University Canada West

Cyclical Program Review Handbook

Office of the VP Academic

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Contact Information

Questions about the cyclical review process and/or self-study template should be directed to VPAcademic@ucanwest.ca

Territorial Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the territories on which UCW and its campuses are situated are the traditional, ancestral and unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish) and Sel̓íl̓witulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. We thank them for having cared for this land since time immemorial, honour their graciousness to the students who seek knowledge here, and iterate our dedication to valuing the ongoing contributions of Indigenous peoples and communities.

Introduction

This handbook has been produced as a resource for the academic programs and self-study committees at University Canada West to support them through the cyclical program review process. Included in this handbook is an overview of the purpose and objectives of the cyclical program review process at UCW, a step-by-step description of the review process, an overview of the self-study template sections, and guidance for programs and self-study committees for maximizing the utility of the cyclical review process.

All post-secondary institutions in British Columbia are required to establish policies and procedures for reviewing programs, as per the Degree Authorization Act. UCW's program review policy is Policy 5001: Program Review Policy, which can be found on the UCW Policies webpage. This Cyclical Program Review Handbook is aligned with the university's commitment to quality assurance and continuous program improvement outlined in those guiding documents. The handbook expands upon the process stages and principles underlying UCW's cyclical program review process as a resource for academic programs engaged in cyclical program reviews.

This handbook was first written in 2022, and is considered a living document. Feedback on its usefulness, as well as any gaps identified in it as a resource for academic programs, are welcomed, and can be directed to the Office of the VP Academic.

Why Cyclical Program Review?

Cyclical program reviews are a regular feature of higher education quality assurance systems. It is common across all jurisdictions in Canada (and more broadly) that on a defined cycle, each academic program offered in a university engages in a comprehensive review of their academic offerings, with the goals of improvement of the program curriculum and student experience as the prioritized outcomes of the process. Although most academic programs engage in formative review of their programs and curriculum through both informal and formal mechanisms, a cyclical program review provides programs with the opportunity to evaluate and reflect more deeply upon what has been working well in the program, and what could be changed or improved upon.

Cyclical program reviews provide reassurance to program stakeholders (students, parents, employers), and the government that the university is evaluating and refining the quality of its programs to ensure that they are meeting program learning outcomes, degree level standards, and the needs of students and employers.

Cyclical program reviews differ from other review processes such as DQAB's renewal of consent process or professional accreditation processes. Cyclical program reviews are predominantly internal processes, the criteria and stages for which are determined largely by UCW. Unlike external review processes, which are designed to ensure that programs are meeting the external organization's standards, the cyclical program review process is focused primarily on **continuous program improvement**.

Through the cyclical review process, the program will take a step back to evaluate and reflect upon data and other sources of evidence to evaluate the effectiveness of its program curriculum in meeting learning outcomes and student needs. This evidence-based evaluation and reflection upon current program strengths and opportunities for change is intended to help inform and shape the future of the program by identifying areas for development and improvement. The more that a program can engage in the cyclical review process in an authentic, collaborative, and inquisitive manner, the more impactful that the results will be.

Objectives of the Cyclical Review Process at UCW

The objectives of the cyclical review process at UCW are:

- To ensure that the undergraduate and graduate academic programs offered through the institution are of the highest quality possible;

- To review and reflect upon the program curriculum in order to ensure alignment between program learning outcomes, curricular components, and assessment activities;

- To identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement in academic programs;

- To encourage programs to reflect, analyze, and evaluate the current state of their program curriculum and to encourage planning for the future;

- To create and promote a culture of continuous program improvement;

- To evaluate the program in relation to its comparators and within the contexts of the provincial and Canadian postsecondary education landscapes;

- To fulfill the regulatory requirements for external program reviews.

Cyclical Program Review Schedule

It is a requirement of the [Degree Quality Assessment Board](#) (DQAB) that all university programs offered within the province of British Columbia undergo a cyclical program review on regular basis. At UCW, the interval between cyclical reviews is typically every **five years**, as specified in [Policy 5001: Program Review Policy](#). A schedule for the cyclical review process has been created and is reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

Definitions

The following terms or phrases are used throughout this document, and the UCW definition for each has been provided below.

Cyclical Program Review: A comprehensive process that involves the striking of a self-study committee within the program, the writing of a self-study document that examines all aspects of the program's curriculum and administration, an external review conducted by an External Review Panel, and a series of follow-up reports identifying recommendations and responses for future action.

Cyclical Review Progress Report: A report written by the program and/or self-study committee starting one year after the cyclical program review is completed, and completed annually, until all recommendations have been sufficiently addressed and/or implemented. The Cyclical Review Progress Report includes all of the recommendations made by the External Program Review Panel, and provides an update from the program on the actions that have been taken to implement each recommendation, along with any challenges that have arisen that have delayed or prevented the recommendation from being implemented. The purpose of the Cyclical Review Progress Report is to 'close the loop' on the previous cyclical review and ensure that the recommendations made by the External Program Review panel are being attended to and implemented according to the agreed upon schedule.

