



ONTARIO UNIVERSITIES
COUNCIL on QUALITY ASSURANCE

**SUMMARY OF AUDITORS' REPORT ON THE
SCOPE OF BROCK UNIVERSITY'S RESPONSE
TO THE QUALITY ASSURANCE AUDIT**

DECEMBER 2014

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SUMMARY STATEMENT

As per the Quality Assurance Framework Section 5.2.9, Brock University submitted its One-Year Follow-Up Institutional Response on the Auditor's Report on September 25, 2014.

The Auditors reviewed this Response and drafted recommendations which were submitted to the Audit Committee for consideration. The Audit Committee, at its meeting of November 20, 2014, reviewed and approved the Auditors' recommendations on Brock University's Response which were subsequently submitted to the Quality Council.

The Quality Council, at its meeting of December 18, 2015, unanimously approved the following motion:

That the Brock University Institutional One-Year Follow-Up Response be Accepted.

The Quality Assurance Secretariat publishes the auditor's summary of the scope and adequacy of the institutional one-year follow-up response in accordance with Section 5.2.10 of the Quality Assurance Framework.

SUMMARY OF THE AUDITORS' REPORT ON THE INSTITUTIONAL ONE-YEAR FOLLOW-UP RESPONSE TO THE QUALITY ASSURANCE AUDIT OF BROCK UNIVERSITY

The Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance undertook an Audit of Quality Assurance at Brock University in 2013. As in all such audits, the purpose was to assess the extent to which Brock University is in compliance with its own Institutional Quality Assurance Processes (IQAP) and to affirm that institutional practices are consistent with the Quality Assurance Framework that governs all Ontario Universities. The Final Report on the Quality Assurance Audit of Brock University was filed with the university on October 21, 2013.

The Quality Assurance Framework requires that each institution submit a one-year follow up response to the Quality Council. Brock University submitted its response and supporting documents in September 2014. This is a summary of the Audit Team's review of the university's one-year response.

Brock University has provided a very well organized response to the Audit Report's recommendations. The auditors also commend the university for anchoring as many of the recommendations as possible in its proposed revisions to the Brock University IQAP.

The Audit Team has concluded that the university's response and proposed IQAP revisions satisfactorily address the following recommendations:

- 1 (Brock University must verify that each sub-criterion in its IQAP is dealt with in the self-studies before proceeding to the next stage of the review.);
- 2 (Brock University's graduate programs must develop explicit learning outcomes and map them to their curricula.);
- 3 (Brock University's IQAP must be amended to describe in more detail the external and internal reviewer selection process.);
- 4 (Brock University must ensure that it is in compliance with Section G of its IQAP regarding the involvement of faculty, staff and students in preparation of the self-study.); and
- 7 (Brock University's IQAP must be amended to elaborate the process for developing joint programs, especially those of an institutional and dual credential nature.)

The Audit Team has the following response to proposed actions regarding the remaining three recommendations.

- Recommendation 5 (Brock university must identify the relationship between learning outcomes and its self-studies and external reviews.)

APPENDIX 1

The university has responded that it will emphasize this in its orientation sessions for programs undergoing cyclical review and, further, refer review teams to the Centre for Pedagogical Innovation for assistance. This is a positive response but the auditors would like the university to consider how it could then track its progress in meeting this recommendation.

- Recommendation 6 (Brock University must develop a specific section of its IQAP that sets out a process for reviewing programs such as General Studies programs that do not have a single departmental home or prescribed set of courses. Particular attention should be paid to developing and assessing learning outcomes.) More work on this recommendation is required. At a minimum, the process for review of these programs – and for developing and assessing learning outcomes – should be explicit in the Brock University IQAP or supporting documents.
- Recommendation 8 (The University must ensure that all programs are included in the schedule for cyclical program review including those that are subject to accreditation.) The Audit Team remains concerned and does not accept the University's response to this recommendation. While accredited programs are included in this schedule, the audit team is now concerned that there are twenty-two instances in which the interval between cyclical reviews of the program exceeds eight years.
- Exceeding an eight-year cycle would be a violation of both the Quality Assurance Framework and the Brock University IQAP. If the University does not take the necessary steps to remedy its cyclical review schedule, a subsequent audit could identify this as a Cause for Concern.

Brock University was one of the first to undergo an audit under the new Quality Assurance Framework. The university should be commended on the clarity and timeliness of its response to the Audit Report.

Brock University Quality Council Audit Summary of Actions Taken

The following is a summary of the actions taken in response to the recommendations and suggestions contained in the Quality Council's Audit of Brock's quality assurance process.

RECOMMENDATION 1: Brock University must verify that each sub-criterion in its IQAP is dealt with in the self-studies before proceeding to the next stage of the review.

See the response to the next recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Brock University's graduate programs must develop explicit learning outcomes and map them to their curricula.

