UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process (UTQAP)

Revised version approved by the

Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance

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1 Quality Assurance Context

1.1 Overview

The University of Toronto, in its *Statement of Institutional Purpose (1992)*, articulates its mission as a commitment "to being an internationally significant research university, with undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs of excellent quality." Thus, as confirmed in the *Policy for Approval and Review of Academic Programs and Units* (2010), “quality assurance through assessment of new program proposals and review of academic programs and units in which they reside is a priority for the University.” The University’s approach to quality assurance is built on two primary indicators of academic excellence:

(1) the quality of the scholarship and research of faculty; and

(2) the success with which that scholarship and research is brought to bear on the achievement of Degree-Level Expectations.

These indicators are assessed by determining how our scholarship, research and programs compare to those of our international peer institutions and how well our programs meet their Degree-Level Expectations. Reviews provide the opportunity to celebrate successes, identify areas where we can do better and vigorously pursue improvements.

Hence, the University continues to welcome the opportunities provided by the Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents' *Quality Assurance Framework (QAF)*.[1] In 2018 an independent review of the QAF and the Quality Council was undertaken, which resulted in revisions to the QAF approved in February 2021. In alignment with the QAF, the *University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process* (UTQAP) supports the University of Toronto’s engagement “in quality assurance and the continuous improvement of its programs and the learning experience of students in those programs.”

UTQAP processes continue to support a structured approach for creating, reflecting on, assessing, and developing plans to change and improve academic programs and units in the context of institutional and divisional commitments and priorities.

[1] In 2010, the Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents (OCAV) approved the Quality Assurance Framework for quality assurance of undergraduate and graduate programs in Ontario effective as of September 2010. The approval of the QAF included the creation of the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance (OUCQA or the "Quality Council"), which operates at arm's length from universities and from government to ensure its independence.

1.1.1 Principles

The University of Toronto commits to the Principles articulated in the QAF, from Principle 1, which states that “The best interest of students is at the core of quality assurance activities,” to Principle 13, which emphasizes that “Quality is not static, and continuous program improvement should be a driver of quality assurance and be measurable,” to Principle 14, which affirms that “Whether for new programs or cyclical review of existing programs, expert independent peer review is foundational to quality assurance,” and finally Principle 15, which undertakes that “The Quality Council’s standards are appropriate to the nature and level of degree programs, are flexible and respectful of institutions and international standards, and encourage innovation and creativity in degree programming. In applying these standards, documentation should be significantly relevant to decision-making, and not be burdensome.”

1.1.2 Development of the UTQAP

The *Policy for Approval and Review of Academic Programs and Units* governs the approval of proposed new programs and the review of existing programs at the University of Toronto and was approved by the Governing Council of the University of Toronto on June 24, 2010. The *University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process* (UTQAP) was brought forward for information at that time and outlines the protocols for the assessment and approval of new programs, review of existing programs, modifications to existing programs and closures of programs. A complementary series of standardized templates supports the quality assurance processes. These and a wide range of explanatory materials and best practice exemplars are available on the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs' website.

The UTQAP was ratified by the Quality Council on March 31, 2011. A subsequent version was ratified by the Quality Council on September 21, 2012, containing a number of small revisions to ensure greater clarity and to bring the document in line with evolving practice across the province following the first full year under the QAF. The UTQAP was amended in response to the September 2017 *Report on the Quality Assurance Audit of the University of Toronto*, with updates to reflect the province-wide changes regarding collaborative specializations (formerly collaborative programs), updated diagrams to clarify processes and maximize usability, as well as updated formatting to correct previous errors and reflect best practices for accessibility. These changes were ratified by the Quality Council on May 24, 2019. The current version of the UTQAP contains updates made in response to the revised QAF and to reflect more explicitly the University of Toronto’s stated commitments and priorities. It was ratified by the Quality Council on March 15, 2023.

The Quality Council ratifies each institution's Quality Assurance Process (IQAP) and is responsible for approving any subsequent revisions to that IQAP.

1.1.3 Scope

The University of Toronto's responsibilities for quality assurance extend to new and continuing undergraduate and graduate degree and diploma programs whether offered in full or in part by the University of Toronto, or conjointly with any institutions federated or affiliated with the University. These responsibilities also extend to programs offered in partnership, collaboration or other such arrangement with other postsecondary institutions including colleges, universities and institutes.

1.1.3.1 Definition of 'Program'

For the purpose of the *Policy for Approval and Review of Academic Programs and Units*, and for the UTQAP, which arises from the *Policy*, "a 'program' is defined as an identified set and sequence of courses and other learning opportunities within an area of study, which is completed in full or partial fulfillment of the requirements for the granting of an undergraduate, second-entry, or graduate degree."

1.1.3.2 UTQAP Elements

The UTQAP encompasses the following elements:

- **The New Program Approval Protocol** applies to new undergraduate degrees, undergraduate specialists and majors, graduate programs and degrees. New graduate diplomas follow an Expedited Approval Protocol. The QAF defines a new program as: "Any degree credential…or degree program (within an existing degree credential), currently approved by Senate or equivalent governing body, which has not been previously approved for that institution by the Quality Council, its predecessors, or any intra-institutional approval processes that previously applied…A 'new program' is brand new: that is to say, the program has substantially different program objectives, program requirements and program-level learning outcomes from those of any existing approved programs offered by the institution."

  New programs and degrees are externally reviewed as part of the process leading to approval by University governance. New graduate diplomas do not require external review prior to approval by University governance. Once approved by University governance, all new program proposals are assessed by the Appraisal Committee of the Quality Council. This Council has the authority to approve or decline all new program proposals.

- **The Major Modification Protocol** is used to ensure program quality where major substantive changes are made to existing and previously approved programs. Major modifications are approved through University governance processes and are reported annually to the Quality Council. The UTQAP also provides guidance on **Other Types of Academic Change** that fall outside the purview of the Quality Council.

- **The Program Closure Protocol** articulates a process for closing programs. There are a number of possible reasons for closing a program including low enrolment, changes in the disciplinary landscape and poor quality of the academic program. These reasons may be articulated in external review reports or may be identified by members of the University community. Program closures are approved through University governance processes and are reported annually to the Quality Council.

- **The Cyclical Program Review Protocol** ensures the quality of existing undergraduate and graduate degree programs and for-credit graduate diplomas. The review of an academic program may be a part of a review of the academic unit(s) in which the program resides.

