New Program Development

A guidebook to accompany the Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP).

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1. Introduction

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. A 'new program' is any new offering that has substantially different program requirements and substantially different learning outcomes from those of any existing approved programs offered by the University, including any new Major. The introduction of the option to complete a portion of a proposed new Degree or Diploma Program to receive an embedded Micro-credential will be included with a New Program Proposal and will be included in the processes outlined below. The creation of a new for-credit Micro-credential or Micro-credential option as part of an existing Degree or Diploma Program will follow the Curriculum Changes Procedures. The creation of new, not-for-credit, stand-alone Micro-credential Programs must proceed in accordance with the current protocols for micro-credential development, or equivalent.

Procedures for new programs involve several components, which will be undertaken in order. All proposals must begin with the submission of a Notice of Intent, to be approved by the Provost, that demonstrates the program's fit with the Strategic Mandate Agreement of the University and the Academic Plan of the Faculty(ies) offering the program. Degree programs are subject to an external evaluation and full review and approval by the Ontario Universities' Council on Quality Assurance (Quality Council). Diploma programs are not subject to the external review process, and only Type 2 and 3 graduate diplomas must be submitted to the Quality Council for expedited review.

2. Background

The Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance (Quality Council), created by the Council of Ontario Universities (COU), is an independent, arm's length body vested with the authority to ensure institutional compliance with program audit guidelines. In 2010, a Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) was established by the Quality Council to align quality assurance among all universities in Ontario, align Ontario universities with international quality standards, and to promote continual program improvements. The provincial QAF was updated in 2021 and the processes of the University were revised in 2022 to reflect this update. The Office of the Provost, through the Centre for Institutional Quality Enhancement (CIQE), coordinates the day-to-day management of the process. Every University in the province of Ontario is subject to an audit by the Quality Council to ensure compliance.

Links:
Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance (Quality Council)
Quality Assurance Framework

3. Timelines for New Program Development

For a summary of the steps in the New Program development process, please download the New Program Process At-A-Glance.

To view the steps in the required governance process for New Programs, please see the New Degree Program Flowchart or the New Diploma Program Flowchart.

The development of a new program should allow for an in-depth, critical look at the program under development and its broader fit within the institution, as well as sufficient consultation with the University community. With this in mind, there is no formal timeline for new program development. However, a general guideline as provided in the example below can assist in ensuring proposals are completed in a timely manner, before expiration of the Notice of Intent approval (2 years), and provide clarity on a realistic expectation for program promotion and implementation.

Timeframe	Description
April 2022	• Submission of Notice of Intent (NOI); initial consultation
May 2022	• NOI open for comment from University community
June 2022	• Approval of NOI (approval valid until June 2024) • Meeting with CIQE to discuss supports and timelines
June 2022 - September 2022	• Creation of the proposal and consultation • Program Learning Outcome development with CIQE & TLC
September 2022	• Submission to Faculty Council for comment/feedback • Submission to CIQE for comment/feedback • Submission to Office of Graduate and Post-Doctoral Studies for comment/feedback (if applicable)
October 2022	• Submission to the Academic Resource Committee (ARC)
October/November 2022	• Revisions to proposal • Return to ARC if required
November/December 2022	• External review site visit (CIQE must have the final proposal and all related documents at least 2.5 weeks before the site visit)
December 2022/January 2023	• Revisions to proposal based on reviewer feedback
February 2023	• Submission to Faculty Council for approval
March/April 2023	• Submission to USC/GSC for recommendation*
April/May 2023	• Submission to AC for approval and recommendation to the Board (must be completed within two years of NOI approval)*
June 2023	• Submission to Board of Governors for approval (Pending meeting schedule)**
June/July 2023	• Submission to the Quality Council and Ministry (where applicable)***
September 2024	• Program start
New program monitoring and review; addition of program to Cyclical Program Review cycle	