Wording to address these two recommendations have been added to the IQAP (Section 2.5).

Implementation of these first two recommendations falls to the Academic Review Committed (ARC). This will be undertaken as the ARC reviews each Self Study, with the unit in attendance. In addition, as part of the orientation session, run annually for all units to be reviewed in the next academic year, these two specific recommendations are reinforced with Self Study lead authors, unit Chairs/Directors, administrative support personnel and others in attendance.

With respect to Recommendation 2, the Faculty of Graduate Studies, is working to review the graduate degree level expectations, approved by Senate, and from this develop a standard set of learning outcomes that are applicable to all graduate programs. Once this is completed Graduate Studies will then work with individual graduate programs to develop program specific outcomes that reflect the discipline and pathway (course based, MRP, thesis) students follow.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Brock University's IQAP must be amended to describe in more detail the external and internal reviewer selection process (Quality Assurance Framework section 4.2.4 b).

IQAP Sections 2.8 and Section 3.7 amended to reflect the process in place for external and internal reviewers.

Adjustments have been made to the Timeline and Process section for both

Cyclical Reviews (Section 2.3) and New Programs (Section 3.3) to reflect the reviewer selection process.

RECOMMENDATION 4: Brock University must ensure that it is in compliance with section G (Renumbered IQAP Section 2.7) of its IQAP regarding the involvement of faculty, staff and students in preparation of the self-study.

IQAP Section 2.7 modified.

RECOMMENDATION 5: Brock University must identify the relationship between learning outcomes and learning modes in its self-studies and external reviews.

While not specifically addressed in the IQAP, the link between learning outcomes and learning modes are highlighted during the orientation session for units undergoing a cyclical review, well in advance of initiating writing the self-study. As part of the documents included in the Self Study, each program identifies course level learning outcomes. For each course learning outcome, the instructor identifies the learning activity/experience, the assessment method and a strategy for improvement. These are then rolled up to ensure that the program learning outcomes are being achieved. SelfStudy authors are directed and encouraged to contact the Centre for Pedagogical Innovation to seek assistance in this undertaking.

RECOMMENDATION 6: Brock University must develop a specific section of its IQAP that sets out a process for reviewing programs such as General Studies programs that do not have a single departmental home or prescribed set of courses. Particular attention should be paid to developing and assessing learning outcomes.

As a result of the recommendations from the cyclical review of the General Studies program, undertaken in 2011-2012, and the subsequent Senate approved FAR, the former General Studies program has been replaced by: 1) a BA in General Humanities; 2) a BA in Social Sciences; and, 3) a BSc with no major, minor or concentration. All three of these programs are coordinated and overseen by the respective Decanal Offices. For these programs, which are not discipline based, the cyclical reviews will require an adjustment to the process, but not the standards outlined in the IQAP, see IQAP section 2.1.

RECOMMENDATION 7: Brock University's IQAP must be amended to elaborate the process for developing joint programs, especially those of an inter-institutional and dual credential nature.

IQAP Section 5 has been changed to address this recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION 8: The University must ensure that all programs are included on the schedule for cyclical program review including those that are subject to accreditation.

Working with the Government reporting group in the Registrar's Office a listing of all programs to be included in the cyclical review process has been generated. This listing kept by the Office of the Associate Vice President, Academic, is updated as new programs are approved and published on the University's Quality Assurance website (<http://www.brocku.ca/vp-academic/quality-assurance>).

SUGGESTION 1: The opportunity of conducting an integrated review enables the institution to consider the linkages between the undergraduate and graduate programs from an educational and an efficiency perspective. Brock University might think about points at which it would like specific discussion of the integration and alignment between the undergraduate and graduate programs in the self-study.

The Self Study manual, developed to assist units undergoing a cyclical review, includes both quantitative and qualitative data and analysis that is pertinent to both undergraduate and graduate programs being reviewed (e.g. faculty qualifications, intellectual contributions, space, etc.), with clear indications of where data and analysis is specific to undergraduate and graduate programs. The first section of the Self Study deals with the unit background. In this section the unit provides information relevant to understanding the philosophy and approach that underlies its programs through providing a description of the evolution of the programs to better understand the nature of the unit in its present form. It is here that the linkages between the undergraduate and graduate programs are presented.

SUGGESTION 2: Brock University should undertake a more concerted effort to support and develop understanding of the benefits of working with a learning outcomes focus in quality assurance.

This aspect is included in the Orientation session for Programs undergoing review and in follow up meetings with these programs. As part of this follow-up, the Centre for Pedagogical Innovation will work with units undergoing a review to facilitate the discussion in the identification of learning outcomes for the unit's programs and that the learning outcomes are mapped to the curriculum.

SUGGESTION 3: The responsibility of verifying that the reviewers are at arm's length should be formally assigned to the individual who, as designated in Brock University's IQAP, appoints the external reviewers.