In addition to the protocols described in the UTQAP, the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs' website:

a) Provides templates that establish formats for new program proposals, major modifications, program closures, self-studies and external review reports
b) Describes best practices and establishes criteria for administrative processes such as the selection of reviewers and scheduling of reviews of new and existing programs and units
c) Provides guidance on the conduct of self-studies
d) Identifies responsibilities for the collection, aggregation and distribution of standardized data and outcome measures required for self-studies
e) Sets out the University's cycle for the conduct of undergraduate and graduate program reviews
f) Establishes contact information for support and assistance

1.2 Institutional Authority

The Vice-President and Provost is the chief academic officer and chief budget officer at the University of Toronto. The Provost, with the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs, is responsible for the oversight of the UTQAP and ensuring that it is applied in a manner that conforms to the University of Toronto's quality assurance principles and to the QAF.

Within the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs, the Director, Academic Programs, Planning and Quality Assurance is the contact between the institution and the Quality Council:

- **New Program Proposals**: The Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs responds to divisional queries and facilitates proposal development with respect to institutional academic, planning and budget, student life and governance and approval aspects of proposals.
- **Major Modifications to Existing Programs**: The Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs consults with divisions on the development of proposals for major modifications to existing programs. The Office receives copies of approved program modifications and compiles an annual report to the Quality Council of all divisional modifications.
- **Program Closures**: The Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs responds to divisional queries and facilitates the development of proposals for the closure of programs. The Office includes program closures in the annual report to the Quality Council.
- **Cyclical Reviews**: The Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs is responsible for ensuring that cyclical reviews of academic programs and/or units are undertaken. Where quality concerns are raised in the cyclical review, the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs monitors the timely implementation of improvements.

The Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs' website includes information pertaining to the quality assurance process, all related templates and materials, program approval and review schedules and contact information.

2 New Program Approval Protocol

The primary responsibility for the design and quality assurance of new undergraduate and graduate degree programs lies with the University and its governing bodies. Academic divisions are responsible for curriculum design; the identification of program objectives; the development of learning outcomes that support approved degree-level expectations that themselves align with the Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents (OCAV) Degree Level Expectations and the Ontario Qualifications Framework; and the assembly of human, instructional and physical resources.

2.1 Purpose and Application

The New Program Approval Protocol sets out the steps to be taken at the University to assemble and provide the information required in support of the development, approval, implementation, and monitoring of new programs. The Protocol is designed to ensure the following:

- Programs are aligned with the objectives of the academic division and of the University, as specified within the *Statement of Institutional Purpose* and within current priority statements and academic plans, and thereby advance the mission of the University and the academic division
- The educational experiences offered to students are engaging and rigorous, and that the approved programs through which those experiences are provided are routinely monitored and, if necessary, revised, consistent with QAF objectives
- The procedures followed for the assessment of proposed new academic degree programs are in accordance with the University's *Policy for Approval and Review of Academic Programs and Units* and the QAF

The New Program Approval Protocol applies to new undergraduate or graduate degrees, undergraduate specialists and majors within approved degrees, and to graduate degree programs, offered in full or in part by the University of Toronto or by the University of Toronto jointly or conjointly with institutions federated or affiliated with the University. New for-credit graduate diplomas and new standalone degree programs arising from a long-standing field in a master's or doctoral program go through the Expedited Approval Protocol (see 2.8):

- New Program Proposals are assessed within the division and by the Office of the Provost as part of the program development process prior to external review and submission to University governance. The new program proposal must address the purpose and content of the new program and the capacity of the unit to deliver a high-quality program.
- Programs that are inter-and multidisciplinary must identify a permanent lead administrative division and identify a commissioning officer for future cyclical program reviews.
- Programs that are inter-institutional and offered jointly, conjointly and/or in affiliation with other higher education institutions (colleges and universities) through formal agreements are assessed as entities distinct from the larger institutions within which they are included. Where a program is held jointly with an Ontario institution that does not have an IQAP that has been ratified by the Quality Council, the UTQAP will serve as the guiding document and the University of Toronto will be the lead institution. Where a program is held jointly

with an Ontario institution that does have an IQAP that has been ratified by the Quality Council, a lead institution will be selected. Program proposals specify how future reviews will be conducted.

2.2 Overview of the New Program Approval Protocol

The steps required for the New Program Approval Protocol are detailed in sections 2.1 to 2.7 and summarized in figure 1a; the steps include an external review.

2.3 Evaluation Criteria

Proposals for new graduate or undergraduate degree programs are evaluated against the criteria set by the QAF and University of Toronto policy.

