

Policy on Quality Assurance

Background

All private postsecondary institutions in BC are required to have an institutionally approved policy and the related procedures for the periodic review of programs. The policies and procedures should achieve the following:

1. Reflect the University's overall mandate, mission and values;
2. Align with the specific goals of the Vancouver Campus;
3. Assess the effectiveness of its programs and services as well as their responsiveness to student, labour market and social needs;
4. Contribute to the continuous improvement of the programs, students' learning and the overall student experience.

Policy Statement

All degree programs undergo an external review every five to seven years or sooner if requested by the Academic Administrative Unit or if deemed necessary by the Provost and Vice President Academic in consultation with the Campus Dean.

The accreditation of a professional Degree Program may be substituted, or serve as partial completion of a required Degree Program Self-Study Review, at the discretion of the Provost and Vice President, Academic. Accommodation will be made where possible to align the accreditation process timeline with the external review schedule to reduce the duplication of work.

Although cyclical program review is an important part of the NYIT Vancouver quality assurance process, NYIT implemented Continuous Program Improvement in 2020 across all academic departments and student support units to improve educational effectiveness. Regular data collection and review creates a more informed academic leaders who can make strategic changes to respond to current needs on an ongoing basis..

Purpose

The purpose of academic program review is to guide the development of academic programs on a continuous basis. Program review is a process that evaluates the status, effectiveness, and progress of academic programs and helps identify the future direction, needs, and priorities of those programs. It is closely connected to strategic planning, resource allocation, and other decision-making at the program, department, and university levels.

The goal of a program review should be the articulation of agreed-upon action plans for further development of the academic program. The program review process should focus on improvements that can be made using resources that currently are available to the program. Consideration should also be given to proposed program improvements and expansions that would require additional resources.

Definitions

1. An **Academic Administrative Unit** is an academic program, department or school comprised of one or more degree programs.
2. An **Academic Service Unit** is a unit that supports student and faculty learning and teaching.
3. A **Program or Industrial Advisory Board** is an external body of professional or industry members dedicated to the external guidance of a degree program.
4. A **Degree Program** is a baccalaureate, masters or doctoral degree granted or conferred by the University.

Required Elements of a Review

Every review undertaken at the NYIT Vancouver campus must include the following required elements characteristic of a review:

1. A self-study of the Degree Program by the Academic Administrative Unit;
2. Engagement of external reviewers with notable expertise in the discipline or service area, a site visit by at least one of the external reviewers, and a written report by the external reviewers which includes both an assessment of program quality and recommendations for growth and improvement;
3. A written institutional response which includes the following:
 - a. A response by the Academic Administrative Unit to the External Review of Degree Program Report;
 - b. The steps the Academic Administrative Unit intends or proposes to take in response to the recommendations from the report (Action Plan)
 - c. A response by the Campus Dean to both the Degree Program Self Study and the external review report; and
 - d. A response by the Provost and Vice President, Academic to the response of the Dean.

All best efforts should be made to ensure that the institutional responses and Action Plan outlines above are completed within sixteen (16) weeks of receipt of the external review report.

PROCEDURES

The Academic Administrative Unit engages in a degree program self-study for one to two semesters, during which its members consider all aspects of the degree program including its vision, values, goals and strategic direction. The Academic Administrative Unit prepares a report that reflects the following areas:

1. A description of the degree program's structure, admissions requirements, degree requirements, courses, degree programs, method of delivery and curriculum for the program's educational goals and standards.
2. An explanation on how the physical, technological, financial and human resources are distributed.
3. Information about the degree program's collective faculty performance including the quality of teaching and supervision.
4. A description of the learning outcomes, assessment, evaluation, and measured achievement by students and graduates.
5. A description of the degree program's stated goals, the credential level standard and the standards of any regulatory, accrediting or professional association if applicable.
6. A description of the methods used for evaluation student progress and how these methods and the progress of the students align with the degree program's stated goals.
7. Aggregate information about the satisfaction level of students, graduates and the graduation rate.
8. Information about the employment rates for graduates, employer satisfaction level, industry representative satisfaction level and advisory board or external/stakeholder satisfaction level.

The Academic Administrative Unit prepares the self-study report and makes it available to all members of the faculty and staff prior to being sent to the External Review Committee.

Students are encouraged to participate in the preparation of material for the self-study and student input is sought throughout the process. Student contributions are included in the self-study report only if the students have provided informed consent.

External Review Committee

1. The external review committee should include two people external to NYIT who are senior members of the discipline, are currently employed at a university that offers graduate level degree programs and have had administrative experience. A third external member of the external review committee should be employed in the industry to which the program trains students for employment.
2. The external committee meets with faculty, staff, alumni and students from the program. The site visit should be one day in length.

3. At the conclusion of the visit and normally within six weeks, the external committee in the following format:
 - a. An executive summary
 - b. Faculty review
 - c. Research review
 - d. Internal and external relationship assessment
 - e. Organizational and financial structure assessment
 - f. Resources and infrastructure assessment
 - g. Long-range planning challenges

A summary of the conclusions of the evaluation will be publicly available on the NYIT Vancouver website.

4. The Academic Administrative Unit prepares a response and action plan with timelines in collaboration with the responsible Associate Dean within eight weeks of receipt of the External Committee Review report. The report is submitted to the Campus Dean and the New York based program Academic Dean.
5. The Academic Administrative Unit is responsible for implementing the *Action Plan* according to the timeline outlined in the *Action Plan*.

Continuous Program Review Process and Policy

1. Continuous Program Review (CPI) involves Academic Administrative Units cascading institutional goals to their level appropriate goals according to their program's mission and functions.
2. Key performance indicators (KPI's should be selected for each of the goals that can accurately measure performance, motivate and direct actions, and identify opportunities for improvement.
3. Apply W. Edwards Deming's improvement model to develop, test and implement changes for improvement. See diagram below.
4. Hold an annual departmental review and planning meeting, and focus departmental energy and effort on Key Performance areas identified by the Action Plan each year to make the CPI a sustained and manageable process. The major KPI areas include:
 - a. Student learning outcomes (curriculum, course and program level learning outcomes update)
 - b. Student success (admission criteria review, retention, DFW, graduation rate)
 - c. Student engagement and satisfaction (Noel Levitz or departmental survey)
 - d. Faculty performance (teaching evaluation, scholarship, service)
 - e. Cost efficiency (classroom utilization, equipment and technology sufficiency)
 - f. Departmental policies and procedures (review and update)
 - g. Other (self-defined)
5. The institution rewards improvement with recognition and resources for quality initiatives (QI)