Degree Level Standard: Degree Level Standards are a set of expectations articulated for each degree level in British Columbia (e.g. Associate, Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctoral). The standards for each degree level outline the demonstrable learning skills and level of mastery of a body of knowledge across six dimensions: depth and breadth of knowledge; knowledge of methodologies; application of knowledge; communication skills; awareness of limits of knowledge; and professional capacity). The degree level standards are meant to facilitate the assessment of credentials for broad purposes of credit transfer and credential recognition, and to provide clear learning outcome standards to inform program design.

External Review: An assessment of the academic quality of the program and learning outcomes by a panel of experts external to the University. External reviewers must have the qualifications and experience relevant to the program(s) under review and to the review process.

External Program Review Panel: A committee comprised of three to five (3-5) qualified individuals (depending on the size of the program) that reviews the self-study, is brought to the university for an external review, and writes a report with their findings and recommendations.

Program Learning Outcome: An action-oriented statement that describes what students in a program should know and/or be able to do upon completion of the program.

Program Response: A report written by the program and/or self-study committee that responds to each of the recommendations proposed by the External Program Review Panel, and outlines actions that will be taken in support of its implementation along with a suggest timeline.

Self-Study: A document that provides analysis of existing program design and curriculum, pedagogy, learning outcomes, and resources.

Self-Study Committee: For each cyclical program review, a self-study committee comprising 4-7 faculty members will be formed. The Self-Study Committee is led by the Department Chair(s) responsible for the program(s) being reviewed under the direction of the Vice President Academic.

Summary Report: The deliverable at the end of the cyclical program review process. The Summary Report provides a summary of the review process, along with the executive summary from the Report of the External Review Panel, along with the recommendations made to the program and the program's responses. The Summary Report is posted on the UCW Quality Assurance website.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Vice-President Academic (VP Academic) is accountable for the completion of cyclical program reviews within five (5) year cycles. The VP Academic, in consultation with others, commissions qualified external reviewers to assess and report on the quality of the academic program, student experiences, and program learning outcomes. The VP Academic is accountable for the submission of results to Academic Council and provides appropriate documentation to the Ministry of Advanced Education and the Degree Quality Assurance Board (DQAB).

The Department Chair(s) of Undergraduate Programs, or Department Chair(s) of Graduate Programs are responsible for leading the internal self-study in accordance with established procedures and timelines, ensuring inclusion of faculty, staff, students and Program Advisory Committee (PAC) input.

The following table provides a suggested breakdown of responsibilities and tasks in the cyclical program review process, organized by role. It is recognized that individual self-study committees may elect to distribute the work differently than what is described below, but this document may serve as a resource for understanding the role that each group is required to contribute to the cyclical program review process.

Role	Recommended Cyclical Program Review Responsibilities
Program Chair	• Assembles and leads self-study committee (recommended 3-5 full-time faculty members) • Distributes draft self-study to stakeholders for review • Submits draft and final version of self-study to the VPA • Liaises with Office of the VPA to coordinate the site visit schedule

Role	Recommended Cyclical Program Review Responsibilities
	• Meets with the External Program Review Panel during the site visit • Leads the writing of the Program Response and post-review Progress Report
Self-Study Committee Chair	• Schedules meetings of self-study committee based on cyclical program review work plan • Distributes tasks to self-study committee members (e.g., data collection, responsibility for writing sections of the document, identification of possible external reviewers) and ensures adherence to deadlines • Submits draft of self-study to the Program Chair • Meets with the External Program Review Panel during the site visit
Self-Study Committee	• Attends all self-study committee meetings organized by Program Chair • Contributes to the collection of data and writing of the self-study as determined by the Program Chair • Reviews draft and final versions of the self-study and provides feedback as required • Meets with the External Program Review Panel during the site visit • Contributes to the authorship of the Program Response
Program Faculty	• Familiarizes themselves with the goals and timelines of the cyclical program review process • Participates in a program retreat at the beginning of the review process to: o Identify program strengths and challenges o Contribute ideas related to the program's future goals and opportunities for change • Contributes information and examples to the self-study as requested by the Program Chair to provide readers with a comprehensive picture of the program's operations • May be asked to review and provide feedback on a draft of the completed self-study • Meets with the External Program Review Panel during the site visit • Reviews and provides feedback on the Program Response • Contributes to the post-review Progress Report, as required
Program Administrative Staff	• Collects faculty CVs and course syllabi as appendices to the self-study • May be asked to collect other forms of program-specific data as requested by the Program Chair • Assists with the scheduling of the site visit • Meets with the External Program Review Panel during the site visit

Stages of the Cyclical Program Review Process

Stage 1: Preparation

The program review cycle is initiated by the Vice-President: Academic, and follows the established schedule. The designated Department Chair(s) of the program will assemble a Self-Study Committee comprised of a combination of four to seven (4-7) full-time and sessional faculty who teach within the program(s) under review. The Self-Study Committee will be responsible for leading the cyclical program review and for collecting and assembling relevant data and supporting documentation.