2.3.1 Academic rationale and program objectives

a) Clarity of the program's objectives

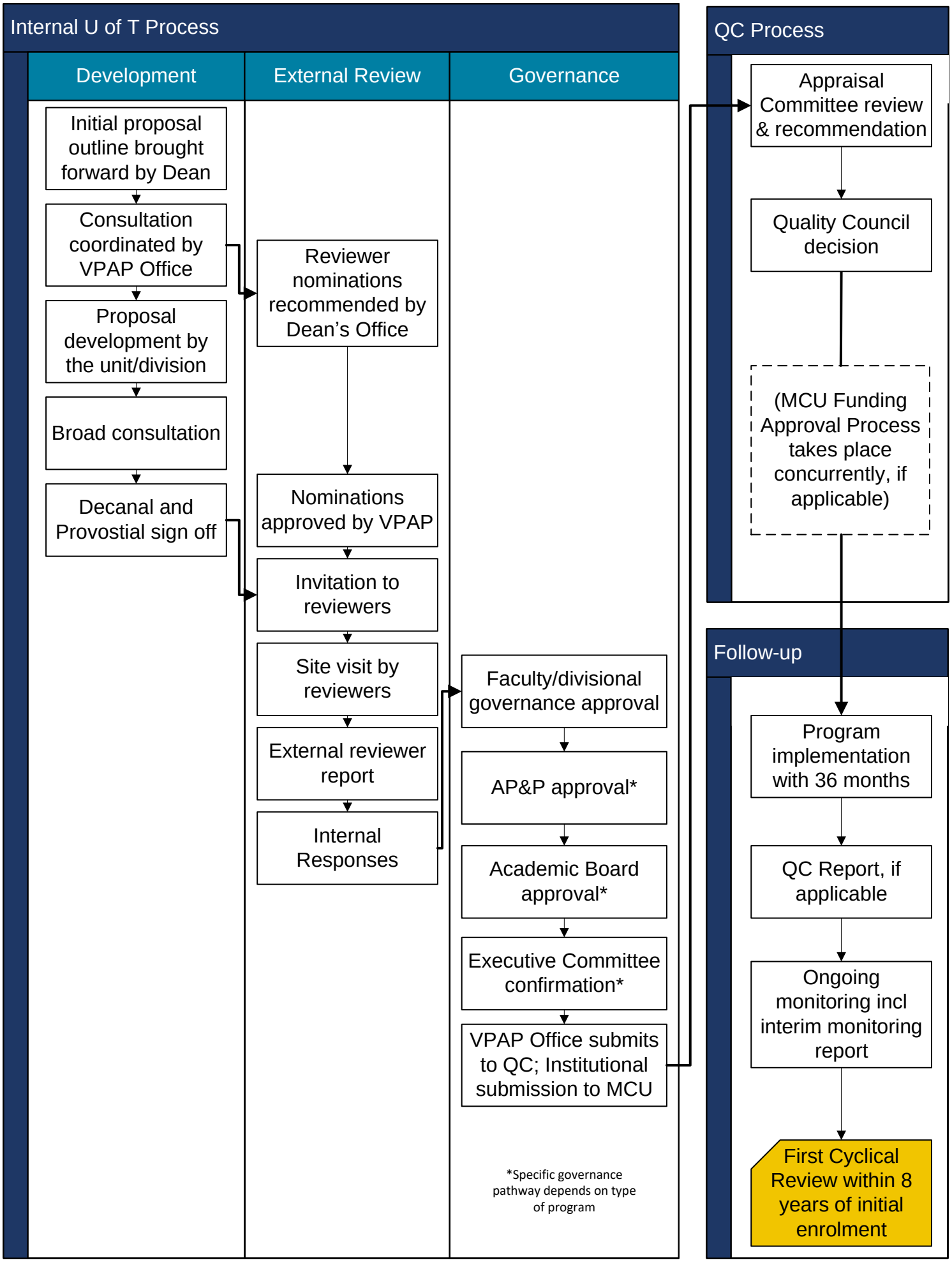
b) Appropriateness of degree or diploma nomenclature given the program's objectives

c) Consistency of the program's objectives with the institution's mission and the University of Toronto's/the division's/unit's academic plans, priorities and commitments, including consistency with any implementation plans developed following a previous review

d) Evidence that the following have been substantially considered in the development of the program and its associated resources:

1. Universal design principles and/or the potential need to provide mental or physical disability-related accommodations, reflecting the University's *Statement of Commitment Regarding Persons with Disabilities*
2. Support for student well-being and sense of community in the learning and teaching environment, reflecting the work of the Expert Panel on Undergraduate Student Educational Experience and the commitment to establishing a Culture of Caring and Excellence as recommended by the Presidential and Provostial Task Force on Student Mental Health

Figure 1a: New Program Approval Protocol



3. Opportunities for removing barriers to access and increasing retention rates for Indigenous students; for integrating Indigenous content into the curriculum in consultation with Indigenous curriculum developers; and for addressing any discipline-specific calls to action, reflecting the commitments made in *Answering the Call: Wecheehetowin: Final Report of the Steering Committee for the University of Toronto Response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*
4. Opportunities for removing barriers to access and increasing retention rates for Black students; for promoting intersectional Black flourishing, fostering inclusive excellence and enabling mutuality in teaching and learning, reflecting the commitments made in the *Scarborough Charter* and consistent with the recommendations of the *Anti-Black Racism Task Force Final Report*
5. Opportunities for fostering an equitable, diverse, and inclusive teaching and learning environment, reflecting the values articulated in existing institutional documents such as the *Statement on Equity, Diversity, and Excellence*, the *Antisemitism Working Group Final Report*, the aforementioned reports, and future institutional reports related to equity, diversity and inclusion

e) Unique curriculum or program innovations, creative components, significant high impact practices, where appropriate

2.3.2 Program requirements

a) Appropriateness of the program's structure and the requirements to meet its objectives and program-level learning outcomes, including the structure and requirements of any identified streams (undergraduate), fields or concentrations (graduate)

b) Appropriateness of the program's structure, requirements and program-level learning outcomes in meeting the institution's applicable undergraduate or graduate Degree Level Expectations

c) Appropriateness of the proposed mode(s) of delivery (i.e., means or medium used in delivering a program; e.g., lecture format, distance, online, synchronous/asynchronous, problem-based, compressed part-time, flex-time, multi-campus, inter-institutional collaboration or other non-standard forms of delivery) to facilitate students' successful completion of the program-level learning outcomes

d) Ways in which the curriculum addresses the current state of the discipline or area of study and is appropriate for the level of the program

2.3.3 Program requirements for graduate programs only

a) Clear rationale for program length that ensures that students can complete the program-level learning outcomes and requirements within the proposed time

b) Evidence that each graduate student in the program is required to take all of the course requirements from among graduate-level courses[2]

c) For research-focused graduate programs, clear indication of the nature and suitability of the major research requirements for degree completion

2.3.4 Assessment of teaching and learning

a) Appropriateness of the methods for assessing student achievement of the program-level learning outcomes and degree level expectations

b) Appropriateness of the plans to monitor and assess:

1. The overall quality of the program
2. Whether the program is achieving in practice its proposed objectives
3. Whether its students are achieving the program-level learning outcomes
4. How the resulting information will be documented and subsequently used to inform continuous program improvement

2.3.5 Admission requirements

a) Appropriateness of the program's admission requirements given the program's objectives and program-level learning outcomes

b) Sufficient explanation of alternative requirements, if applicable, for admission into a graduate, second-entry or undergraduate program, e.g., minimum grade point average, additional languages or portfolios, and how the program recognizes prior work or learning experience

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[2] While the QAF requires a minimum of 2/3 courses be at the graduate level, the University of Toronto requires all courses be at the graduate level. The QAF Guide includes the following statement from the Ontario Council on Graduate Studies (OCGS): "Since graduate work implies work beyond the undergraduate level, quality considerations require that the number of undergraduate or combined courses be limited to a minor proportion of the course requirements for the graduate program; as well, the additional work required of graduate students enrolled in such courses should be outlined. OCGS believes that the number of undergraduate courses or combined courses in which undergraduate students predominate should be not more than one third of the total course requirement for the degree."

