

QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS AUDIT

ASSESSORS' REPORT WORKBOOK

INSTITUTION NAME: Emily Carr University of Art
and Design

SITE VISIT DATES: Jan 18 – 19, 2023

SUBMISSION DATE: Jan 28, 2023

OVERALL ASSESSMENT

The panel is requested to keep in mind the objectives and the guiding principles when undertaking the QAPA assessment.

Objectives

The main objectives of the quality assurance process audit (QAPA) are to ascertain that the institution:

- a) Continues to meet the program review policy requirements outlined in the DQAB's Exempt Status Criteria and Guidelines and the Degree Program Review Criteria and Guidelines, as applicable to the institution;
- b) Has and continues to meet appropriate program review processes and policies for all credential programs; and
- c) Applies its quality assurance process in relation to those requirements and responds to review findings appropriately.

Guiding Principles

- 1) Transparent and credible evidence of robust quality assurance criteria and processes are vital to BC public post-secondary institutions, the Degree Quality Assessment Board and the Ministry; demonstrate accountability; and contribute to the national and international reputation of the BC public post-secondary system.
- 2) Credible quality assurance should be rigorous and have peer evaluation as an essential feature.
- 3) QAPA standards will recognize the diversity and different mandates of BC public post-secondary institutions.
- 4) Primary responsibility and accountability for educational program quality assurance rests with post-secondary institutions themselves.
- 5) QAPA will be carried out so as to maximize the opportunity to:
 - a. affirm, and add value to, the internal quality assurance processes at each institution; and
 - b. share best practices from other BC institutions and elsewhere.
- 6) QAPA will promote a collaborative and supportive process that benefits BC public post- secondary system.

Summary:

Situating the QAPA process at the institutional level requires considering the mandate, mission, and history of the university. Emily Carr University of Art & Design (ECUAD) focuses on visual arts, media arts and design programming and research, with graduates contributing their "creative output and research to British Columbia's economic, knowledge and cultural sectors" (Institution Profile, p.3). Originally launched under the Vancouver School Board, the institution became an independent organization in 1995, and then became a university in 2008 under the University Act

as a special purpose teaching university. This last transition is when bicameral governance came into reality and many of the university policies were created.

Since 2017 the university has been located at Great Northern Way in a purpose-built space. The four Faculties offer 11 degree programs (three Masters), and 2 non-credit professional certificates, with 2020-2021 reporting year of 1844 student FTEs (domestic and international).

The university is currently engaged in activities developing its next strategic plan, with the most recent plan tracking up to 2021. In that plan, eight priorities are identified: (1) Research, (2) Student Agency, (3) Outreach and Community Engagement, (4) Indigeneity, (5) Graduate Programming, (6) Teaching and Learning, (7) Infrastructure, and (8) Lifelong Learning.

A first round of program reviews occurred during 2012-2014. A subsequent round of Faculty unit reviews occurred during 2021-2022 utilizing guidelines developed through the Office of the Vice-President Academic & Provost, and approved by Senate (December, 2019). Of note, a significant amount of the reviews and the self-study for QAPA coincide with the COVID-19 global pandemic that necessitated significant focus on adjusting and adapting to evolving public health guidelines while ensuring program/academic continuity.

Under the executive leadership of the Vice-President Academic & Provost, a quality assurance committee was established and was the key team to undertake the self-study and provide leadership with the one and a half day in-person site visit. The committee was comprised of Trish Kelly, Vice-President Academic & Provost; Celeste Martin, Dean, Faculty of Design and Dynamic Media; Chelsea Hug, Manager, Operations & Analytics (Academic Affairs) and Heather Fitzgerald, Senior Advisor, Teaching and Learning. We thank the team for their preparation, responsiveness to information sharing, embracing the spirit of quality, and the articulated commitment of enhancing processes and practices to strengthen academic quality assurance.

This assessment is based on the self-study and related materials provided by ECUAD, some access of information available on the institution's website (e.g., Institutional Accountability Plan and Report and university policies), and meetings with various constituents during the in-person site visit January 18 and 19, 2023 (see Appendix A for the agenda). Three Faculty unit reviews were considered in detail, including self-assessments, external reviews, and action plans in two of the three submissions.