In between the beginning of the review cycle and the self-study due date, there are many activities that the program and Self-Study Committee can engage in order to maximize the utility of the cyclical program review. Preparatory activities that should be considered before drafting the self-study might include some or all of the following:

- Development of a work plan (e.g. roles and responsibilities among the Self-Study Committee, timelines) for completing all portions of the self-study

- Review of program learning outcomes and curriculum maps (programs can contact the Centre for Teaching Excellence for support with this work)

- Scheduling a program retreat to discuss goals and objectives for the review, as well as to engage in a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) or SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations and Results) activity with program members

- Development and administration of current student and alumni feedback tools, in consultation with Institutional Research

- Ways to engage other stakeholders, such as employers, in the cyclical review process

Stage 2: Self-Study Drafting

A significant portion of the cyclical program review time frame involves the program / self-study committee writing the self-study. The self-study is a comprehensive document that provides a retrospective analysis of the program curriculum and its operations, with the aim of using that narrative and data to inform the future of the program and help to support it in achieving its goals. A UCW self-study template has been created that includes evaluation criteria provided in the DQAB Degree Program Review Criteria and Guidelines Document, as well as other elements to a cyclical program review deemed important at UCW.

The Self-Study Committee should review the template, and decide who will contribute to the writing of the document. The Self-Study Committee will connect with staff and appropriate departments to obtain the data necessary to support the self-study analysis. The Department Chair(s) and Committee uses appropriate methods for gathering and analyzing input from the relevant faculty members, staff, students and the Program Advisory Committee (PAC).

Once a draft of the self-study is completed, it is recommended that an opportunity for feedback is provided to the full Self-Study Committee, and the Program Advisory Committee, where appropriate. A completed draft of the self-study is shared with the VP Academic for review by [self-study due date]; revisions to the document may be requested prior to being finalized and sent to the External Program Review Panel.

Stage 3: External Review

Once the self-study has been revised and a final version prepared, the completed report is submitted to the VP Academic. Included in the self-study should be a list of proposed external reviewers that the program / self-study committee submits for consideration. The VP Academic (or designate) will be responsible for appointing the External Program Review Panel to assess and report on the program operations and deliverables.

The program / self-study committee should use the following criteria to nominate candidates for the External Program Review Panel:

- Candidates should hold an advanced academic credential (normally doctoral level in the discipline or terminal level of the particular field) with expertise related to the subject area under review;

- Where applicable to the program, candidates should have the required or desired professional credentials and/or related industry experience;

- Candidates should have program leadership / administration experience;

- Candidates should have an identified interest and/or relevant academic experience in areas such as teaching, learning, curriculum development, quality assessment (e.g. appraisers for accrediting bodies or previous experience as an external reviewer);

- Candidates should be actively engaged in the scholarship of their field or discipline;

- Ideally, candidates' profiles demonstrate some alignment with UCW priorities, such as internationalization, equity, diversity, and inclusivity.

The program / self-study committee should also attend to the possible sources of conflict of interest identified in the External Program Review Panel Nomination Form.

From the list of candidates, the VP Academic will rank and select an External Program Review Panel comprised of 3-5 qualified individuals. Once confirmed, the VP Academic provide the External Program Review Panel with the self-study and other relevant cyclical program review materials, and coordinate the site visit itinerary in consultation with the program. The site visit will take place at a time that is mutually convenient for the program and the External Program Review Panel. The External Program Review Panel will be reimbursed for expenses and provided with an honorarium for their work; these costs are covered by Office of the VP Academic.

The site visit will take place over a 1-3 day period onsite at the UCW campus. During the visit, the External Program Review Panel will meet with a list of relevant program stakeholders, including:

- Vice-President: Academic and Executive Dean

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- Program Chair and faculty representatives

- Self-Study Committee

- Program Advisory Committee

- Students from the program

- Program alumni (as applicable, and available)

- Employers of program graduates (as applicable and available)

- Representatives from academic support services, such the Library, Program Advising, Teaching and Learning

The External Program Review Panel will use the information from these meetings, along with the self-study and accompanying documents (e.g. faculty CVs, course syllabi) to provide preliminary feedback to the VP Academic and the Chair at the conclusion of their site visit.

Stage 4: Follow-Up Reporting

Following the site visit, the External Program Review Panel will compile a draft report, using a template provided, to identify program strengths and areas for further development. The draft report is forwarded to the VP Academic and Program Chair, within fifteen (15) working days of site visit. The VP Academic, in consultation with the Department Chair(s), the Self-Study Committee, the President, the Registrar or other senior leadership staff (where applicable) has fifteen (15) working days in which to respond in writing to the External Program Reviewer Panel accepting the report, correcting elements noted therein, or questioning or disputing findings. The External Program Review Panel reviews the feedback from the University and completes the final version submitting the report to the VP Academic.