2.3.6 Resources

Given the program's planned/anticipated class sizes and cohorts as well as its program-level learning outcomes:

a) Participation of a sufficient number and quality of core faculty who are competent to teach and/or supervise in and achieve the goals of the program and foster the appropriate academic environment

b) If applicable, discussion/explanation of the role and approximate percentage of adjunct and sessional faculty/limited term appointments used in the delivery of the program and the associated plans to ensure the sustainability of the program and quality of the student experience (see QAF Guidance)

c) If required, provision of supervision of experiential learning opportunities

d) Adequacy of the administrative unit's planned utilization of existing human, physical and financial resources, including implications for the impact on other existing programs at the University

e) Evidence that there are adequate resources to sustain the quality of scholarship and research activities produced by students, including library support, information technology support, and laboratory access

f) If necessary, additional institutional or divisional resource commitments to support the program in step with its ongoing implementation

2.3.7 Resources for graduate programs only

Given the program's planned/anticipated class sizes and cohorts as well as its program-level learning outcomes:

a) Evidence that faculty have the recent research or professional/clinical expertise needed to sustain the program, promote innovation, and foster an appropriate intellectual climate

b) Where appropriate to the program, evidence that financial assistance for students will be sufficient to ensure adequate quality and numbers of students

c) Evidence of how supervisory loads will be distributed, in light of qualifications and appointment status of the faculty

2.3.8 Quality and other indicators

a) Evidence of the quality of the faculty (e.g., qualifications, funding, honours, awards, research, innovation and scholarly record; appropriateness of collective faculty expertise to contribute substantively to the program and commitment to student mentoring)

1. The quality of the scholarship of the faculty, and the degree to which that scholarship is brought to bear in teaching

b) Any other evidence that the program and faculty will ensure the intellectual quality of the student experience

c) Any additional indicators of quality identified by the division or academic unit

d) How the proposed program compares to the best in its field among international peer institutions

2.4 Initial Institutional Process

2.4.1 New Program Proposal Development and Submission to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

New programs are initiated within academic divisions. The Office of the Dean of the academic division submits the initial proposal outline, utilizing the institutional template, which addresses academic rationale, distinguishing features, and resource considerations, including proposed enrolment and proposed tuition, and whether the proposed program will be cost-recovery. The Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs is responsible for providing feedback regarding the program including input from the Offices of the Provost and other Vice-Provosts, and other shared service offices as appropriate. For example:

The Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs considers:

- Program rationale including consistency with the unit's academic plan
- Appropriateness of the name and degree designation
- Program description, requirements, content and standards; program objectives; learning outcomes; faculty and teaching staff requirements and supervisory capacity
- Impact on the nature and quality of the division's programs of study
- Impact on other divisions and need for inter-divisional and inter-institutional consultation and agreements/contracts

The Office of the Vice-President, Operations and Real Estate Partnerships/Vice-Provost, Academic Operations considers:

- Resource implications, including, but not limited to, staffing, libraries and computing facilities, enrolment/admissions, revenue/costs, financial aid
- Enrolment planning, revenue and expense projections
- Ministry grant funding eligibility
- Space allocations and operating costs; capital project approvals

- Ministry program approvals process and submission requirements

The Office of the Vice-Provost, Students considers:

- Impact on student affairs, services, and fees
- Implications for student placement agreements

The Office of the Vice-Provost, Strategic Enrolment Management considers:

- Impact on fees, registrarial functions and student information systems, financial aid, awards and admissions
- Enrolment planning and space recourses/scheduling

The Office of the Vice-Provost, Faculty and Academic Life considers:

- Faculty implications

(For new graduate programs/degrees) The Office of the Vice-Provost, Graduate Research and Education considers:

- Program design and objectives (from admissions to graduation) relative to the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) regulations and best practices (e.g., to support timely completion, diverse career outcomes, etc.)
- Plans for the coordination and offering of program-level supports and services to students and, if applicable, discussion of student funding sources and demonstration of a commitment to funding transparency
- Faculty and teaching staff requirements and supervisory capacity relative to SGS policies for graduate faculty and best practices for supervision
- Impact on SGS student affairs and services; SGS registrarial and information systems; and SGS awards and admissions

(For new undergraduate and graduate programs/degrees) The Office of the Vice-Provost, Innovations in Undergraduate Education considers:

- Alignment between program design, delivery and learning objectives
- Supports for the development and mapping of program learning outcomes, pedagogical innovation, educational technology, work-integrated learning

Depending on the nature of the proposed new program, feedback will be requested from additional offices, such as Digital Learning Innovation in the case of new online or hybrid programs.

Once the program has been moved forward for development, the division works with the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs to develop the new program proposal.

The Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs responds to divisional queries and facilitates proposal development with regard to institutional academic, planning and budget, student life, governance and approval aspects of proposals.

The Dean ensures appropriate compliance with the new program proposal requirements (2.4.2), including the evaluation criteria listed in section 2.3, and ensures that appropriate consultation is conducted with the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs early in the process of proposal development. The Dean ensures that appropriate consultation is conducted with faculty and students, other University divisions and external institutions and organizations, as applicable. The Dean commissions the external review of a new program with the approval of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs.

The Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs reviews and approves draft proposals as identified in figures 1a and 1b.

2.4.2 Program Proposal

Academic divisions are responsible for the development of a new program proposal that addresses the following requirements and any further divisional requirements which the academic division chooses to apply:

- All evaluation criteria listed in section 2.3
- Effective date
- Date of first cyclical review and unit/programs with which the program will be reviewed
- Need and demand, including information on internal cognate and external comparator programs
- Proposed enrolment
- Consultation with internal (faculty, students, cognate units, etc., as appropriate) and external stakeholders (alumni, community or professional organizations, etc., as appropriate)
- Full academic calendar copy
- Course numbers, titles and descriptions for all courses

Academic divisions are also responsible for compiling faculty CVs, which are provided to the external reviewers.

Proposals must use the institutional template provided by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs. The Vice-Provost, Academic Programs confirms that the new program proposal is complete so that the submission process can continue.

