



ACADEMIC COUNCIL REPORT

SESSION:

Public


ACTION REQUESTED:

Decision



Discussion/Direction



Information


DATE:

24 May 2022

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

SUBJECT:
2021-22 CIQE 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 of Governors for information that provides a snapshot of quality frameworks and enhancements, academic program development and a summary of the status of Ministry Program approvals of Ontario Tech programs.

The Programs and Quality Enhancement report outlines what quality enhancements have been made over the past year to align our processes with the Province's Quality Assurance principles and Quality Assurance Framework as well as the work completed to ensure effective governance oversight of new programs, including new forms of programs e.g. Micro-credentials.

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.

NEXT STEPS:

This report will be presented to the Board for information.

SUPPORTING REFERENCE MATERIALS:

2022 Programs and Quality Enhancement Annual Report

2022

Programs and Quality Enhancement

DISCUSSION PAPER
STRATEGY AND PLANNING

PREPARED BY: CENTRE FOR INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

April 2022

This 2021-2022 annual report offers a snapshot of quality enhancements made, and a glimpse of the development and growth of academic programs at Ontario Tech University.

1. QUALITY UPDATES AND ENHANCEMENTS

IQAP Revisions and Enhancements: After the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance (Quality Council) completed their own audit in 2018, a set of [Principles](#) were developed to inform quality assurance practices at Ontario Universities. In addition, revisions to the Provincial [Quality Assurance Framework](#) (QAF) were ratified in February 2021 with a goal of ‘quality assurance that produces quality enhancement’. While a number of these changes were anticipated and formed part of the revisions to our IQAP that were approved by Academic Council in June 2020, further enhancements to our IQAP were required to ensure compliance with the revised QAF. As part of this enhancement, a general process for approving Micro-credentials has been added to the IQAP. The internal details of this process will be finalized during the spring of 2022. The required consultation and approval process has been completed and the revised IQAP was approved by Academic Council in March 2022. The revised IQAP is pending ratification by the Quality Council. Once this is completed, the associated user-friendly handbooks and governance flow-charts will be updated.

Academic Resource Committee: The mandate of The Academic Resource Committee (ARC) is to review resource implications and operational decisions related to pathways partnerships, new program development, major program modifications, and action plans resulting from cyclical program reviews to assist in the assessment of proposals through the governance process. The formation of this Committee has resulted in better assessment of resources in relation to new program development as well as improvements for how recommendations resulting from program reviews are included as part of the overall university planning process. In 2021-2022 ARC reviewed the first required Intake reports and One-Year Follow-up reports for new programs.

Moving Processes, Programs, and Program Components Online: With the unique challenges that continue to be posed by the pandemic, there has been an additional focus on moving to online and hybrid modes of delivery for programs. CIQE fielded numerous inquiries and assisted with proposal development for online delivery of courses and programs post-pandemic. A set of reflection questions related to online delivery was inserted into proposals for major program modifications and new programs, and references to this process were included in the new IQAP. A project is currently underway to capture existing approved modes of delivery for all courses, and provide assistance with course or program changes where there is a desire to continue with virtual or hybrid course offerings when the current emergency response has expired.

Due to the pandemic, all cyclical program review and new program site visits continue to be held solely online, requiring the CIQE team to further adapt all communications and process-related documentation normally sent out for in-person reviews. The CIQE team also provided technical and logistical problem-solving support to programs through one-on-one meetings prior to the site visit, or participating in the site visit as a “technical support” guide. In addition, substantial work was also done to adjust the Program Level Learning Outcome sessions to ensure that participants continue to have valuable interactions that result in enhanced PLOs for students.

2. ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND CURRICULUM

The focus of program development continues to be ensuring the right program mix, overall quality, and alignment with strategic priorities. Between May 2021 and April 2022, in addition to the standard program and course proposals, there were a number of undergraduate and graduate programs that proposed changes to allow courses to be delivered online, and several courses were modified to include online or hybrid delivery options. While there was only one new program Notice of Intent, there was a substantial increase in new program proposal development compared to prior years. No programs or program components were closed this year. **Table 1** outlines the Major Program Modifications completed and additional program components approved this year. This includes a new Co-op designation for all Bachelor of Commerce and Bachelor of Engineering degree programs, effective Fall 2022. Programs continue to look for new ways to attract students, provide breadth, and deliver quality pathways to and from Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology.