We appreciate the time invested by the Quality Assurance Committee at ECUAD, the faculty and administrators, staff and faculty involved in the Faculty unit reviews over the last several years, for the compilation of the QAPA materials, and the candor and insights provided during the site visit.

Commendations

Provide clear statements that articulate areas where the institution has shown exemplary practice in the field of program quality assurance and improvement.

ECUAD has several areas of exemplary practice. The panel recognizes the high level of participation and engagement across Faculties of faculty and staff. Moreover, the institution demonstrated that they had internalized and meaningfully understood that quality assurance is about teaching and learning (and not an artificial imposition).

At ECUAD, there was a clear openness and desire to focus on improvement through quality assurance.

We commend the institution for demonstrating effective collaboration in the self-study across units. ECUAD demonstrated a highly collaborative and collegial culture which is necessary and effective for building an exemplary practice.

Affirmations

Provide clear statements in the areas where the institution has identified a weakness and has articulated how it intends to correct it. In effect, this is affirming the institution's judgment and findings in its Institution Report.

The Assessors have identified three areas where they can confidently affirm the wisdom of the institution's actions and their continuing effect:

1. The university has demonstrated good judgement that evaluation by Faculty was the right thing to do now (to produce a good baseline) but may need to change to program specific or degree specific review going forward.
2. The university has clearly recognized and articulated that a review of data governance (from collection to dissemination) is required for continuous improvement.
3. The university has developed an exhaustive list of Quality Assurance projects that are in-progress covering areas such as policy development and renewal, operational supports, learning outcomes and curriculum mapping, institutional data, and student participation.

The next step is to work on priorities and dependencies. Considering that there has been little new program development at the university, developing substantive policy and procedure for new program development (including new course development, definitions of credentials, templates and tools) aligned with governance responsibilities and accountabilities (Faculty level, Senate, and Board of Governors) is key and recognized by the institution.

Recommendations

Provide clear statements in areas needing improvement. Recommendations may also be made in relation to areas of concern identified by the institution for which no plan of action has been articulated by the institution.

From our interpretation of the University Act, the Board of Governors appears to have responsibilities regarding academic quality. In particular:

“35.2(6) The senate of a special purpose, teaching university must advise the board, and the board must seek advice from the senate, on the development of educational policy for the following matters:

- (a) the mission statement and the educational goals, objectives, strategies and priorities of the special purpose, teaching university;*
- (b) the establishment, revision or discontinuance of courses and programs at the special purpose, teaching university;*
- (c) the preparation and presentation of reports after implementation by the special purpose, teaching university without prior review by the senate of*
 - (i) new non-credit programs, or*
 - (ii) programs offered under service contract;*
- (d) the priorities for implementation of new programs and courses leading to certificates, diplomas or degrees;*
- (e) the establishment or discontinuance of faculties at the special purpose, teaching university;*
- (f) the evaluation of programs and educational services;*
- (g) the library and resource centres;*
- (h) the setting of the academic schedule;*
- (i) the qualifications for faculty members;*
- (j) the adjudication procedure for appealable matters of student discipline;*
- (k) the terms for affiliation with other post-secondary bodies;*
- (l) the consultation with community and program advisory groups concerning the special purpose, teaching university's educational programs;*
- (m) other matters specified by the board.”*

It was not clear to the review committee that the Board of Governors has policies that govern the execution, responsibility, and allocations of resources to assume their portion of responsibilities that Section 35.2(6) infers. **We recommend (1) that the institution draft appropriate policy at the Board and Senate levels to make the accountabilities and responsibilities clear.** This would include programming that may or may not be for credit undertaken by continuing studies, while still allowing continuing studies to be flexible and nimble in its operations and delivery.