*Multiple dates for USC/GSC and AC allow for resubmission should there be questions the first time the proposal is submitted. The print deadline for OUF is normally July; graduate programs aren't normally pushed for OUF, but for any advertising pending Ministry final approval, proposal would need to pass AC by May to be included in July OUF materials

**The Board meets four times per academic year; for this example, there is typically a Board AGM in June; outside these timelines, CIQE will coordinate with the Secretariat

***Programs may be promoted as 'pending approval' once they have been submitted to the Quality Council (QC) **and** have approval by the Board; QC approval typically takes 1-3 months; Ministry can take 4-12 months, may require accepting students conditionally

4. New Degree Programs

Notice of Intent and Consultation

Before a new program proposal begins, proponents will submit a [Notice of Intent (NOI) form](). The NOI provides the University community with an opportunity to review the details of the program and provide feedback through the CIQE website. All NOIs and the collected feedback are provided to the Provost through the Academic Resource Committee (ARC) who will work with the Dean(s) to ensure that any resource requirements are addressed and provide an approval before work on the full proposal will proceed.

While the NOI will facilitate consultation at the beginning of the planning stages, it does not replace any required ongoing communication and consultation throughout the process. Faculties are encouraged to discuss any consideration of the principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization with the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. 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](). It is a best practice to begin the Indigenous consultation prior to submitting an NOI.

Proposal Brief

Following the approval of the NOI, the proponents of a new program (program team) will develop a detailed proposal using the template provided by CIQE. The proposal brief is prepared by the program team, in consultation with the Dean, faculty members, support staff, and any other relevant stakeholders. All sections and appendices of the proposal template must be completed in full and will include any associated program components, such as pathways, micro-credentials, co-operative education options, etc. The sections of the template have been designed to provide the information necessary for external reviewers and approval bodies to provide feedback and, ultimately, approve the program. While the proposal is being written, the program team will request from the Library a Library report, which is required as an appendix.

A critical component of the proposal will be the development of the Program Learning Outcomes through one or more program learning outcome workshops or consultations coordinated by CIQE. This will include mapping to degree level expectations and mapping courses with learning activities.

Upon completion of the brief, the proposal should be sent to CIQE for review and presented at Faculty Council for consultation and general approval. Proposals for graduate programs will also be submitted to the Dean of Graduate Studies for review and comment.

Once the reviews and revisions are complete, the proposal will be sent to ARC to ensure that all operational and financial issues and evaluation criteria have been adequately considered and addressed. ARC may request further revisions to the proposal.

For references purposes only:
New Program Proposal template (undergraduate)
New Program Proposal template (graduate)

External Review

External Reviewers

The program team must propose a minimum of five (5) external reviewers from different institutions to review the new program. The proposed reviewers must be tenured or equivalent, have relevant 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. CIQE will provide guidance on meeting the arm's length requirement. The proposed list, along with a detailed rationale and biographical statement or curriculum vitae for each reviewer, is to be signed by the Dean and submitted to CIQE for approval by the Provost. CIQE will contact the reviewers as ranked on the form until the required number of reviewers have been achieved (2 reviewers are required for all programs).

Note: Ideally, at least one reviewer must be from a Canadian institution and it is preferred they are from an Ontario institution to provide provincial context.

For references purposes only:
Proposed External Reviewers and Arm's Length Guidelines

Site Visit

The site visit normally occurs over a one or two-day period and is hosted on campus. Working with the Faculty(ies), CIQE will organize the site visit. In some cases, and with approval of the Provost, for undergraduate programs and some Master's programs the review may be conducted by video conference or equivalent method, for example for programs with significant online course delivery. The visit is an opportunity for the external reviewer(s) to meet with the various stakeholders of the program and other areas of the University regarding the proposal.

The program team is responsible for ensuring faculty, staff, the Dean(s), and the Provost are available for the site visit and for sending the necessary Calendar invitations. The program team is also responsible for booking rooms, tours, catering service, etc. CIQE is responsible for coordinating with the external reviewers and for providing the program team with a schedule template.