Table 1: Major Program Modifications Completed May 2021-April 2022

Faculty	Program	Change
FSci	BSc Biological Science	Addition of Marine Biology Specialization
FBIT	BComm	Changes to course requirements, addition of Co-op
FEAS	BEng	Add Co-op to all programs
FSSH	Criminology and Justice Minor	Changes to course requirements
FBIT	BComm Advanced Entry	Changes to course requirements
FBIT	BComm Bridge	Changes to course requirements
FESNS	BEng Nuclear	Add Co-op
FHSc	BHSc Kinesiology	Pathway to DC Massage Therapy
FHSc	BHSc Kinesiology	Pathway from DC Massage Therapy
FSSH	BA in Psychology	Addition of Advanced Entry
FSSH	BA in Psychology	Addition of GAS Transfer Pathway
FSSH	BA in Psychology Minor	New minor program
FSSH	New Minor in Indigenous Studies	New minor program
FEEd	Educational Studies	Name change from Ed Studies and Digital Technology, course changes
FEEd	Educational Studies Minor	As above

Pathways Programs: Ontario Tech currently has formal articulation agreements with five Ontario partner institutions based on the strength of the partnership related to student movement, program fit, and their unique relationship to Ontario Tech. These articulation agreements expire in 2023. Students may enter defined pathways from institutions with or without formal articulation agreements. Where no articulation agreement exists, the **Undergraduate Alternate Pathways Policy** governs the relationship with Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology to allow seamless transfers to occur without binding the University to any specific financial or personnel obligations. As our close campus partner, Durham College (DC) continues to have the most activity, and this year was no exception. As indicated in **Table 1**, four new pathways were created, two of which were designed using the DC curriculum.

Notices of Intent and New Program Development: Enhancements continue to be made to the new program process and templates to more closely align with the new IQAP, mandate agreements, academic planning documents, and the Quality Assurance Framework. Between May 2021 and April 2022, one new NOI was submitted for a Graduate Diploma in Small Modular Reactor Technology. Over the same period, ten new programs from previous NOI cycles underwent site visits (where applicable) and proceeded through the internal and external governance process. Of these, three programs have received Ministry approval, with the rest currently under review. **Table 2** summarizes the new programs developed this year and their current status.

Table 2: New Programs Developed May 2021-April 2022

Faculty	Degree/Diploma/Program	Current Status
FEd	EdD	Under Ministry Review - November 2021
FSSH	Gdip Police Leadership	Under Ministry Review - November 2021
FSSH	Master of Arts in Social Practice and Innovation	Approved by Ministry - April 2022
FHSc	Bachelor of Health Administration	Approved by Ministry - April 2022
FBIT	Master Business Analytics and AI	Approved by Ministry - April 2022
FBIT	Master of Financial Data Analytics	Under Ministry Review - December 2021
FSSH	UG Dip in Public Policy	Under Ministry Review - March 2022
FEAS	MASc/Meng Software Engineering	Under Ministry Review - February 2022
FEAS	BEng Industrial Engineering	Under Ministry Review - March 2022
INTERD	BEng Energy Engineering	Under Ministry Review - March 2022

Curriculum and Calendar Management: Curriculog is the university’s curriculum management system. The system is fully operational, transparent, widely used across campus, and has reduced many of the inefficiencies and inconsistencies in our former processes. This year presented an opportunity to review our current processes and look at developing further enhancements. To date, we have developed draft processes for new programs and cyclical program reviews, which will be tested during the 2022-2023 cycle. Our goal is to continue streamlining existing processes, and explore new and innovative ways to leverage the functionality of Curriculog as well as Acalog, the university’s calendar management system.

We continue to make changes to improve the calendar management process and to increase the user-friendliness of the calendars. The two-step calendar review process continued, with calendar contacts now reviewing the non-curricular calendar content in the fall to propose edits. The second part of the review, in the spring, focuses solely on curriculum content to ensure accuracy of approved changes. Splitting the review in two and moving the focus on editorial changes to the fall has allowed for us to publish the calendars sooner.

CIQE has also conducted research to explore new ways to highlight Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) in the academic calendars using Acalog. Displaying PLOs in the relevant Calendar in the future will not only show students upfront the skills they will obtain throughout their degree, but will also allow other departments on campus, such as Career Services, to more easily obtain learning outcome information to assist students with career planning and resume building.