The process of program review (Appendix A) as laid out by ECUAD results in an Action Plan reported to the Senate via its Academic Priorities and Planning (APP) committee. More clarity in this final step of the process is warranted. In some cases, the final results read more like a list of recommendations and/or observations rather than an Action Plan. **We recommend (2) that the university considers carefully how to convert the recommendations from Faculty/unit or program reviews into actionable items** inclusive of timelines. **A mechanism is also warranted (3) for addressing recommendations that are deemed non-actionable at the time of the review.** This final process requires clear responsibilities and accountabilities that are tightly defined, as well as guidelines/decision making considerations to determine non-actionable recommendations.

During our meetings, there were perspectives raised about the effectiveness of the external review site-visit and the resulting recommendations. It was appreciated that such a short visit (usually two days) makes it difficult to fully understand a program or Faculty and can result in recommendations that are based on errors of fact. The development of handbook(s) for internal and external reviewers will help. **We also recommend (4) that the university look at additional ways to on-board or orient internal and external reviewers to the university in general as well as the process.** Related to this is the criteria and qualifications of external reviewers and **we recommend (5) that the university be more explicit with guidance to the type of external reviewer that they deem to be most appropriate for the program or Faculty under review.** Based on the external reviewers site visit schedule, many of the sessions were quite brief to afford time with a wide range of constituents. Given the focus of the institution on creativity, decolonization and EDI **we recommend (6) that the university investigate approaches to decolonize the external review, to maximize the reviewers interaction with key constituents to produce a more effective review.**

There are curriculum templates for course revisions/program revisions for minor and major course revisions, though the review/approval steps appear to be nearly similar, and the minor course change process includes one additional step **We recommended (7) that the university review the guidelines/policies regarding course revision and consider a common course outline template that could help with efficiency and effectiveness of course revision, review and approvals.**

It was clear to the reviewers that the faculty maintain networks of professional practitioners outside of the university and this is to be encouraged and applauded. However, there is no formal mechanism by which those networks are formally consulted during the program review process. **We recommend (8) that the university explore how voices external to the institution could be brought into the review process that would add value to the programs.** Many institutions have formalized some type of program advisory council for example.

The university demonstrated understanding that making appropriate unit, program, and university information available to the review process was important and is undertaking efforts to make this more effective (e.g., student surveys, program costing). **The reviewers recommend (9) that these data be made available on an on-going manner and not just concentrated at the time of program review.**

Based on this last round of review, the university has decided that program reviews would be preferable to Faculty unit reviews, using the current review cycle to establish a baseline. We understand this decision, but we also heard from faculty members that they had difficulty accommodating the time required for the review process. Programs with a very small faculty complement may also have difficulty meeting the requirements of reviews. **We recommend (10) that the university re-examine how grouping programs and creative scheduling could result in better satisfaction with the process and potentially better outcomes.**

In some cases, the role and relationship of institutional priorities in the program review process and the programs themselves was not clear. We understand that the university is undertaking a new strategic planning process that may possibly result in new priorities. **We recommend (11) that a mechanism be sought that allows for these priorities to be explicitly included in the program review process.**

Based on the information provided in the self-study, the focus of this external review focused heavily on program review as there has not been recent new program development at ECUAD for some time. That said, there are substantive actions to develop and implement a solid and effective range of policies, procedures, and processes for new non-credit and credit programs. **We recommend (12) that a comprehensive set of policy and procedures – inclusive of roles, responsibilities and accountabilities - be developed in support of academic quality assurance and reflective of bi-cameral governance.**

Signed:

Chair of the QAPA Team:



28-Jan 2023

(Signature)

(Date)

Stephen Grundy

(Printed Name)

QAPA Assessors:



27-Jan-2023

(Signature)

(Date)

Ann-Barbara Graff

(Printed Name)



27-Jan2023

(Signature)

(Date)

Laureen Styles

(Printed Name)

4.1. Overall Process

<i>A. Does the process reflect the institution's mandate, mission, and values?</i>	
CRITERIA:	COMMENTS / RECOMMENDATIONS:
<p>(i) The institution should be able to demonstrate that it has an established institutional and program review planning cycle and process to assess the effectiveness of its educational programs and services, their responsiveness to student, labour market, and social needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The university has produced a procedures and guidelines document for program review. All the elements of the program review process are there. The process was seen as valuable by faculty, and they felt that program improvement will result. • Policy and procedures are largely silent on how the mandate, mission and values are reflected in the process. A mechanism should be found that allows for these priorities to be included in the program review process. Policy 4.3 outlines the process for program and course changes. • The institutional analysis function is maturing at ECUAD, and projects are underway to strengthen even further. • While recognizing that there are particular challenges with an arts-based curriculum in defining employers, there was limited evidence of employer input and the university needs to examine how labour market and societal needs are captured in on-going program improvement projects.

