

# DEGREE QUALITY

## 2018/19 QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS AUDIT THE UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA

The Summary was prepared by the Degree Quality Assessment Board Secretariat using the Institutional Report, the Expert Panel Report, and the Response to the Expert Panel Report. The University of Victoria was one of three public post-secondary institutions to undertake the Quality Assurance Process Audit in 2018/19.

### Introduction

The Terms of Reference for the Degree Quality Assessment Board establish that audits will be based on information provided by public post-

## The University of Victoria – Institutional Context

The University of Victoria (UVic) has its roots in Victoria College, founded in 1903 as an affiliate of McGill University. Since being granted autonomy by the University Act in 1963, UVic has become a mid-sized, comprehensive research university. UVic identifies key strategies to advance research excellence and intensify dynamic learning. The university offers students a wide range of opportunities for experiential learning that include research-enhanced courses, community-based field schools, internships and practicum placements in professional settings as well as cooperative education work terms. Students in all Faculties can participate in cooperative education programs (co-op).

Table 1: Student enrollment (2017-2018)

	Undergraduate	Graduate	Degree Programs	Non-Degree Programs
Full-time equivalent (FTE)	16,172	2,865	18,683	354

UVic offers undergraduate and graduate programs on its campus in Victoria and in off-campus and distance education formats. Programs range from traditional academic programs to professional, accredited programs. Nine Faculties offer academic degree programs, including the Faculties of Business, Education, Engineering, Fine Arts, Human and Social Development, Humanities, Law, Science, and Social Sciences. In addition, the Division of Medical Sciences offers the Island Medical Program and graduate programs in Neuroscience, and the Division of Continuing Studies offers courses to support pathways programs and lifelong learning.

UVic provides an extensive range of opportunities for research-enriched and work-integrated learning. Its educational programs include co-op, internship and practicum opportunities in

## Institution Self -Study

The UVic QAPA review was initiated with an Institution Briefing on April 9, 2018 at the Victoria campus. The Institution Briefing provides an overview of the QAPA process and the documentation institutions are requested to submit.

At its meeting on June 22, 2018, the Quality Assurance Audit Committee reviewed the Completed and Planned Review worksheet submitted by UVic and selected three reviews for sampling. The selected samples are those that the DQAB considers to be representative of Y D U L R X V D U H D V R I W K H L Q V W L W T X W L B Q S E L E C T E D G W E F D P I T I C A I Q D O D F W Science; Teacher Education; and Bachelor of Commerce. UVic submitted its Institution Report on November 9, 2018.

### Self-Evaluation Approach

The evaluation was led by the Office of the Vice-President Academic and Provost. The X Q L Y H U V E V A L U A T I O N A P P R O A C H focused on policies and procedures related to quality assurance, particularly processes for academic program review, revision and approval, as well as their practice and implementation.

## Quality Assurance Policy and Practices

The academic resource planning process involves submissions made by academic units, such as a school or department, to the Dean of its Faculty who prioritizes them within a Faculty-level resource request submitted to the Provost.



to student, labour market and social needs. The annual cycle for academic and resource planning is part of an integrated planning process that contributes to the continuous improvement of the university.

Academic program reviews are implemented on a cycle of five to seven years for all programs in an academic unit, i.e., either a non-departmentalized Faculty or an individual academic department or school within departmentalized Faculties. The Dean of an academic unit may request to initiate a review outside the cycle to address specified circumstances.

Approximately eight to ten academic units will participate in a review each academic year. The 3 U R Y R V W ¶ manages the annual planning process to schedule academic program reviews. Accreditations and reaccreditations are managed by administrative units within each Faculty, and monitored and recorded by the 3 U R Y R V W. ¶ V 2 I I L F H

In order to accommodate differentiation among academic and accredited professional programs, accreditation and reaccreditation of professional schools or programs, at the discretion of the Provost, may be substituted for an Academic Program Review (APR) when the processes are commensurate, that is, the reaccreditation process has equal or greater scope in terms of the criteria specified in Senate Policy AC 1145. However, both the academic program review and accreditation processes are implemented when an academic unit has both unaccredited and accredited programs. In addition, provision is made in the policy to enable a

- x DQ ([HFXWLYH 6XPPDU\ RI WKH \$FDGHPLF 3URJUDP 5HYLHZ] published on the Provost Office website. Similarly, the outcome of an accreditation is posted on the website of the relevant Faculty.
- x a written report that identifies all academic program reviews completed in the previous academic year and those planned for the current academic year submitted to Senate by the 3 U R Y R V W. This report also includes information about revision and approval of academic programs in the previous academic year.

## QAPA Review

The QAPA panel conducting the assessment were Dr. Ross Paul, panel chair, and panel members Dr. Ronald Bond and Dr. Brenda Brouwer. The site visit was held on December 11 and 12, 2018. In addition to the panel, Ms. Dao Luu, a member of the DQAB Secretariat, also attended the site visit.

The QAPA panel submitted its report on December 28, 2018. The panel noted it was LPSUHVHVG ZLWK WKH VFRSH DQG VXEVDQFH RI WKH 8QLYH quality assurance across the institution. The panel report provided commendations, affirmations and recommendations. UVic provided a response on April 12, 2019.

Commendations are areas where the institution has shown exemplary practice:

- x 7KH XQLYHUVLW\ (QKDQFHG 3ODQQQLQJ 7RROV quality assurance processes by encouraging data-driven decision-making, the development of appropriate matrices, and the use of templates while providing useful data to each department. The EPT reports save faculty time and render the QA process more efficient.
- x Another custom-made UVic tool, the Viability Index, greatly facilitates consideration of program proposals by serving as an important early check on their suitability for further development. Other post-secondary institutions could benefit significantly by developing instruments similar to the EPT and Viability Index for their own quality assurance purposes.
- x The department of Political Science is to be commended for its embracing of experiential learning and its efforts to improve the scholarly recognition of faculty research.
- x The Teacher Education Program is saluted for its regular celebration events around practice teaching and community liaison. Its TRUVic initiative, which encourages teacher education students to reflect on their application of theory to practice in the schools, is particularly noteworthy and should be expanded.
- x The School of Business, through its AACSB and EQUIS accreditations, has systematically developed a quality assurance culture that is a model for the rest of the institution.

Affirmations are areas where the institution has identified weaknesses and intends to correct it:

- x The University is in the process of revising and developing new learning outcomes for each program. There are institution-wide learning outcomes and, in many cases, program specific learning outcomes. This is a work in progress which needs to be better integrated within the institution but the direction is the right one. The process should differentiate outcomes at the undergraduate program level IURP WKRVH DW WKH 0DVWHU\ at the doctoral level.

- x At the time of the review and after broad-based consultation, the University was about to launch a Strategic Enrolment Planning initiative which has the promise of contributing significantly to the integration of all of the elements of quality assurance into institutional planning and implementation.
- x Led by the School of Business, the University is developing a culture of sharing best practices in quality assurance across the institution.
- x The University has an ambitious Indigenous Plan which needs to be widely considered and integrated into all components of the institution.
- x 7KH )DFXOW\ RI (GXFDWLRQ KDV LQWURGXFHG <sup>3</sup>GRXE OH PH whereby new scholars are mentored by experienced faculty members both in research and in subject-matter expertise.

Recommendations are areas the panel identified for improvement:

- x UVic V KRXOG FRQVLGHU FUHDWLQJ D <sup>3</sup>4XDOLW\ \$VVXUDQFH´ SDQ HODPHs about a lack of transparency around QA in a number of ways:
  - o Public accountability for how every recommendation in external reviews is handled by the relevant unit.
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