Quality Assurance Process Audit
Institution Response

April 2021

UNIVERSITY
OF THE FRASER VALLEY

Our vision

UFV will be known as a gathering place
for learners, leaders, and seekers.
We will pursue diverse pathways of scholarship,
leading to community connection, reconciliation,
and prosperity, locally and beyond.

Our Mission

Engaging Learners | *Yoystexw ye totilthet*

Transforming Lives | *Ayeqet kw'e shxwaylexws*

Building Community | *Thayt kw'e st'elt'elawtexw*

Our values

Integrity | *Letse o sqwelewel*

We act honestly and ethically, upholding these values
and ensuring our mission is delivered consistently.

Inclusivity | *Lexwsq'eq'ostexw*

We welcome everyone, showing consideration and respect
for all experiences and ideas.

Community | *St'elt'elawtexw*

We cultivate strong relationships, acting as a hub where all
kinds of communities — educational, scholarly, local, global,
and cultural — connect and grow.

Excellence | *Ey shxweli*

We pursue our highest standard in everything we do,
with determination and heart.

Learn more about our vision, mission,
and values at ufv.ca/vision.

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Front cover Indigenous art:
Raven mask carved by
Jonny X̲ótxwes Shaw
located in B309 the
Indigenous Affairs Office

The University of the Fraser Valley is located on the traditional territory of the Halq'eméylem-speaking Stó:lō peoples. We express our gratitude and respect for the honour of living and working in S'olh Temexw (Our Land; Our World).

INSTITUTION RESPONSE TO THE ASSESSOR'S REPORT

The University of the Fraser Valley appreciates the thoughtful assessment of its quality assurance policies and processes provided by the QAPA Assessors' Report. The report commends the university's commitment to quality assurance and enhancement, evidenced through the creation of the Program Development and Quality Assurance office, which supports program review and development, and the Teaching and Learning Centre, which provides support for curriculum development. The quality and breadth of the data and supporting evidence supplied by the Institutional Research office is also noted as contributing to a consistent and thorough approach to program review and development. The report also commends UFV for the creation of Institutional Learning Outcomes and Principles for Quality Curriculum, the value and importance of which have been socialized throughout the institution to guide the continuing enhancement of program quality. The report further affirms areas for improvement already identified by UFV in the QAPA Institution Report, and makes recommendations on additional areas the university could consider to further advance the evolution and growth of its quality assurance processes. UFV's responses to the affirmations and recommendations follow.

AFFIRMATIONS

1. *Continue to support the newly instituted role for a Student Voices Coordinator to assist programs with student led focus groups. The QAPA Panel "believes this new role will enhance the student voice and lead to new insights regarding the student experience that will enhance quality."*

   In Fall 2020, the PDQA office launched a pilot project to create a position for a Student Voices Coordinator through UFV's work study program. A student has been hired and is in the process of organizing student-led focus groups to canvass students' perspectives on the quality of their learning experiences. Information from the focus groups will be gathered confidentially and provided to the academic units that are currently working on program review.

   Action: the PDQA office will continue development of the Student Voices initiative by supporting the work of the Coordinator, assessing the outcomes of project now underway, and seeking further support for the project in 2021/22.

2. *Continue work on definitions and guidelines for program types and incorporate further work on micro-credentials.*

   UFV appreciates affirmation of the initiative to develop clearer definitions and guidelines for program types. Since the university is currently developing a strategy and framework for micro-credentials, the suggestions to incorporate micro-credentials is timely and will be taken into consideration as part of this initiative.

   Action: The PDQA office will work with the Registrar and the Advising Centre to draft definitions and guidelines for program types, including consideration of micro-credentials. The goal will be to have a draft version ready for committee review during the 2021-22 academic year, with a final version in place in 2022-23.

3. *Consider some standardized entrance requirements to match to credential definitions.*

   UFV appreciates the suggestion to develop standardized entrance requirements matched to credential definitions.

   Action: The PDQA office will consult with the Registrar and Advising Centre to investigate the viability of developing standardized entrance requirements.

4. *Ensure external review teams address alignment with Internationalization and Indigenization in recommendations.*

   UFV agrees with clarifying the role of external review teams to specifically address program alignment with Indigenization and Internationalization, as well as other specific strategic priorities when relevant. The External Review Report template and guidelines currently ask for the external review team to comment on the program's contribution to the university's strategic goals, vision, mission, plans and values in section 2 of the report, which would include contributions to initiatives like Indigenization and Internationalization. Nonetheless, providing more specific direction to address these key initiatives would be helpful.

   Action: The PDQA office will revise the External Review Report template and guidelines prior to the initiation of the 2021 cycle of program reviews to ensure external review teams are encouraged to address key strategic priorities such as Indigenization and Internationalization.