<p>(ii) The process should contribute to the continuous improvement of the institution.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is difficult to assess currently. This round of program reviews under the new review process is the first and so essentially forms a baseline for continuous improvement. • ECUAD is relatively new to bicameral governance and as such policies and processes are still evolving. • The committee heard positive comments from faculty that the review process had led to positive changes but since the reviews are relatively recent many action items and concomitant improvements have yet to be realized.
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<i>B. Is the scope of the process appropriate?</i>	
CRITERIA:	COMMENTS / RECOMMENDATIONS:
<p>(i) There should be evidence of a formal, institutionally approved policy and procedure for the periodic review of programs against published standards that includes the following characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A self-study undertaken by faculty members and administrators of the program based on evidence relating to program performance, including strengths and weaknesses, desired improvements, and future directions. A self-study takes into account: • the continuing appropriateness of the program's structure, admissions requirements, method of delivery and curriculum for the program's educational goals and standards; • the adequacy and effective use of resources (physical, technological, financial and human); • faculty performance including the quality of teaching and supervision and demonstrable currency in the field of specialization; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are some policies and procedure documents that guide the process. ECUAD has self-identified gaps in this area and is undertaking plans to improve and disseminate policies, procedures and guidelines. • The currently used procedures lay out a generally accepted approach to program improvement. • Faculty reported value in the self-study and it was clear that the process was collaborative and efforts were made to include the student voice. • Institutional data was made available to the faculty during the review process, but not always in a timely fashion. It was not clear exactly what data on teaching effectiveness was given to the reviewers or the faculty. • There was some confusion about what constituted an action plan and how exactly it resulted from recommendations in the report. This is an area where the

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that the learning outcomes achieved by students/graduates meet the program's stated goals, the credential level standard, and where appropriate, the standards of any related regulatory, accrediting or professional association; • the continuing adequacy of the methods used for evaluating student progress and achievement to ensure that the program's stated goals have been achieved; • the graduate satisfaction level, student satisfaction level, and graduation rate; and • where appropriate, the graduate employment rates, employer satisfaction level, and advisory board satisfaction level. <p>➤ An assessment conducted by a panel that includes independent experts external to the institution. The assessment should normally include a site visit, a written report that assesses program quality and may recommend quality improvements; and an institution response to the report;</p> <p>➤ A summary of the conclusions of the evaluation that is made appropriately available.</p>	<p>committee felt that ECUAD has to do additional work to clarify roles, responsibilities and accountabilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The external reviewer site visits were well organized and resulted in formal reports to the university. There were mixed reviews by faculty of these reports which in some cases appeared to contain many factual errors. The university should investigate mechanisms to improve the quality of the external review where possible.
<p>(ii) The institution can demonstrate that it has a policy and process for new program approval that includes peer / external review by appropriate experts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no policy on program development, only one on program and curricular change. The university will need to develop more specific policy in this area.

<p><i>C. Are the guidelines differentiated and adaptable to respond to the needs and contexts of different units, e.g. faculties or departments or credential level?</i></p>	
<p>CRITERIA:</p>	<p>COMMENTS / RECOMMENDATIONS:</p>