External Reviewers' Report

Within one month of the site visit, the external reviewer(s) will prepare a report from a template provided by CIQE, that appraises the standards and quality of the proposed program. This appraisal will be based on the Evaluation Criteria (QAF Section 2.1.2) set out by the Quality Council. 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. ARC will review the report to ensure it meets the requirements; if additional details or clarification are needed from the reviewers, CIQE will reach out to the reviewers to request this in a revised report.

For reference purposes only:
External Reviewers' report template

Response to External Report

The program team and the Dean will each consider the reviewer(s)'s recommendations. Using a template provided by CIQE, the program committee will send to the Dean a response to the recommendations that will include a list of changes that can be made to the proposal. The Dean will then respond and comment on the recommendations and the program team's responses, considering overall Faculty and University plans. The program team, working with the Dean, will then amend the proposal, including an appendix that notes the final list of changes made to the proposal based on the recommendations. This process will normally be completed within two months of the receipt of the External Reviewer's Report.

Internal Approval Process

The final program proposal, with all appendices and supporting documents, along with the External Reviewer's Report, and the Faculty response will be reviewed and approved by the Faculty Council. In cases where the program is developed jointly with one or more Faculties this will include all applicable Faculty Councils.

Once approved at Faculty Council(s), the complete document package will be presented to the Undergraduate Studies Committee (USC) or the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC), as appropriate, for recommendation to Academic Council. In some cases, the Chair of the Committee will elect to bring forward the package first for consultation and then for approval the following month.

If recommended by the Committee, the proposal will then be sent to Academic Council for review and academic approval, and recommendation to the Board of Governors. Proposals are then subject to final approval by the Board.

Submission to the Quality Council and the Ministry

Once internal approvals have been obtained, the full program proposal package must be submitted to the Quality Council for review. Once it has been submitted to the Quality Council, and approved by the Board, the program may be marketed as pending final approval, with the following statement: "Prospective students are advised that offers of admission to a new program may be made only after the university's own quality assurance processes have been completed, and the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance has approved the program."

No offers of admission can be made until Quality Council approval is received. The Quality Council will, in all likelihood, respond to the submission with one or more sets of questions or points of clarification. This may, in some cases, result in changes to the proposal.

Programs approved by the Quality Council must begin within 36 months of the date of approval, or the approval is cancelled.

Ministry funded programs will also require submission to the Ministry. For programs also being submitted for Ministry funding, the statement for prospective students must also indicate this: "Prospective students are advised that offers of admission to a new program may be made only after the university's own quality assurance processes have been completed, and the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance and the Ministry of Colleges and Universities have approved the program."

5. New Diploma Programs

Notice of Intent and Consultation

Before a new program proposal begins, proponents will submit a Notice of Intent (NOI) form. The NOI provides the University community with an opportunity to review the details of the program and provide feedback through the CIQE website. All NOIs and the collected feedback are provided to the Provost through the Academic Resource Committee (ARC) who will work with the Dean(s) to ensure that any resource requirements are addressed and provide an approval before work on the full proposal will proceed.

While the NOI will facilitate consultation at the beginning of the planning stages, it does not replace any required ongoing communication and consultation throughout the process. Faculties are encouraged to discuss any consideration of the principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization with the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. 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. It is a best practice to begin the Indigenous consultation prior to submitting an NOI.

Proposal Brief

Following the approval of the NOI, the proponents of a new program (program team) will develop a detailed proposal using the template provided by CIQE. The proposal brief is prepared by the program team, in consultation with the Dean, faculty members, support staff, and any other relevant stakeholders. All sections and appendices of the proposal template must be completed in full and will include any associated program components, such as pathways, micro-credentials, co-operative education options, etc. These sections of the template have been designed to provide the information necessary for reviewers and approval bodies to provide feedback and, ultimately, approve the program. While the proposal is being written, the program team will request from the Library a Library report, which is required as an appendix.