The VPA presents the Report of the External Program Review Panel to Academic Council normally at the meeting immediately following receipt of the Final Report. The VPA includes a formal response to the Report from the External Program Review Panel outlining action plans to address recommendations made by the Self-Study Committee and the External Program Review Panel.

Once the Report of the External Program Review Panel has been received, it will be shared with the program and self-study committee. The self-study committee will then complete the Program Response template, which provides a response to the Report of the External Program Review Panel, which will include:

- The self-study committee's comments on each of the recommendations;

- The suggested actions to respond to each of the recommendations;

- An approximate timeline for the completion of each recommendation.

Below is an example of a recommendation from an External Program Review Panel Report, with a response from the self-study committee on behalf of the program. In this example, it is clear whether or not the self-

study committee agrees with the recommendation, what actions can be taken to complete the recommendation, and a reasonable timeframe for implementation.

Sample Program Response to Recommendation from the External Program Review Panel

Recommendation #1: *We recommend that the program conduct a curriculum mapping exercise to ensure that all program learning outcomes are being addressed at the appropriate locations, and with the appropriate level of redundancy, across the curriculum.*

Response and Suggested Actions: The self-study committee agrees with this recommendation and recognizes that considerable time has elapsed since the program's curriculum map was last reviewed. Since that time, several new courses have been added, and some of the program requirements have changed, which could impact the ways in which the current program learning outcomes are being addressed across the curriculum. Student feedback collected by the program has also suggested that there is too much overlap in some topics covered in multiple courses. We recognize that an updated curriculum map could be a useful tool for program faculty, both full and part-time, for understanding the contribution that their course makes to the overall program curriculum. It could also benefit students in seeing the relationships between the individual courses and the program as a whole.

Implementation Timeline: The program has a retreat coming up in August 2022. The self-study committee will recommend that a preliminary discussion of this recommendation and how it can be accomplished be included on the retreat agenda. The curriculum mapping exercise should be completed by May 2023.

Once the Program Response is completed, the Program Chair should be provided with an opportunity to review and provide feedback on a draft of the report before it is finalized. The completed Program Response should be submitted to the Office of the VP Academic.

The final stage of the cyclical program review process is for the Office of the VP Academic to prepare the Cyclical Program Review Summary Report, which provides a summary of the cyclical review process, the executive summary from the Report of the External Review Panel, and a list of the recommendations made by the External Review Panel. A summary of the program's / self-study committee's response to each recommendation made by the External Review Panel will also been included, which provides details on how the program intends to implement the recommendations made.

The Cyclical Program Review Summary Report will be submitted to UCW's Academic Council for information.

Stage 5: Implementation of Recommendations

As part of the cyclical review follow-up processes, the program / self-study committee will submit a Cyclical Review Progress Report one year following the completion of the cyclical review, on a date to be determined by the VP Academic based on the recommendations made by the External Program Review Panel. In the

Cyclical Review Progress Report, the program will outline the actions that it has taken to implement the recommendations made by the External Program Review Panel. Once completed, the Cyclical Review Progress Report will be submitted to the Academic Council for information. Based on the progress made in implementing the recommendations made by the External Program Review Panel, the VP Academic can request a follow-up report at a specified timeframe, or determine that no further reports are necessary in advance of the program's next scheduled cyclical review. To support the goals of transparency and accountability in UCW's cyclical program review process, the Cyclical Review Progress Reports will be posted on the UCW Quality Assurance webpage (https://www.ucanwest.ca/about/accountability/quality-assurance).

Cyclical Program Review Flowchart

Sample Cyclical Review Timelines

As may already be evident from the discussion of the process stages previously outlined, a cyclical program review is a significant undertaking that will usually take at least one year from the beginning of the review cycle to the completion of the follow-up reports. The Cyclical Program Review Schedule will include the start date for each cyclical program review, and the table below provides a suggested timeframe for each of the stages of the cyclical program review. Note that some of these stages may take more or less time than noted below, based on the work plans developed by the self-study committees and other review activities that they program may be engaged in.

Stage of Review Process	Anticipated Timeframe
Stage 1: Preparation and Planning	3-4 months
Stage 2: Drafting of Self-Study	3-4 months
Stage 3: External Review	2 months
Stage 4: Follow-up Reporting	2-3 months
Stage 5: Implementation of Recommendations	1-3 years following the review

Cyclical Program Review Task Breakdown

The following table provides a suggested breakdown of tasks and work associated with the cyclical program review process, organized by review stage. The primary audience for this resource is the Program Chair, who will be leading the cyclical review process and the self-study committee. This resource is intended to ensure that there is clarity around the cyclical program review expectations and that all deliverables during the cyclical program review process are met.

