are in progress or require continuous monitoring following the 18-month time frame. A selection of these items is outlined below.

- Investigate the program's student retention, particularly students choosing to switch into another program.
- Review the program map and consider increasing program flexibility to give students more options to tailor their degree program according to their interests while maintaining the core competencies and satisfying the accreditation requirements.
- Introduction of a mandatory TA training session.
- Improve student feedback process; meet with students at a townhall to gather feedback; improve mechanisms for students to raise issues with the program.
- Develop internship course(s) including research-based placements.
- Undertake a review of current assessment practices across required courses to determine whether there is opportunity for more reflective learning integrating "work" experiential learning.

The following chart outlines the overall progress of the 86 action items found in these reports.

Chart 3.1 Final Assessment Reports Action Items Status, 18-month follow-up



It falls to the Faculty to indicate when an action item has been completed and these are reported at the Academic Resource Committee (ARC). After the 18-month review the Faculty Dean and the Provost discuss any outstanding or in progress items to be updated within the CIQE files.

4 Ministry of Colleges and Universities Approvals

While a program can be offered once the Quality Council has provided approval, receiving Ministry of Colleges and Universities (Ministry) approval allows for the students taking these programs to be eligible for OSAP funding and allows the institution to report domestic students towards our enrolment grant corridor.

One program, the MEng/MASc in Mechatronics Engineering, was submitted for Ministry approval during the 2023-2024 reporting year.

5 Summary

Amidst a challenging financial climate for the post-secondary sector, this year saw a high volume of activity in the development of innovative new programs and strategic curricular change to support Ontario Tech's differentiated growth strategy.

New programs and changes to individual programs also highlighted a strong commitment to collaboration amongst Faculties to create opportunities for students to diversify their academic experience. CIQE will continue to provide guidance and support to Faculties as they bring these initiatives to fruition.

With an ongoing high volume of activity related to cyclical program review, CIQE will also continue to enhance supports and resources and to create greater efficiencies within quality assurance processes to assist faculties in meeting program review goals and milestones.