5. ***Establish a subcommittee of APPC to provide a comprehensive and detailed consideration of the program reviews and follow up.***

   UFV appreciates affirmation for the establishment of a program review subcommittee of APPC.

   Action: APPC will investigate the formation of a program review subcommittee, including membership and terms of reference. If there is consensus to proceed, a reasonable timeline would be to have the subcommittee in place to provide guidance and oversight for the 2022-23 cycle of program reviews.

6. ***Refine program development process to align with the current DQAB submission process.***

   In 2019, UFV introduced a revised program development process designed to align more effectively with the current DQAB submission process, which involves a Stage 1 and Stage 2 assessment of new degree program proposals. UFV appreciates the affirmation of the QAPA External Assessors in support of this revised process.

   Action: PDQA and the relevant standing committees of Senate will continue to monitor the program development process to ensure it effectively aligns with the DQAB's process, addresses standards and criteria for degree quality, program need and feasibility, and provides efficient review and approval timelines.

7. ***Investigate a shorter timeline for program development; specifically, a more efficient concept paper template and approval process.***
   - *The concept paper is an excellent way to float a new program in advance of full development but it appears that the development of the concept paper is somewhat onerous with multiple reviews including the Board which may not be necessary for a concept paper (p. 10)*

   UFV agrees that a more efficient concept paper approval process would be beneficial. The purpose of the concept paper should be to test the viability and interest for the creation of a new program prior to committing significant time and energy to full program development. The current concept paper approval process requires approval by the UFV Board, which occurs once annually as part of the Board's approval of the Program Report and Plan. An investigation of the Board's role in approving concept papers forms part of the response to Recommendation 14 below, the outcome of which could result in a more efficient process for concept paper approval. In the interim, the PDQA office is already working on refinements to the concept paper templates and will additionally investigate the procedures for internal review to identify ways to streamline the process.

Action: UFV will investigate the Board's role in approving concept papers as part of the response to Recommendation 14 below.

Action: The PDQA office will refine the concept paper templates and investigate the procedures for internal review to identify ways to streamline the concept paper approval process. This work to be completed by Fall 2021.

8. ***Develop a tailored program review process for Trades and developmental programs which have outside standards ("the advent of micro-credentials, stackable, and transferable courses and credentials makes this an important recommendation to act upon, as it facilitates student mobility and career transitions and ensures quality programming is linked through a variety of credentials").***

The PDQA office is currently developing a strategy and framework for micro-credentials which will include recommendations on how to ensure the quality of this programming, including where it might integrate with or scaffold into degree and non-degree credentials. The project of developing tailored program review processes for Trades and developmental programs, as well as programs with professional accreditations, will be a longer-term initiative, requiring consultation with deans and academic units. The upcoming review of the Academic Program Review policy (189) will provide an opportunity to investigate the implementation of distinct review processes for relevant programs.

Action: PDQA will submit a strategy and framework for micro-credentials for review by Senate standing committees (UEC, GSC, APPC) in 2021-22.

Action: As part of the upcoming review of the Academic Program Review policy (189), scheduled to begin in May 2021, UFV will investigate the development of tailored processes for programs with professional accreditations, as well as for short programs and non-degree programs, particularly in areas such as Trades and developmental programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

9. *Create a mechanism for revising recommendations in line with the resources and priorities of the institution if Senate or the Board of Governors determine that the recommendation and action plan of the program could not be achieved.*

UFV recognizes that not all recommendations and actions identified through a program review may be achievable, particularly if they involve institutional decisions at the Senate or Board level. Establishing a transparent process to adjust recommendations and action plans in line with institutional resources and priorities based on Senate and Board decisions will help to ensure fuller accountability and timely resolution of actions. The work of creating this process will hinge, in part, on the outcomes to Recommendation 14 below.

Action: As part of the upcoming reviews of the Academic Program Review policy (189) and the Board Policy on University Educational Directions and Planning (BPD-202), the university will investigate the creation of a transparent process to adjust program review recommendations and action plans based on institutional decisions at the Senate or Board level.

10. *Develop a concrete plan to gather the input of all stakeholders including employers and community groups (consider strategies such as employer surveys or the creation of an employer advisory group for ongoing input to program relevance and quality).*

The university recognizes that input from external stakeholders is beneficial, and even essential for some programs. UFV has an External Program Advisory Committees policy (60) and several academic units have established EPAC's. Departments and faculty members regularly consult with these committees, as well as with employer and community groups generally, and these groups are often invited to meet with the external reviewers during the program review site visit. Given the diversity of programs offered at UFV, there can be significant variation in the importance of external consultation relative to other components of program review. The dean's scope letter provides the opportunity to define the extent to which an academic unit should seek input from external stakeholders. Furthermore, the Program Review Handbook asks that the unit's self-study assess "program graduates' preparation to meet emerging trends in the field, community needs and/or workplace needs, as identified by External Program Advisory committees and/or stakeholders" (p. 18). Nonetheless, the program review procedures and Handbook could be strengthened by clarifying the need to include data and information that documents the input of external stakeholders.