2.4.3 External Review

An external review is required for new undergraduate and graduate degrees; new undergraduate specialists and majors; and new graduate degree program proposals. The following process is required in the selection and appointment of external reviewers who review a new program proposal:

- The Dean of the relevant academic division is responsible for commissioning the external review of a new program with the approval of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs
- The Dean commissioning the review is responsible for the selection of the external reviewers in consultation with the proponents of the new program
- All reviewers must be approved by the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs, before they are invited to serve
- There must be at least two external reviewers for new undergraduate and graduate programs
- The external reviewers should be active and respected in their disciplines, and will normally be associate or full professors, or the equivalent, with suitable qualifications and program management or senior academic administrative experience, including an appreciation of pedagogy and learning outcomes
- The commitments articulated in the University's *Statement on Equity, Diversity and Excellence* should inform the nomination and selection of reviewers
- Reviewers must be at arm's length from the program under review (see 2.4.3.1)
- Nominations are submitted to the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs using the nomination form in order to:
    - Streamline the approval of nominations
    - Support disclosure of potential conflicts of interest
    - Ensure that the submission to the Quality Council can speak to the reviewers' expertise in content and program delivery, connections to industry (where appropriate) and expertise in teaching and learning
- The Dean will ask selected external reviewers to confirm that there is no conflict of interest at the time of being invited to conduct the review

2.4.3.1 Definition of Arm's Length

External reviewers must not be close friends, current or recent collaborators, former supervisors, advisors or colleagues.

Arm's length does not mean that the reviewer must never have met or even heard of a single member of the program. It does mean that reviewers should not be chosen who are likely, or perceived to be likely, to be predisposed, positively or negatively, about the program.

Examples of what ***may not*** violate the arm's length requirement:

- Appeared on a panel at a conference with a member of the program
- Served on a granting council selection panel with a member of the program
- Author of an article in a journal edited by a member of the program, or of a chapter in a book edited by a member of the program
- External examiner of a dissertation by a doctoral student in the program
- Presented a paper at a conference held at the university where the program is located
- Invited a member of the program to present a paper at a conference organized by the reviewer, or to write a chapter in a book edited by the reviewer
- Received a bachelor's degree from the university (especially if in another program)
- Co-author or research collaborator with a member of the program more than seven years ago
- Presented a guest lecture at the university
- Reviewed for publication a manuscript written by a member of the program

Examples of what ***may*** violate the arm's length requirement:

- A previous member of the program or department under review (including being a visiting professor)
- Received a graduate degree from the program under review
- A regular co-author and research collaborator with a member of the program, within the past seven years, and especially if that collaboration is ongoing
- Close family/friend relationship with a member of the program
- A regular or repeated external examiner of dissertations by doctoral students in the program
- A recent doctoral supervisor (past several years) of one or more members of the program
- A previous external reviewer for a Cyclical Program Review or a New Program Proposal in the department/unit in question*

*In all cases, no more than one external reviewer can have previously reviewed a program in the department/unit.

2.4.4 Site Visit and Report

The external review of any new program proposal incorporates a site visit.

The external review of most new master's program proposals and all new doctoral program proposals must incorporate an **on-site** visit.

In the case of some master's and all undergraduate new program proposals, the Dean may request that the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs grant approval for a **virtual site visit**, if the external reviewers are satisfied that the off-site option is acceptable. Requests to approve a virtual site visit must provide a clear justification for holding a virtual site visit. Master's programs that may be eligible for a virtual site visit include professional master's programs and programs designed to be delivered online only.

Before the site visit, the Office of the Dean will provide the reviewers with the New Program Proposal, all relevant faculty CVs, and the institutional template that must be used by the external reviewers for their report.

The Vice-Provost, Academic Programs website includes sample instructions to reviewers.

The reviewers provide a joint Report evaluating the standards and quality of the proposed program. The Report will:

- Address the substance of the New Program Proposal
- Respond to the evaluation criteria listed in section 2.3
- Comment on the adequacy of existing physical, human and financial resources, based, in part, on the external reviewers' assessment of the faculty members' education, background, competence and expertise as evidenced in their CVs
- Acknowledge any clearly innovative aspects of the proposed program together with recommendations on any essential or otherwise desirable modifications to it

The reviewers normally present their report to the Dean within two weeks of the site visit. Before accepting the report as final, the Dean, after consulting with the proponents of the new program, will bring to the attention of the reviewers any clear factual errors that can be corrected in the report, and/or omitted UTQAP requirements that can be added to the report. The Dean then formally accepts the final report and submits it to the Office of the Vice Provost, Academic Programs along with the Administrative Response(s) described in 2.4.5.

2.4.5 Administrative Responses

In single department divisions, the Dean of the proposing academic division develops the response to the external review report and recommendations, detailing any amendments to the New Program Proposal. The Vice-Provost, Academic Programs responds to the Dean's response.

In departmentalized divisions, clearly separate administrative responses to the external review report and recommendations are required:

a) Response of the Dean of the proposing academic division: to develop their response to the external review report and recommendations the Dean will consult with the academic unit proposing the program; the Dean's response will reflect this consultation and respond to the key elements of the unit's response. Any amendments to the New Program Proposal must be detailed in the Dean's administrative response.
b) Response of the Chair/Director of the proposing academic unit: as part of their consultation, the Dean will request that the proposing academic unit prepare a brief administrative response to the review report and recommendations.
c) Response of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs: the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs responds to the Dean's response and ensures that the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs has access to the unit's response.

2.4.6 University of Toronto Approval

The new program proposal, the external review report and the internal administrative responses proceed through the divisional and University governance processes.

2.4.6.1 Divisional Governance

Each academic division is responsible for delineating divisional governance approval processes for new undergraduate and graduate degree and diploma programs, which are recommended for approval to the appropriate body of Governing Council. The Vice-Provost, Academic Programs is responsible for reviewing these processes and ensuring compliance with University and UTQAP processes. Each division outlines its process on its own council website. A summary of divisional governance processes is available on the website of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs.

2.4.6.2 University Governance

Upon approval of a new program by divisional council, the new program proposal, review report and administrative responses are submitted to the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs by the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs, who is senior assessor to the Committee. The Committee on Academic Policy and Programs approves proposals for new undergraduate programs and graduate diplomas. The Committee recommends proposals for new undergraduate degrees, graduate degree programs, and joint programs to Academic Board for approval; Academic Board's approval is confirmed by the Executive Committee of Governing Council.

2.4.7 Quality Council Secretariat

Upon approval by University governance, the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs submits the new program proposal, together with all required reports and documents, to the Quality Council Secretariat, including at minimum the following:

- Proposal
- External Reviewers' Report
- Administrative responses
- Date of university governance approval
- Information on whether or not the proposed program will be a cost-recovery program
- Brief commentary on the external reviewers selected to review the proposed program in regard to their qualifications in the following areas: sufficient expertise in content and program delivery; appropriate connections to industry (where appropriate); and expertise in teaching and learning

2.4.8 Announcement of New Programs

Following the submission of the new program proposal to the Quality Council, and with the approval of the Vice-President and Provost, the academic unit may publicly announce its intention to offer the program, provided that, when such announcements are made at this stage, they must contain the following statement: "Prospective students are advised that the program is still subject to formal approval," and provided that no offers of admission will be made until and unless the program is approved by the Quality Council.