PREPARATION AND PLANNING	- Meet with VPA to discuss cyclical program review process - Identify self-study committee and organize members; arrange initial meeting to discuss process - Organize retreat for all program faculty and discuss agenda with self-study committee - Review available data and determine how to collect any additional data (e.g., surveys, focus groups) - Review program learning outcomes and seek assistance from the Centre for Teaching Excellence as necessary - Review responsibilities of administrative staff and set due date

SELF-STUDY DRAFTING	• Delegate drafting of self-study to committee members and set due dates for submission • Schedule regular touchpoint meetings with self-study committee to discuss progress and answer questions • Collect faculty CVs and course syllabi • Complete External Review Panel Nomination Form to submit alongside self-study • Assemble self-study draft and distribute to relevant groups for review (e.g., self-study committee, program faculty) • Submit draft self-study to Office of the VPA for review
FINALIZING SELF-STUDY	• Review feedback provided by Office of the VPA and other groups, and create final, revised version of self-study (may request input or assistance from self-study committee members) • Submit final version of the self-study to the Office of the VPA
EXTERNAL REVIEW	• Work with Office of the VPA to identify possible site visit dates and relevant individuals or groups for the External Program Review Panel to meet with • Ensure that the Office of the VPA has all necessary review documents to be distributed to the External Program Review Panel • Distribute final version of self-study to relevant groups (e.g., faculty, self-study committee, program advisory committee) in advance of site visit • Provide any context necessary to individuals or groups meeting with the External Program Review Panel • Participate in site visit meetings
FOLLOW-UP REPORTING	• Review Report of the External Program Review Panel and distribute to self-study committee • Coordinate and complete writing of Program Response and submit to the Office of the VPA once completed • Attend relevant governance meetings to speak to cyclical program review, as required
IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS	• Lead the implementation of the cyclical program review recommendations in the year post-review, delegating tasks to self-study committee members or program faculty, as relevant • Complete the Progress Report one year after the cyclical program review has been completed

Self-Study Template

A template for the cyclical program review self-study has been created and is available on the UCW Quality Assurance website. The primary and sub-sections of the template correspond to the DQAB degree program criteria, complemented by areas that UCW values and believes should be reflected on as part of the cyclical program review process. The reason for using the DQAB criteria is to be consistent in asking programs to reflect upon the same types of information required for the renewal of consent of academic programs with DQAB. The additional sections and sub-sections within the self-study template have been included as they represent important areas for program to reflect upon and evaluate that may not be captured in the DQAB criteria.

The template has been designed as a fillable standalone document, with the prompts under each sub-section designed to clarify for the program or self-study committee the types of information, data, reflection, and evaluation that should be discussed. The section headings, sub-section titles, and italicized prompts should not be removed from the document as they are there to help readers understand the narrative and evidence that has been provided.

The self-study template is organized around the following areas of program operations:

1. **Program Description and Purpose**: this opening section of the document asks the program to describe its history and purpose within the institution, its alignment with the mission and goals of UCW, the consultation process undertaken while preparing the self-study, and the program's areas of interest or focus for the cyclical program review.

2. **Degree Level Standard**: this section focuses on the program's learning outcomes, and their alignment with the curriculum and degree level standards. The self-study committee should seek support and advice from the Centre for Teaching Excellence and identify the program's learning outcomes and explain how they were developed and when they were last updated. There are two mapping tools that accompany this section: a **learning outcomes matrix** to demonstrate that the curriculum addresses both subject matter and program learning outcomes appropriate for the degree level standard, and **a curriculum map** to demonstrate how the curriculum is purposefully structured and logically sequenced (vertically and horizontally) to ensure that what students are actually taught matches the academic expectations in a particular subject area and degree level standard. Degree level standards for each degree type have been included as Appendix A.

3. **Credential Recognition and Nomenclature:** as applicable to the program, this section of the self-study asks the program to explain how the program facilitates credential recognition and transfer, into other post-secondary programs and/or the standards of industry, regulatory, licensing or credentialing bodies.

4. **Program Curriculum and Content:** this section focuses on the program's curriculum and its areas of focus. The self-study committee is asked to comment on the program's structure, learning outcomes, length of the program (number of credit hours), and course-level methods of student evaluation. The prescribed set of core and elective courses in the program's curriculum should be explained, as well as

any new courses that have been developed since the last cyclical review or that are planned for the near future. Please provide the course descriptions for each course found in the academic calendar. Full course outlines can be provided as an appendix. The alignment of the program curriculum; that is, how all of its parts fit together to form the whole, should be explained, and the earlier learning outcomes matrix and curriculum map (see Section 2) can be referenced to support this explanation. This section also includes a discussion of the experiential learning opportunities that are offered to students and their associated outcomes. If the experiential learning includes placements for students, it should be explained how equity to access to placements is ensured, how students are supported in finding placements, and how their performance in placements is evaluated. Lastly, the program should address the ways in which it has been working towards incorporating Indigenous knowledges and perspectives, as well as principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion, into their program curriculum.