Action: UFV will update program review procedures and the Academic Program Review Unit Handbook to ensure the inclusion of documentation that supports the input of external stakeholders.

11. **Link policy and procedure on discontinuation of programs to a quality assurance process.**

UFV recently updated its Program Suspension and Discontinuance policy (222), which provides for APPC to initiate program discontinuance based on the results of formal university review processes. The issues that would provide a rationale for discontinuance, as identified in the policy, arise from categories that closely align with those investigated as part of program review, namely: demand (including student demand, employment demand, etc.); capacity (including faculty/staff, capital equipment, infrastructure, etc.); program output (including graduation, contribution to strategic directions, etc.); and financial impact/viability. Nonetheless, while UFV policy already links program discontinuance to quality assurance, the program review procedures themselves could provide clearer guidance around issues that might initiate consideration to discontinue a program.

Action: As part of the review of the Academic Program Review policy (189), UFV will consider how guidance on program discontinuance might be clarified in program review policy and procedures.

12. **Revise policy and procedure to ensure mid-cycle review of newly developed and implemented programs (new programs might benefit from an earlier, formative review with a focus on unanticipated issues that need to be addressed).**

When implementing new programs, academic units will often have a plan to assess how well the program is meeting intended goals and outcomes after it's been running for 3 to 4 years. Establishing a mid-cycle formative review process for new programs would be a beneficial way to ensure all programs have an opportunity to address emerging issues and enhance program delivery. The mid-cycle review might best be captured as an extension of program development policy and procedure.

Action: The PDQA office will investigate the creation of a mid-cycle formative review process for new programs to be included as part of program development policy and procedure (*cf.* Undergraduate Course and Program Approval (21) and Graduate Course and Program Approval (209).

13. **Revise review cycle to match the DQAB requirements for a review every 5-7 years.**

Most academic units at UFV undergo program review every seven years. An additional year was provided in the policy to allow some flexibility when unforeseen or emerging issues might justify a postponement. The policy could clarify that reviews should be undertaken every seven years, and that postponement is only provided in exceptional, clearly defined circumstances.

Action: As part of the review of the Academic Program Review policy, UFV will revisit the review cycle to ensure that all programs are reviewed every 7 years and that exceptions to this rule are clearly defined. The Program Review office, in consultation with deans, will also revise the master schedule for program reviews to ensure alignment with a seven-year cycle.

14. *Ensure program review policy (and procedure) address accountability for implementation (the progress report is an important step to accountability and additionally, there is a need to follow up if progress has not occurred).*

   Progress reports on the implementation of program review action plans were introduced as part of the 2016 revision to the program review policy. Provision could be made to require a subsequent progress report when APPC (or the APPC program review subcommittee) determines that insufficient progress has occurred.

   Action: As part of the upcoming review of the Academic Program Review policy, UFV will introduce a follow-up process for progress reports to ensure accountability when insufficient progress on action items has occurred. The PDQA office will implement procedures to support progress report follow up when required.

15. *Review Board policies with respect to Board responsibility for quality assurance in program review and program development.*

   UFV notes the following observations from the QAPA Assessor's Report that comment on the Board's responsibility for quality assurance:
   - *The Panel noted that the differentiation of responsibilities for quality assurance between the Senate and the Board was not evident in Policy 189 or Board Policy 202. This should be clarified. (p. 8)*
   - *We also noted that the Board is relatively silent of the subject of academic quality and that could be revisited when BPD-202 is reviewed (which is overdue). (p. 10)*
   - *There is not a process for Senate to respond back or to report program review results to the BOG, to fulfill their responsibility in monitoring program quality. Clarity should be attempted. (p. 13)*
   - *The Board receives a report of the completed program reviews as part of their responsibility for educational planning under Board Regulation 202. As noted above, further clarity regarding the role of the Board in quality assurance should occur. (p.13)*

   The Provost annually submits a Program Report and Plan (PRP) to the Board that includes an update on program reviews, programs in development, and program discontinuance. The PRP also includes all the concept papers for new programs that have been recommended for development by APPC and Senate. This annual submission provides the opportunity for the Board to become informed on the academic activities of the university, to comment on matters related to quality assurance, and to approve the academic directions presented. Nonetheless, UFV recognizes the value of clarifying the Board's responsibility for quality assurance in program review and program development given the important role the Board plays in ensuring the resources and community support for the university's initiatives are being addressed.

Action: As part of the upcoming reviews of the Academic Program Review policy (189) and the Board Policy on University Educational Directions and Planning (BPD-202) commencing in 2021, the university will investigate the Board's responsibility for quality assurance in program review and program development with the goal of clarifying the Board's role in both policies and in the accompanying procedures.