A critical component of the proposal will be the development of the Program Learning Outcomes through one or more program learning outcome workshops or consultations coordinated by CIQE. This will include mapping to degree level expectations and mapping courses with learning activities.

Upon completion of the brief, the proposal should be sent to CIQE for review and presented at Faculty Council for consultation and general approval. Proposals for graduate programs will also be submitted to the Dean of Graduate Studies for review and comment.

Once the reviews and revisions are complete, the proposal will be sent to ARC to ensure that all operational and financial issues and evaluation criteria have been adequately considered and addressed. ARC may request further revisions to the proposal.

For references purposes only:
[New Program Proposal template (undergraduate)](#)
[New Program Proposal template (graduate)](#)
New Diploma programs are not subject to the external review and reporting processes.

Internal Approval Process

The final program proposal, with all appendices and supporting documents will be reviewed and approved by the Faculty Council. For joint or collaborative programs, this will include all applicable Faculty Councils.

Once approved at Faculty Council(s), the complete document package will be presented to the Undergraduate Studies Committee (USC) or the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC), as appropriate, for recommendation to Academic Council. In some cases, the Chair of the Committee will elect to bring forward the package first for consultation and then for approval the following month.

If recommended by the Committee, the proposal will then be sent to Academic Council for review and academic approval, and recommendation to the Board of Governors. Proposals are then subject to final approval by the Board.

Submission to the Quality Council and the Ministry

For Type 2 and 3 Graduate Diploma programs, once internal approvals have been obtained, the full program proposal package must be submitted to the Quality Council for expedited review. Undergraduate Diploma programs are not subject to approval by the Quality Council, and may proceed once approved by the Board. However, the University may elect to submit the proposal. When an Undergraduate Diploma is submitted, it will be considered similarly to Graduate Diplomas.

Once the proposal has been submitted to the Quality Council, and approved by the Board, the program may be marketed as pending final approval, with the following statement: "Prospective students are advised that offers of admission to a new program may be made only after the university's own quality assurance processes have been completed, and the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance has approved the program."

No offers of admission can be made until Quality Council approval is received. The Quality Council will, in all likelihood, respond to the submission with one or more sets of questions or points of clarification. This may, in some cases, result in changes to the proposal.

Programs approved by the Quality Council must begin within 36 months of the date of approval, or the approval is cancelled.

Ministry funded programs, at the graduate or undergraduate level, will also require submission to the Ministry. For programs also being submitted for Ministry funding, the statement for prospective

students must also indicate this: "Prospective students are advised that offers of admission to a new program may be made only after the university's own quality assurance processes have been completed, and the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance and the Ministry of Colleges and Universities have approved the program."

6. Development of Collaborative and Joint Programs with Other Post-Secondary Institutions

When developing Joint Programs, and other Programs offered in collaboration with other post-secondary institutions, it is important to ensure that the quality assurance requirements of both institutions are met. Program teams interested in developing these programs should reach out to CIQE prior to submission of an NOI for assistance with the process.

7. Monitoring and Review of New Academic Programs

At the time of first intake into the program, CIQE and OIRA will prepare an Intake Report that contains admissions and enrollment data as well as any changes made to the program since it was approved. This report will be reviewed by ARC to assess any issues and determine if alternate plans are required to ensure the overall success of the Program. One year after the launch of the Program, the program team, using a template provided by CIQE, will prepare an initial report that will review enrolment data, admission averages, and other key metrics to assess New Program effectiveness. This report is to ensure the program outcomes are being achieved. The report will be sent via CIQE to ARC for review.

The Committee will:
- Assess if there are any issues and determine if alternate plans are required to ensure the overall success of the Program
- Note any recommendations and request additional monitoring, including further follow-up report(s), if needed

If, at the time of approval, the Quality Council requires any additional reports, these shall be completed in accordance with the requirements outlined in the approval letter from the Quality Council.

New 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.