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Decolonization of Curriculum: In 2020-2021 guiding questions were embedded into CIQE’s program and curricular change templates that addressed the process of

consultation with the Indigenous Education Advisory Circle when developing or modifying Indigenous content. This year, in consultation with the Quality Council and the Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), CIQE began to include questions around any consideration of the principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization in new program, program change, and cyclical program review templates. The requirement to include these considerations has also been embedded in the revised IQAP. CIQE looks forward to continuing their partnership with the President's Indigenous Reconciliation Taskforce and Indigenous community members, as well as the Office of EDI, to ensure quality enhancement is practiced in a respectful, meaningful way.

3. CYCLICAL PROGRAM REVIEW

Between May 2021 and April 2022, the following programs are under review (pre-site visit milestone):

- Bachelor of Science, Computer Science
- Master and Doctorate of Science, Computer Science
- Bachelor of Science, Physics
- Bachelor of Health Science, Health Science
- Bachelor of Information Technology, Game Development and Interactive Media
- Bachelor of Information Technology, Networking and Information Technology Security
- Master of Information Technology Security
- Bachelor of Health Science, Medical Laboratory Science
- Master of Health Science, Health Science
- Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy, Materials Science
- Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy, Modelling and Computational Science
- Bachelor of Arts, Legal Studies

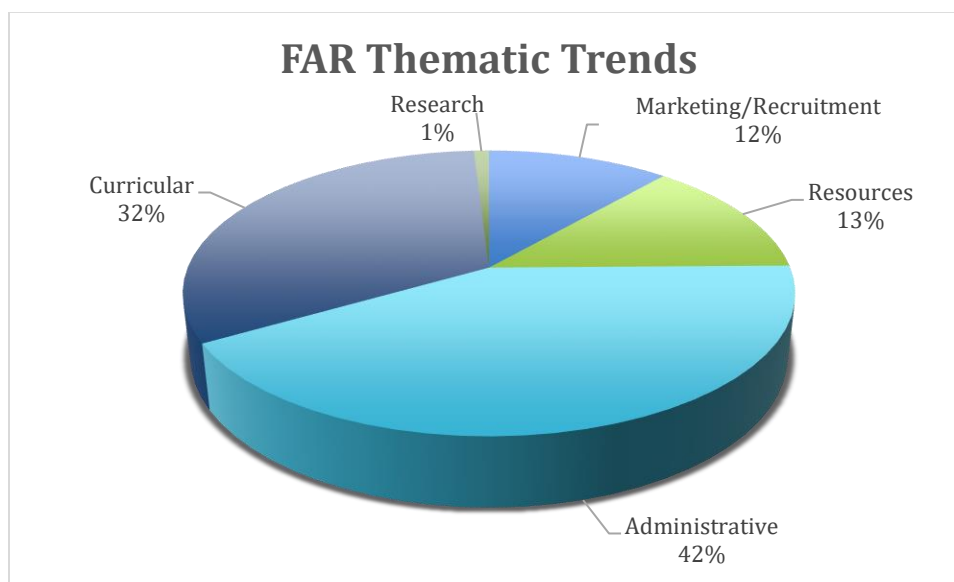
During this time period, CIQE facilitated virtual site visits for the following programs under review:

- Bachelor of Arts, Educational Studies and Digital Technologies
- Bachelor of Health Science, Applied Health Science
- Bachelor of Engineering, Nuclear Engineering
- Bachelor of Engineering, Automotive Engineering
- Bachelor of Engineering, Electrical Engineering
- Bachelor of Engineering, Software Engineering

Program-level Student Learning Outcomes Workshops: As part of the two-year program review cycle, programs under review participate in a series of Program Learning Outcome (PLO) review and revision activities and sessions. This past year, the PLO enhancement process has begun some internal revision to include support and expertise from the Teaching and Learning Centre. The revised process should be fully in place by the end of 2022, and will continue to include elements on the enhancement of program learning outcomes, mapping of the enhanced outcomes to degree level expectations, and mapping of the enhanced outcomes to courses (and associated learning activities/assessments). The new PLO enhancement process will adjust to the needs to the program up for review, and utilize a combination both asynchronous activities and synchronous sessions, which can be delivered both in-person and virtually.

Final Assessment Reports and 18-month Follow-up Reports: Additionally, between May 2021 and April 2022 CIQE prepared Final Assessment Reports (FARs) for 9 programs and tracked the progress of action plans through 18-Month Follow-Up Reports for 2 programs. ARC utilizes the trends found in these reports to discuss on-going and institution-wide resource implications as well as to facilitate continuous improvement dialogue with the associated faculties.