2.5 Initial Quality Council Appraisal Process

The Quality Council Appraisal Process proceeds as outlined in sections 2.6 to 2.8 of the QAF, resulting in one of the following decisions:

a) Approved to commence
b) Approved to commence, with report
c) Deferred for up to one year during which time the university may address identified issues and report back
d) Not approved
e) Such other action as the Quality Council considers reasonable and appropriate in the circumstances

When the recommendation is one of b), c), or d) above, the University may, within 30 days, through the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs, request a meeting with and/or reconsideration by the Appraisal Committee. When the recommendation is one of b), c), or d) above, the University may, within 30 days, through the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs, and in consultation with the Dean of the proposing division and Chair/Director of the academic unit (if applicable), submit an appeal to the Quality Council. If declined permission to proceed (c, above), or following a denied appeal, the University will normally wait until one year has elapsed from the date of the Quality

Council's decision, to allow time for revisions, before resubmitting a revised version of its Proposal. The same waiting period normally applies when the University does not resubmit a deferred New Program Proposal within the specified period. When the University has been given approval to commence a program *with report,* the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs will request the required information from the Dean of the proposing division, ahead of the Quality Council's deadline. The Dean will consult with the Chair/Director of the academic unit (if applicable) and provide the information to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs. The Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs will provide the report to the Quality Council.

Decisions of the Quality Council are final and binding. The Quality Council conveys all decisions to the University through the designated institutional contact and reports them for information to the Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents (OCAV) and to the Ministry of Colleges and Universities (the Ministry). Information about decisions on approval to commence for new programs, together with a brief description of the programs, are posted on the websites of the Quality Council and the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs. Only at this point may the University make offers of admission to the program.

2.6 Subsequent Process

2.6.1 Ministry Funding Approval for New Undergraduate Degrees and Graduate Degrees and Programs

The Ministry approves funding for new degree and diploma programs. The University submits proposals to the Ministry at the same time as they are submitted to the Quality Council.

2.6.2 Implementation Window

After a new program has been approved to commence, the program must begin within **36 months** of that date of approval; otherwise the approval will lapse.

2.6.3 Ongoing Monitoring of New Programs

The monitoring of a new program facilitates continuous improvement, which is an essential goal of quality assurance. It is the responsibility of the Dean, in consultation with the head of the relevant academic units, to monitor student enrolment and success in the program, as well as resource allocation and program administration. Ongoing assessment of the program will take place as outlined in the new program proposal.

Midway between the program's effective date and the date of the first review, the Dean will provide a brief monitoring report to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs that:

- Carefully evaluates the program's success in realizing its objectives, requirements and outcomes, as originally proposed and approved as well as any changes that have occurred in the interim, including in response to any Note(s) from the Appraisal Committee
- Addresses student enrolment and success, resource allocation and program administration, and the findings of program assessments conducted as outlined in the new program proposal
- Identifies any areas of concern that need immediate attention, the action(s) to be taken to address these areas, and who will take the action(s)
- Any additional areas to be considered in the first cyclical review of the new program

(Note: for programs that will be reviewed within four years of their effective date the monitoring report is provided as part of the self-study process.)

As part of the annual academic review process, the Office of the Vice-President and Provost works with Deans' Offices to review the quality and performance of all program offerings and address any areas of concern.

2.6.4 First Cyclical Review

The first cyclical review for any new program must be conducted no more than **eight years** after the date of the program's initial enrolment and normally in accordance with the University of Toronto program review schedule. The Dean is responsible for conveying to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs the inclusion of the program in the University's review schedule by confirming this information in the New Program Proposal.

2.7 Quality Council Audit Process

New undergraduate and/or graduate programs that have been approved within the period since the conduct of the previous Audit are eligible for selection for the University's next Cyclical Audit (see QAF Audit Protocol). An Audit cannot reverse the approval of a program to commence.

2.8 Expedited Approval Protocol

The Expedited Approval process is intended to enable the University to secure Quality Council approvals more efficiently for changes that are considered less wide-ranging.

The Expedited Approval Protocol applies to the following proposal types:

1. New for-credit graduate diplomas (Types 2 and 3)

2. New standalone degree program arising from a long-standing field in a master's or doctoral program that has undergone at least two Cyclical Program Reviews and has at least two graduating cohorts.

The steps required to develop and approve these types of proposals are summarized in figure 1b. All steps required for the New Program Approval Protocol (i.e., sections 2.3 to 2.6.4) apply for the Expedited Approval Protocol, except that the Expedited Approval Protocol does not require an external review (i.e., sections 2.4.3 to 2.4.5 are not required) and the Council's appraisal and approval processes are reduced.

The Proposal will include the elements described in 2.4.2, including the Evaluation Criteria (2.3). Proposals must use the institutional template provided by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs.