5. **Learning Methodologies and Program Delivery:** in this section, the self-study committee should explain how the learning methodologies (e.g. lecture, lab, tutorial, online, experiential learning) that are used to deliver the program are appropriate for the program content, accessible to all student audiences, and suitable for ensuring student learning and achievement of program learning outcomes and degree level standards. This section also asks the program to provide a link to UCW policies on technology-based, computer-based or web-based learning, as well as the ways in which the program strives to promote academic integrity through its teaching, learning, and assessment practices.

6. **Admission and Transfer/ Residency:** the focus of this section is on student mobility, both into and out of the program. The self-study committee is asked to outline the program's admission requirements and describe any policies and practices in place in the program or institution to promote the admission, retention and success of students from a diverse range of backgrounds, including those from traditionally underrepresented groups. The self-study committee should identify any existing processes related to transfer credit and prior learning assessment to enable advanced standing into the program, the program's residency requirements, and any articulation agreements that the program has with other institutions.

7. **Faculty:** in this section, programs are asked to provide information on how the expertise of the collective full and part-time faculty complement are sufficient to support the program and its students, the achievement of the program's mission, overall high quality, and continuous improvement. Specific mention should be given to an explanation of the role that sessional faculty play in the teaching and administration of the program, the supports that are provided to sessional faculty, how they are mentored, and how they are integrated into the activities of the program. Programs will comment on the teaching quality and scholarly and creative activity of faculty involved in the program, and list any UCW policies related to faculty activity. This section will also discuss the sufficiency of the program's support staff.

8. **Resources:** this section focuses on the program's evaluation of its access to and use of existing physical (e.g. teaching, research, administrative, informal learning spaces), technological, financial and human resources in delivering the program. This section also profiles the academic services available to

students in the program to support their academic success, such as the Library, writing services, and academic advising, as well as those supports specific to international student success. The self-study committee should seek responses that provide information on how the institution ensures the adequacy and appropriateness of its learning and information resources and their renewal and upgrade.

9. **Student Quality Indicators**: the success of its students in completing the program in the anticipated timeframe and finding meaningful post-graduate education and employment opportunities are important indicators of program quality. This section of the self-study follows the student life cycle from admission, retention, and graduation. Programs are asked to comment on identifiable trends in the data provided, as well as highlight any successes or challenges that have been experienced during the time period under review.

10. **Program Consultation:** this section is designed to capture all of the types of feedback and consultations that the program has engaged in either as part of the cyclical review process in particular, or on an ongoing basis. Sub-sections of the Program Consultation section include a summary of feedback collected from current and former students, employers of program graduates, and those responsible for supporting the recruitment of students into the program. The program is also asked to summarize data on the employment outcomes and further education opportunities of graduates.

11. **Program Review and Assessment:** this important section captures the ways in which student learning is assessed at the program level, as well as how the overall quality of the program is monitored on an ongoing basis. Self-study committees are asked to identify the signature assessments of the program, how the program measures and documents student performance of program learning outcomes, degree level standards, and any regulatory, accreditation or professional association. The program is asked to explain how it assesses the effectiveness of its curriculum on an ongoing basis. The institution's policies and processes for the cyclical review of its academic programs should also be explained. Where applicable, the program is asked to summarize the recommendations and results of its previous reviews, and explain how the program is benchmarked against comparable programs in the province.

12. **Conclusion:** this final section of the self-study provides the self-study committee with the opportunity to identify the future goals and aspirations of the program, its areas of concern, and summarize the key themes of the self-study as a whole.

These broad sections of the self-study align with the headings used in the DQAB new program approval and renewal of degree consent documents. Each section of the self-study template is divided into sub-sections that includes guidance to the program about the areas for discussion and evidence that should be provided. The program should address all of the areas within the italicized prompts provided in each self-study section as best as they are able to, and seek guidance from the Office of the VP Academic if they are unsure how to address the prompts within the template.

In determining the depth and breadth of the responses to each section, the self-study committee should consider the audience for the document and their informational needs. The self-study will become part of the program's historical records, read by program members and senior administrators. The external audience for the self-study is the External Program Review Panel, who while they will have disciplinary expertise, may not strong familiarity with the program or the university. The authors of the document should keep this external audience in mind when determining the depth of the responses to each section.

Self-study committees may find that previously written program documents, such as the new program proposals written at the university and/or submitted to the DQAB, applications for renewal for consent to DQAB, and any documents prepared for accreditation reviews, can be useful resources for writing the self-study. While these other documents are prepared for purposes different than a cyclical review, there may be some material in these documents that can form a foundation for the self-study.

Data, Sources of Evidence, and Appendices

Although the majority of the self-study is based around narrative provided by the program and self-study committee, this can and should be complemented by relevant data and other forms of evidence for support. There will be several sets of institutional and program-specific data provided to the program for its self-study, such as:

- Student survey data
- Admissions and enrolment data
- Data related to student progression and graduation
- Course evaluation data
- Student employment outcomes

In addition to this centrally provided data, the program is welcome and encouraged to include any of their own program-specific data and evidence in support of their narrative in the self-study.