<p>(i) Are the guidelines adaptable to the range of programs and offerings within the institution?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is one guideline (not policy or procedure) that applies to Faculty unit review. And it has been used with the reviews done to date that reflect a range of programs and offerings. • There are no guidelines/policy for non-credit credential reviews, although we understand that this is under development. • Given the current guidelines and feedback from the site visit, the guidelines may be more challenging for smaller Faculty units/programs given the intensity of faculty time required. Consideration for scaling or clustering of reviews may assist with this.
<p>(ii) Do the guidelines provide measurable, consistent means and direction to undertake diversified program review?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is one operational document (“Guidelines”) for reviews (undertaken as Faculty unit reviews 2021-2022). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A consistent student survey was utilized; one review involved student focus groups others did not. • Guidelines provide basic direction; no tools provided for evidence of consistent means and direction. • Based on site visit, some standard information is provided to the review teams (e.g., student surveys) • Voiced plans to standardize the data packages provided to the review teams based on available data and/or provide access to data sources
<p>(iii) Are the guidelines consistent with institutional Mandate, mission, vision and associated strategic goals?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on the Guidelines for Reviews and the Faculty Unit reviews provides there are no explicit connections with the mandate, mission, vision, and strategic goals. And no clear indication of the role of Senate or other bodies to draw out those accountabilities and interconnections. • Several reviews picked up and integrated review commentary with regards to the

	<p>EDI Action Plan but in other cases there was no identified assessment of key priorities in the university plan such as climate justice and support of a low carbon economy.</p>
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D. Does the process promote quality improvement?

CRITERIA:	COMMENTS / RECOMMENDATIONS:
<p>(i) The institution should be able to demonstrate that it has appropriate accountability mechanisms functioning for vocational, professional, and academic programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action plans are identified as a requisite component of Faculty unit review as per the Guidelines. • Reviewing the two action plans provided, there are a range of recommendations that are then translated into actions. • Based on the site visit, there is not a decision-making framework/guidance about what recommendation are taken up/moved into the action plan • Unclear how recommendations from the reviews are moved forwarded when they are outside of the domain of the Faculty unit to enact/make change. • Absence of procedural steps or process for Action plans and accountability of various offices/governance bodies: Board, senate, provost

<p>(ii) The institution should be able to demonstrate how faculty scholarship and professional development inform teaching (including graduate teaching) and continue to be a foundation for ensuring that programming is up to date.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECUAD faculty are active scholars and researchers and have allocated professional development time. • During the site visit, the professional development block is often used for program-related curriculum work among other activities • Given the focus of the curriculum, scholarship and research enter into studio and classroom teaching based on examples provided in the site visit • The connection between faculty scholarship, research and professional development informing teaching is not explicitly layered into program review; this could be strengthened through new policy and procedure as well as assessment of student learning and capturing curriculum development/evolution.
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<p>(iii) The institution should be able to demonstrate how learning outcomes are being achieved and how student progress is assessed and measured.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on the program reviews provided, two of the three had program learning outcomes identified, and all three referenced course level learning outcomes • Focus of learning outcomes – course and program – has been enshrined with some of the work of the Teaching and Learning Center. • Curriculum mapping is identified as work underway; timelines for completion not identified • Course outlines for new courses/course changes include evaluation elements though no standard university course outline that may hinder systemic approaches to demonstrate how student progress is assessed and measured • Absence of course and program learning outcomes across the university programs hinders the ability to demonstrate how they are being achieved and how student progress is assessed and measured.
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4.2. Review findings

<i>A. Were the responses to the sample program review findings adequate?</i>	
CRITERIA:	COMMENTS / RECOMMENDATIONS:
<p>The institution has a follow up process for internal program reviews and acts in accordance with it.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECUAD recognizes that after this first process of review, they need to work actively to develop a follow up process that is transparent and robust.

<i>B. Does the process inform future decision making?</i>	
CRITERIA:	COMMENTS / RECOMMENDATIONS:
The program review ensures that the program remains consistent with the institution's current mission, goals, and long-range plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In development. As assessors we were informed that turnover in key administrative positions has tested the institution's ability to be consistent and to plan. ECUAD should reflect on the role of bodies like Senate and the Board, rather than people, to hold goals, plans and accountabilities to decision making.

<i>C. Are the review findings appropriately disseminated?</i>	
CRITERIA:	COMMENTS / RECOMMENDATIONS:
The institution has a well-defined system to disseminate the review findings to the appropriate entities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All but the board, the institution could consider what pieces to see and what accountabilities rest with committees, Faculties and Senate so that findings are robustly debated and broadly understood not only in the local context but also institutionally.