Letters of invitation to reviewers amended to specifically include arm's length criteria,(included in the IQAP) and asking reviewers to verify same.

SUGGESTION 4: Section J (Renumbered Section 2.10) of Brock University's IQAP should be amended to instruct the reviewers to explicitly reference all of the evaluation criteria set out in section E of the IQAP. It might be helpful to provide external reviewers with a report template that includes all evaluation criteria.

Template for Reviewers' Report for Cyclical Reviews and New Program appraisals created. Information sheets for Reviewers Orientation for Cyclical and New Programs changed to reflect templates.

SUGGESTION 5: Brock University should consider amending its IQAP to provide more specific instruction about the link between existing resources as set out in the evaluation criteria for learning outcomes (section II E 5 a (Renumbered Section 2.5.5)) and the instructions for the reviewers' report regarding recommended actions to improve the program (section II J4 c (Renumbered Section 2.10)).

With respect to resources:

- 1) As part of the orientation session with each review team, the existing resources are addressed in their appropriateness to meet the current needs of the program undergoing review. Reviewers are reminded that any increase in resources simply because the unit needs more would not be considered favourably. However, if there is an emerging field in the program area where the addition of specific, targeted resources (e.g. a faculty line or specific equipment, etc.) would serve to improve the program and help it move to the next level such a request would be considered, and included in the implementation plan within the Final Assessment Report.
- 2) Within the FAR, reviewer's recommendations that have resource (human, physical, fiscal) implications are directed to the appropriate University office for consideration. Within the past year Senate has created the Planning, Priorities and Budget Advisory Committee (PPBAC) that, through Senate, advises the Board of Trustees in insuring consistency of the operating budget with the academic policy of the University.

SUGGESTION 6: Brock University should consider revising its IQAP to clarify roles and reporting expectations between its Academic Review Committee and two Senate Committees, Senate Undergraduate Program Committee and Senate Graduate Studies Committee.

IQAP Sections 2.11.2 and 3.11 revised to clarify

SUGGESTION 7: Brock University should consider establishing a university-wide process by which Deans and other affected senior budget managers would review draft Final Assessment Reports prior to distribution to Senate.

IQAP Section 2.12 revised with wording added.

SUGGESTION 8: Brock University should review the package of data required for its self-studies, providing a comparable, analytically complete data set to units undergoing cyclical program review.

Standard data set currently provided to each unit undergoing review.

The University should also develop a timeline to ensure the provision of data at an appropriate point.

Done – included in revised Timeline and Process summary (IQAP Section 2.3.)

SUGGESTION 9: Brock University might consider undertaking a gap analysis to determine if there are items in its IQAP that are not included in the IQAPs of partner institutions. Where gaps exist, procedures should be put in place to ensure that the requirements for cyclical program reviews under the Brock University IQAP are met.

Analysis will be undertaken and discrepancies identified and monitored as applicable programs come forward.

SUGGESTION 10: Brock University should monitor the timelines associated with reviews of joint programs led by partner institutions in order to encourage a timely process.

This will include a monitoring component for ARC, through the Office of the AVPA, for joint programs.

SUGGESTION 11: Section 3 B (Renumbered Section 3.3) of Brock University's IQAP should be reviewed and clarified. One approach might be to develop a timeline that works backward, in the number of weeks associated with each stage of approval, and that begins with the arrival of the first cohort of students.

IQAP Section 3.3 modified.

SUGGESTION 12: Brock University should consider encouraging proponents of a new program to post that program's Statement of Intent for broad review within the University.

Wording added at the end of Section 3.4 relating to posting the SOI for a consultation

phase.

SUGGESTION 13: Brock University should consider providing additional encouragement and support to proponents of new programs in their program learning outcomes/curriculum mapping process.

As new program proposals are being developed, the proponents are directed to make use of the services provided by the Centre for Pedagogical Innovation who can facilitate the discussion by the program in developing program and course learning outcomes and mapping the outcomes to the proposed curriculum.

SUGGESTION 14: Brock University should review the protocols for obtaining data in support of new program development, with the aim of providing the best level of central support possible to new program proponents.

As new program proposals are being developed The Office of Institutional Analysis and Planning has been directed to work with the program proponents to provide internal metrics, where appropriate, and to assist in identifying and compiling external data for inclusion in the Program Proposal Brief.

SUGGESTION 15: Brock University may want to consider making specific reference in its IQAP regarding the practice of program proponents attending the relevant Academic Review Committee meeting(s) to receive comments on new program proposals.

IQAP Sections 2.7, 3.4 and 3.6 modified.

SUGGESTION 16: Brock University may want to review its IQAP to ensure that there are processes for efficient communication between university-level committees and program proponents.

IQAP Section 2.12 modified.

SUGGESTION 17: Brock University should consider including a separate section in its IQAP on program discontinuation.

IQAP Section 6 added.