Additional information or existing program documents that the program / self-study committee may wish to share with the External Review Panel can be included as appendices to the self-study. A curriculum mapping template has been included as part of the self-study as a suggested Appendix A. Other appendices that the program / self-study committee may wish to consider adding to the self-study might include a Library Report, data and/or information related to program benchmarking, and information on program graduates career outcomes. In determining which information they wish to share with the External Program Review Panel, the program / self-study committee can keep in mind that the program's self-study is treated as confidential, and that all members of the External Program Review Panel will be made aware of their limitations of use during the cyclical program review. That said, the self-study committee should consider whether or not information included in the self-study might be considered commercially sensitive to UCW's competitive advantage in the market. Any questions about the suitability of inclusion of specific data and/or information can be directed to the Office of the VP Academic.

As part of the cyclical program review process, the program / self-study committee should also assemble a completed collection of all faculty CVs and current course syllabi to complement the narrative provided in the self-study. Faculty CVs offer the External Program Review Panel a deeper perspective on the expertise and strengths of the collective faculty complement, and enable the program to speak more briefly about these elements. A collection of recent course syllabi help to support the narrative provided in the self-study around program design, curricular alignment, modes of delivery, and assessment methods. Faculty CVs and course syllabi can each be packaged as separate documents that accompany the self-study.

Approaches to Self-Study Drafting and Editing

As much as the overall approach to the cyclical program review should be a collaborative one in which program members and the self-study committee have a shared sense of engagement and commitment to the process, the writing of the actual self-study document is often allocated to a few contributors. This approach ensures that this element of the review process – which is a significant one – is not the responsibility of a single person and can help to achieve a shared sense of ownership over the process and its outcomes. When a self-study will be written by multiple program and/or self-study committee members, the following considerations are recommended:

- As the leader of the self-study committee, the program Chair is encouraged to establish clear expectations around the drafting of the self-study (e.g. who is responsible for writing what) and the associated timelines (e.g. when are those contributions due).

- Having a retreat for the program and/or self-study committee as part of the preparation phase of the cyclical review can help to ensure that there is shared understanding of the goals of the cyclical review, the main successes to highlight, and challenges to be addressed.

- A work plan that identifies which committee members are expected to contribute to each section of the self-study, and the due dates for their contributions is recommended.

- Uploading the self-study template into a web-based platform such as SharePoint can enable multiple self-study authors to collaborate on the document, without emailing version back and forth.

- The intended readers of the self-study should be kept in mind throughout the process. The primary readers of the document will be internal readers, such as program faculty, UCW administrators (e.g. Executive Dean, VP Academic, as well as the members of the External Program Review Panel, who will be less familiar with UCW culture and processes. The level of detail provided in the self-study should be sensitive to these external readers, who may have little to no prior understanding of UCW's context, in particular.

- A program and/or self-study committee member should be appointed to edit the document once it has been drafted, with the aim of producing a consistent tone, narrative, and format throughout the document.

- All program and/or self-study committee members can be invited to review a completed draft of the self-study before it is submitted to the Office of the VP Academic for review, and the document

finalized. Deadlines for this review should be established.

The following suggestions can help to ensure that the self-study will meet the expectations of its readers, be completed on schedule, and contribute to shared sense of ownership of and participation in the process by the program.

Qualities of Effective Cyclical Reviews

The most effective cyclical program reviews are those that are the result of:

- A planning process that ensures that sufficient time is allocated to the idea generation, writing, reviewing, and revising stages of the self-study;

- Authentic engagement and commitment to the value of the process by program faculty and self-study committees;

- An inquisitive and open-minded approach to probing both the program's existing areas of strength, but also to investigating how the curriculum and student experience can be improved;

- Efforts made to incorporate evidence and viewpoints from multiple perspectives (e.g. students, faculty, staff, alumni, employers, PAC);

- A future-oriented approach that leverages the cyclical program review process to help identify goals for the program and approaches to achieving them.

Remember that the overall goal of the cyclical program review process at UCW is **continuous program improvement**. This goal is achieved by evaluating the effectiveness of the program's curriculum in achieving its objectives and student learning outcomes, by inviting and reflecting upon feedback from the program's stakeholders with an open mind to confirm areas of strength and identify opportunities for improvement, and to leverage this analysis and evidence to chart a path forward for the program that enables it to achieve its future aspirations.