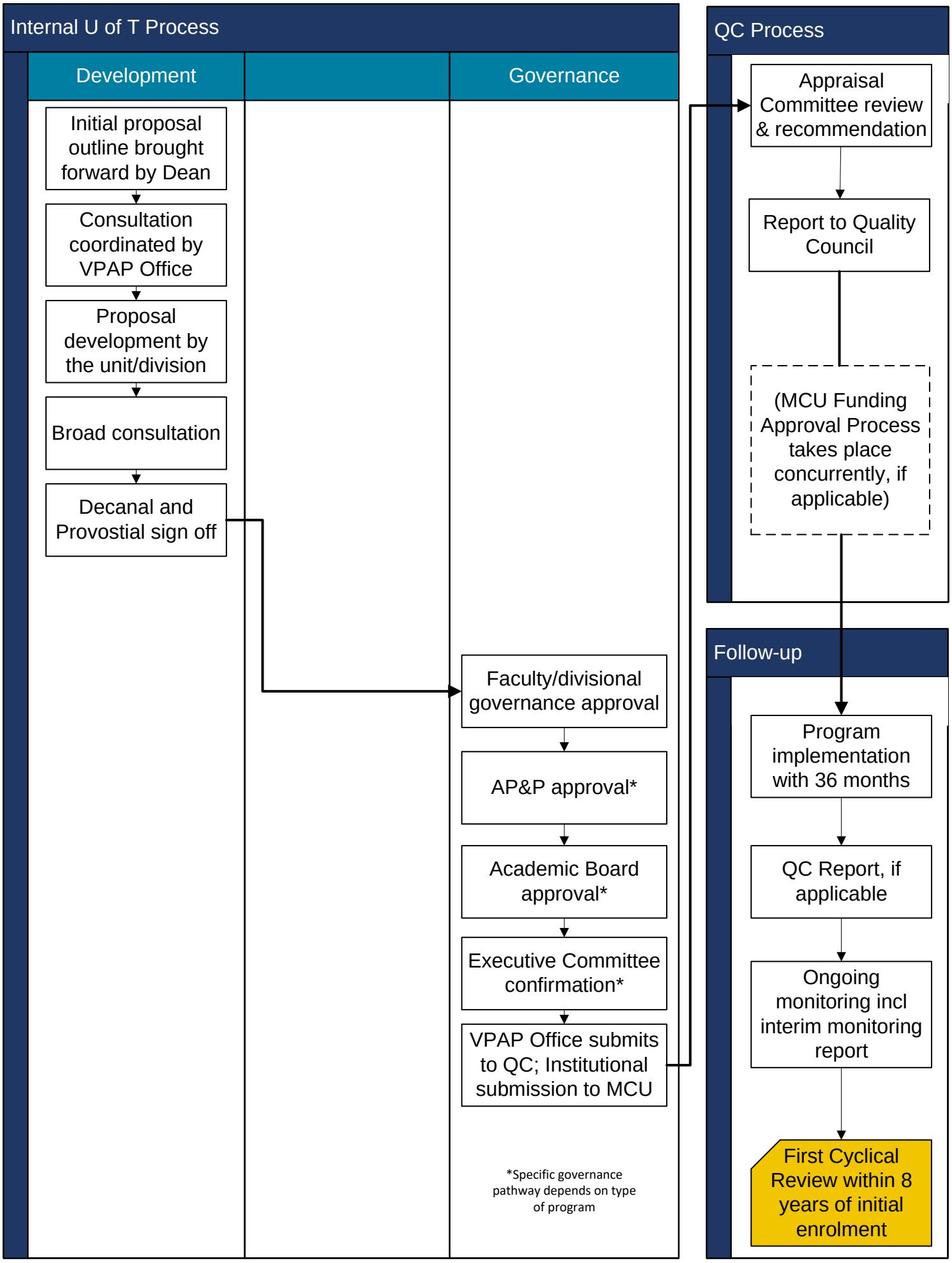
Upon approval by University governance (2.4.6), the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs submits the proposal, together with all required documents, to the Quality Council Secretariat. The Quality Council's Appraisal Committee will come to one of the following decisions:

1. Approved to Commence
2. Approved to Commence, with Report
3. Not Approved

The Expedited Approval Protocol then proceeds with the subsequent steps outlined in section 2.6.

Programs created or modified through the Protocol for Expedited Approvals are not normally selected for the institution's Cyclical Audit.

Figure 1b: Expedited Approval Protocol



3 Major Modifications to Existing Programs Protocol

3.1 Definition

The University of Toronto embraces academic change as a critical part of maintaining and enhancing programs of outstanding quality through a process of continuous improvement. Proposals for major modifications are vehicles of academic change. The steps required to develop and approve these types of proposals are summarized in figure 2.

A major modification to an existing program is a restructuring of a program, a merger of or the creation of new elements within existing programs, or a renewal of a program in order to keep it current with its academic discipline or improve student academic experience. Major modifications are made in order to support one or more of the following:

- Implement the outcomes of a cyclical program review
- Reflect the ongoing evolution of a discipline or area of study
- Accommodate new developments in a particular field
- Facilitate improvements in teaching and learning strategies
- Respond to the changing needs of students, society, and industry
- Respond to improvements in technology

At the University of Toronto major modifications include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following program changes:

A) Significant changes to program requirements:

- Creation of a new program of specialization where another with the same designation already exists (e.g., a new specialist program where a major with the same designation already exists)
- Addition of a new major or specialist that does not differ substantially in program requirements or learning outcomes from an existing program
- Requirements that differ significantly from those existing at the time of the previous cyclical program review
- Merger of two or more existing programs
- Creation of a minor where there is no existing program of specialization (i.e., a “freestanding minor”)
- Creation of new bridging options for college diploma graduates
- Introduction or deletion of a thesis requirement, co-op requirement or placement at the undergraduate or graduate level

- Creation or deletion of a field or concentration within an existing graduate program
- Creation or deletion of a stream within an existing undergraduate program
- Creation or deletion of a graduate collaborative specialization
- Creation or deletion of a combined degree program, dual degree program, or double degree program where the degree programs to be combined already exist
- Creation of a for-credit, post-baccalaureate certificate (Category 1)

B) Significant changes to the learning outcomes:

- Changes to program content that affect the learning outcomes, but do not meet the threshold for a "new program"

C) Significant changes to the faculty engaged in delivering the program and/or to the essential physical resources as may occur, for example, where there have been changes to the existing mode(s) of delivery (e.g., different campus, online delivery, inter-institutional collaboration):