Final Assessment Reports: Through this process, it was noted that there has been an overall increase in the number of reviewer recommendations, and subsequent action items, coming out of the cyclical program reviews. There has also been an upward swing in the number of administrative action items, the majority of which center around assessing student supports and experience. A breakdown of the trends is outlined in the pie chart below:



Definitions of thematic groupings:

Curricular: Action items involving the review and/or revision of program and/or course curriculum.

Administrative: Action items involving the assessment, planning, and/or development of strategic initiatives, processes, and/or proposals to support the program's management, direction, and experience.

Resources: Action items involving the examination and/or changes to resource allocation, including but limited to, staff and faculty, space, and assets. May have a financial implication.

Marketing/Recruitment: Action items involving program recruitment/marketing efforts, including the assessment of target markets.

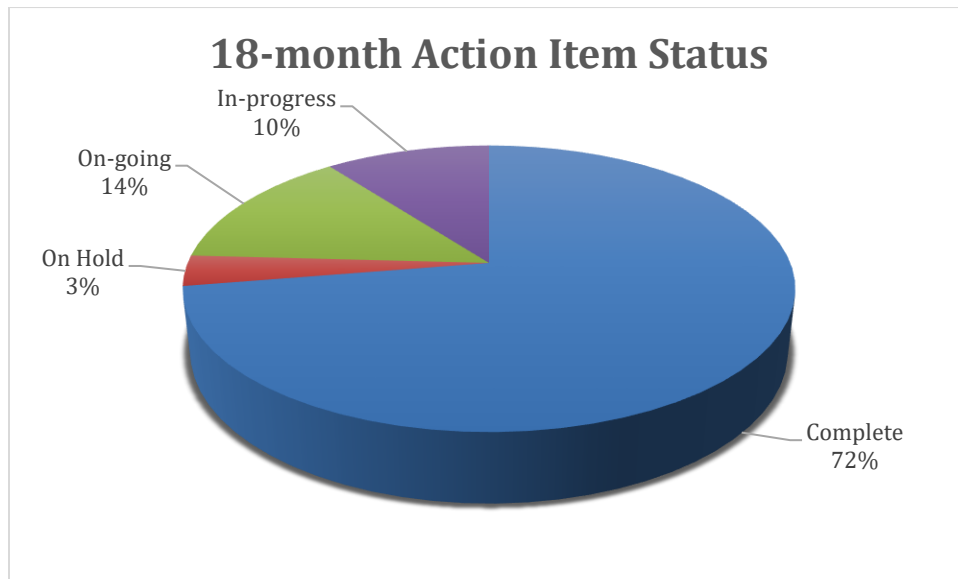
Research: Action items involving faculty and/or student research opportunities and/or supports.

A total of 105 action items were reported across the FARs curricular improvements, at both the program and course level, and administrative elements of program enhancement being the top themes.

Curricular improvements included reviewing existing program curriculum to ensure consistency and fluidity of content, with an eye to eliminating unnecessary overlap and identifying gaps, and improving program flexibility and the breadth of available discipline-specific electives. Administrative action items included studying program retention and identifying areas of concern in student progression, investigating and creating mechanisms to develop stronger connections with alumni and industry, and establishing initiatives to better explore and understand the student experience. With the overall increase in reviewer recommendations coming out of the cyclical review process, the majority of the programs have scaled their identified action items into achievable milestones within the next 18 months and, where appropriate, have identified appropriate institutional areas to support their progress.

18-month follow-up reports: 18-month follow-up reports comment on the completion of action items outlined in the initial final assessment reports. 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 for 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 2021-2022, there were two 18-month follow-up reports as part of the cyclical program review process. The following chart outlines the overall process status of the 29 action items found in these reports:



Process status legend:

Complete: Accomplished action item; no further steps required.

Continuous: Initial action item complete but requires ongoing monitoring and/or enhancement.

In Progress: Progress on action item has been initiated but is not complete at this time. Outline all steps taken in the comment's column.

On Hold: Unable to complete due to other dependent factor(s)

Cancelled: Item no longer relevant or resources unavailable

Upon reviewing the follow-up reports, most action items have been completed within the allotted 18-month time frame. This past year saw only 1 action item put on hold due to limitations from the pandemic and public health restrictions. The programs reported that while the pandemic continued to present challenges, most action items could be implemented within the 18-month timeframe, and made efforts to note any additional considerations or 'next-steps' that were identified for follow-up and on-going action as operations moved more towards on-campus activities and in-person learning.