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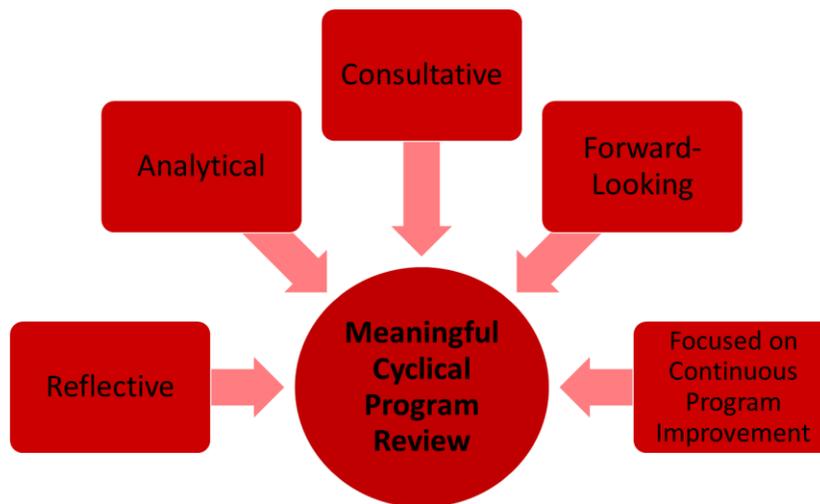
Summary

This first edition of the UCW Cyclical Program Review Handbook is designed to help programs to complete a successful first cyclical program review. The handbook will be updated on a regular basis as additional information and resources to support the UCW cyclical program review process are created. If you have suggestions on information or resources that you'd like to see incorporated into future iterations of this handbook, please share them with the Office of the VP Academic.

Appendix A: DQAB Degree Level Standards

Degree Level Standard – Bachelor Degree

1. *Depth and Breadth of Knowledge*

   a. Knowledge and critical understanding in a field of study that builds upon their secondary education and includes the key assumptions, methodologies and applications of the discipline and/or field of practice;

   b. Basic understanding of the range of fields within the discipline/field of practice and of how the discipline may intersect with fields in related disciplines;

   c. The ability to gather, review, evaluate and interpret information, including new information relevant to the discipline; and to compare the merits of alternate hypotheses or creative options relevant to one or more of the major fields in a discipline;

   d. The capacity to engage in independent research or practice in a supervised context;

   e. Critical thinking and analytical skills inside and outside the discipline; and,

   f. The ability to apply learning from one or more areas outside the discipline.

2. *Knowledge of Methodologies and Research*
An understanding of methods of enquiry or creative activity, or both, in their primary area of study that enables the student to:

   i. evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems using well established ideas and techniques;

   ii. devise and sustain arguments or solve problems using these methods; and,

   iii. describe and comment upon particular aspects of current research or equivalent advanced scholarship in the discipline and how these are relevant to the evolution of the discipline.

3. *Application of Knowledge*

   a. The ability to review, present and critically evaluate qualitative and quantitative information to:
      i. develop lines of argument;

      ii. make sound judgments in accordance with the major theories, concepts and methods of the subject(s) of study;

      iii. apply underlying concepts, principles, and techniques of analysis, both within and outside the discipline; and,

      iv. where appropriate, use this knowledge in the creative process.

   b. The ability to use a range of established techniques to:

      i. initiate and undertake critical evaluation of arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts and information;

      ii. propose solutions;

      iii. frame appropriate questions for the purpose of solving a problem; and

      iv. solve a problem or create a new work.

   c. The ability to make critical use of scholarly reviews and primary sources.

4. Communication Skills

The ability to communicate information, arguments, and analyses accurately and reliably, orally and in writing, to a range of audiences, to specialist and non-specialist audiences, using structured and coherent arguments, and, where appropriate, informed by key concepts and techniques of the discipline.

5. Awareness of Limits of Knowledge

An understanding of the limits to their own knowledge and ability, and an appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits to knowledge and how this might influence analyses and interpretations.

6. Professional Capacity/ Autonomy

Qualities and transferable skills necessary for further study, employment, community involvement and other activities requiring:

   i. the exercise of initiative, personal responsibility and accountability in both personal and group contexts;

   ii. working effectively with others; and,

   iii. behaviour consistent with academic integrity.

Degree Level Standard – Master's Degree

1. *Depth and Breadth of Knowledge*

A systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study, or area of professional practice.

2. *Knowledge of Methodologies and Research*

A conceptual understanding and methodological competence that enables the graduate to have a:

a. working comprehension of how established techniques of research and inquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline;

b. capacity to evaluate critically current research and advanced research and scholarship in the discipline or area of professional competence; and,

c. capacity to address complex issues and judgments based on established principles and techniques.

On the basis of that competence, has shown at least one of the following:

a. the development and support of a sustained argument in written form; or

b. originality in the application of knowledge.

3. *Application of Knowledge*

Competency in the research process by applying an existing body of knowledge in the research and critical analysis of a new question or of a specific problem or issue in a new setting.

4. *Communication Skills*

The ability to communicate ideas, issues and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences.

5. *Awareness of Limits of Knowledge*

A cognizance of the complexity of knowledge and of the potential contributions of other interpretations, methods, and disciplines.

6. *Professional Capacity/ Autonomy*

a. The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
   i. the exercise of initiative and of personal responsibility and accountability; and,
   ii. decision-making in complex situations, such as employment.

b. The intellectual independence required for continuing professional development; and,

c. The ability to appreciate the broader implications of applying knowledge to particular contexts.