



Program Closure

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

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1. Introduction

Ontario Tech is committed to ensuring the highest quality learning experience for students while maintaining the highest integrity of its academic programs.

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

Ontario Tech will ensure ongoing academic integrity in its curricula while remaining rigorous and consistent in the expansion and refinement of program offerings. It will promote quality assurance in the ongoing review and improvement of curriculum and courses and the periodic review of program offerings. To that end, the closure of a program may be desirable in a number of circumstances and can be initiated by the Dean of a Faculty or the Provost.

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. Curriculog

CIQE provides access to Curriculog, an electronic workflow tracking system and repository for curricular changes, which includes the closure of programs. All program closures, must be proposed and approved through the Curriculog system. Curriculog is the University's solution for reducing many of the inefficiencies and inconsistencies in paper- and email-based processes and is utilized as the platform for review of proposals starting at the Faculty level. Curriculog links directly to Acalog, the Academic Calendar software system, to allow for seamless updates of the Academic Calendar once items are approved.

Programs and Faculties proposing curriculum changes 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 [Curriculog](#). When using the templates, it is important to complete all sections to ensure the Curriculog contact(s) for each Faculty have the information they need to complete the electronic proposals.

To view the steps in the required governance process for Program Closure, please see the [Program Closure Governance Flowchart](#).

For closure of a program component, such as a specialization or minor, or to close a Micro-Credential, please refer to the [Curriculum Change Guide](#).

4. Initiation and Consultation

Program closures can be initiated by the Dean of the Faculty or Faculties responsible for the program. The Dean(s) will consult with the Faculty Council(s) and receive feedback on the closure.

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. When a program closure is initiated by the Provost, the Provost will first consult with the Faculty Dean(s) of the affected program(s) to outline the reasons for closure. The Dean(s) will consult with the Faculty Council(s) and receive feedback on the closure.

In the case of Graduate Programs, the Dean of Graduate Studies will also be consulted.

In the case of programs that contain Indigenous content, consultation in accordance with the current procedures for [Indigenous Consultation](#), is required.

5. Proposal Brief

After all necessary consultation has been completed, a Major Program Modification – Program Closure electronic proposal is required to be completed in its entirety by the Dean or designate within the Faculty. All sections and appendices of the proposal must be completed in full and will include evidence that appropriate consultation has taken place, rationale for removal and program details, date of closure, and a detailed transition plan.

For references purposes only:
[Closure template](#)

6. Approval of the Program Closure

Completed proposals must be presented to the Faculty Council(s) for information and then submitted to CIQE via Curriculog. CIQE will prepare a detailed report of the impacts of the Program closure for discussion at USC or GSC as part of the consultation process. CIQE will record any concerns raised 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.

The Provost will submit their recommendation for Program closure, detailing the process and transition recommendations to Academic Council, through the Executive Committee, for final review and approval.

When the Program closure has been approved by Academic Council, the President will 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.

To be removed from the academic calendars for the subsequent academic year, the Major Program Modification – Program Closure must be presented to the Faculty Council(s) and received by CIQE no later than the end of November each year.

If Program Closure is not Approved by Academic Council

If 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. The Committee will seek the views of the Faculty Council, the Dean of the Faculty or School, the Dean of any related Faculty or School, the Provost, the Registrar, and at least one external assessor. The Committee will also invite all faculty members who teach in the program to comment if they wish to do so.

After discussing any conclusions that result from the investigations with the Provost and the appropriate Dean(s), the Committee will issue, within 60 days, a report to the Board of Governors that presents the results of the investigations and makes one or more recommendations. The Board will then make a decision whether or not to close the program. The decision of the Board on the closure of the program is final.

7. Impacts of Program Closure

Once the approval to close the program has been received, the program will no longer accept applicants and it will be removed from the website and Academic Calendar.

Phase-Out of Programs - Students

Students in a closed program will be informed of the program closure according to the requirements outlined in the Program Closure Procedure. The closure will 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. For graduate programs, the closure must not prevent students from completing their courses, examinations, training, and research necessary to graduate, or interfere with their commitments of financial support. Students wishing to graduate from a closed program must apply to do so within four years of the program closure.

Communication to Students

The Registrar, or designate, will consult with the Dean(s) of the Faculty(ies) in which the program resides and prepare an official list of all students currently enrolled in the program. The Dean(s) will prepare correspondence to notify all enrolled students of the closure and provide information on:

- The date by which the program must be completed in order to receive the specified degree
- A brief description of the program and the current Calendar copy
- The last semester and year in which each course required for the program will be offered
- The availability of closely related programs offered by the University to which the student may transfer
- The extent to which transfer work, substitutions, etc., may be considered in meeting the requirements of the program

Phase-Out of Programs - Faculty

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. 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.

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.

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.

Phase-Out of Programs - Staff

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.

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.