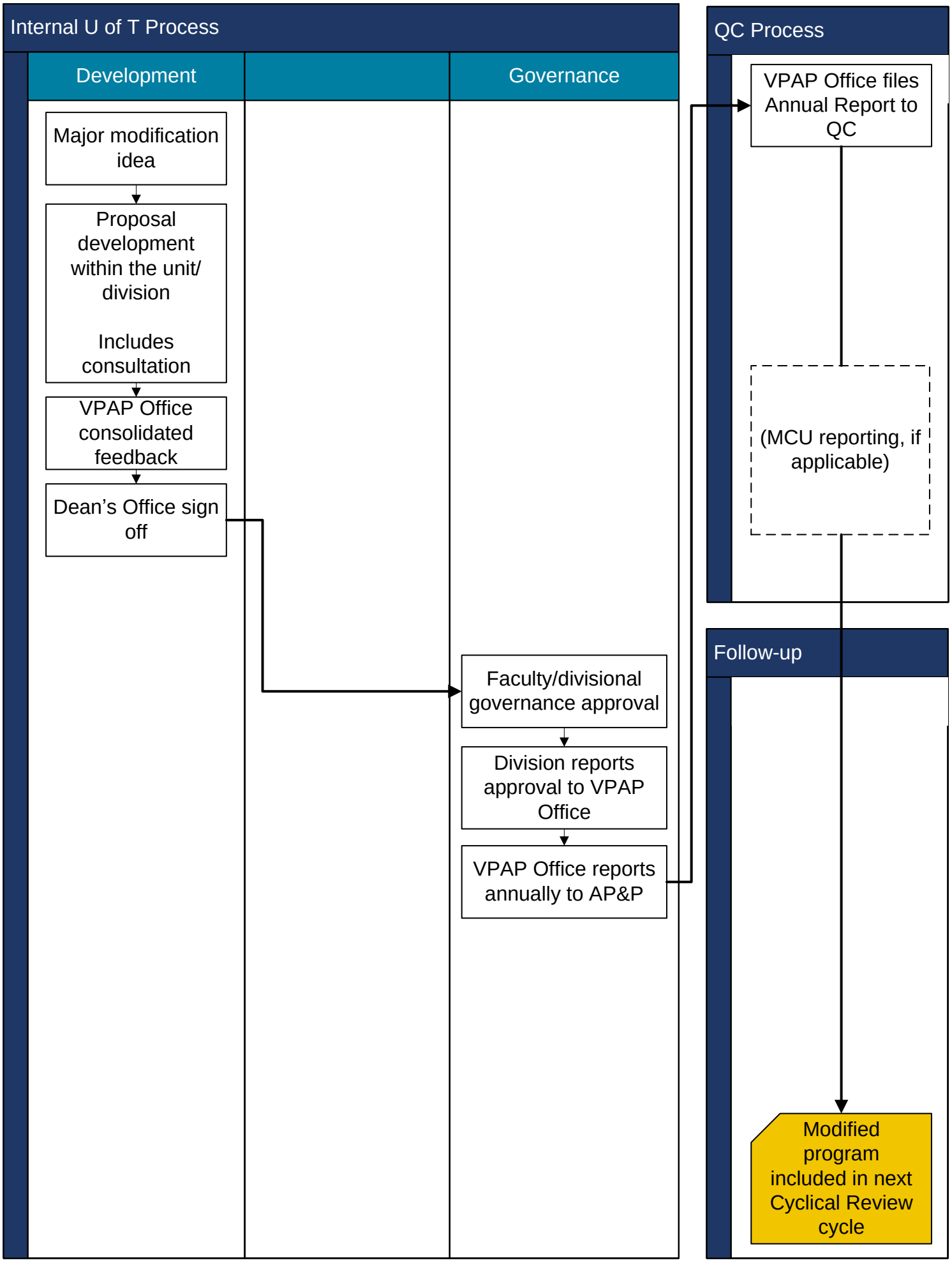
- A change to the language of the program
- The establishment of an existing degree program at another institution or location
- Change in or the establishment of additional modes of delivery of a program, such as from in-person to online or full-time to part-time, including a change to the length of a program (e.g., the addition of a direct-entry option for an existing PhD program)

3.1.1 Program and Degree Nomenclature Name Changes

The University of Toronto normally considers program name changes to be minor modifications. However, if the name change implies a significant change to what is being offered or how it is being offered, this may be a major modification or new program.

Degree nomenclature changes have multiple implementation implications, regardless of their impact on program learning outcomes. All degree nomenclature changes must be discussed with the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs at an early stage to determine the appropriate proposal development and approval process.

Figure 2: Major Modifications to Existing Programs Protocol



3.1.2 Identifying the Category of Academic Change

In cases where it is unclear whether a proposed change in a program is a new program, a major modification or a minor modification, a determination will be made by the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs in consultation with the divisional Dean and the academic unit. The Quality Council has the final authority to decide if a major modification constitutes a new program and, therefore, must follow the Protocol for New Program Approvals. In particular, the QAF notes that the creation of more than one field at one point in time or over subsequent years may need to go through the Expedited Approval Protocol.

3.2 Proposal

The proposal for a major modification includes the following together with any additional requirements which the academic division chooses to apply:

- Discussion of major changes to the program description, requirements, and program learning outcomes in relation to applicable evaluation criteria as they appear in 2.3; all proposals must discuss 2.3.1 (Academic Rationale and Program Objectives) and 2.3.6 (Resources)
- Effective date
- As appropriate given the type of major modification, confirmation that the proposed modification is in alignment with the relevant program-level learning outcomes
- Assessment of the impact the proposed modification will have on the program's students and/or other units or divisions
- Consultation: how input from current students and recent graduates of the program has been considered as part of the development of the proposal; description of consultation with others affected by the change (e.g., faculty, cognate units, external stakeholders)
- Statement on the way in which the proposed major modification will improve the student experience
- As appropriate given the type of major modification:
    - date of first cyclical review and unit/programs with which the offering will be reviewed
    - need and demand
    - proposed enrolment
- Full academic calendar copy with changes tracked

In addition, when changing the mode of delivery of a program to online for all or a significant portion of a program that was previously delivered in-person, consideration must be given to the following:

- Maintenance of and/or changes to the program objectives and program-level learning outcomes
- Adequacy of the technological platform and tools
- Sufficiency of support services and training for teaching staff
- Sufficiency and type of support for students in the new learning environment
- Access

All major modification proposals must use the appropriate template available on the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs website.

3.3 Institutional Process and Approvals

Major modifications to academic programs are initiated within academic divisions. The division's Dean's Office is responsible for the development of a major modification proposal, including consultation with faculty and students within the division; consultation with other academic divisions and external stakeholders as appropriate; and coordination and consultation with the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs. The Vice-Provost, Academic Programs is responsible for providing feedback regarding the major modification that includes the input of the Provost, other Vice-Provosts, and other shared service offices, as appropriate.

The University of Toronto is responsible for approvals of major modifications to existing programs. Such modifications are normally submitted by the Dean's Office for approval by divisional governance.

The Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs submits for information to the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs an annual report on major modifications to existing programs.

Major modifications to existing programs do not require submission of a proposal to the Quality Council.

3.4 Annual Report to the Quality Council

The Vice-Provost, Academic Programs files an Annual Report to the Quality Council that provides a summary of major program modifications that were approved through the University's internal approval process in the past year.

3.5 Subsequent University Process

Cyclical review of the program takes place according to the pre-existing cycle of the relevant existing program within eight years. In cases where a new standalone entity is being created (e.g., new category 1 (standalone) certificate; new freestanding minor) the provisions for the UTQAP review are confirmed in the major modification proposal.

3.6 Quality Council Audit Process

Major Modifications are not normally selected for Cyclical Audit.

4 Other Types of Academic Change

4.1 Minor Modifications

Minor modifications are the most common type of academic change; they are intrinsic to maintaining robust programs. They involve a wide variety of academic changes to existing undergraduate and graduate programs.

Minor modifications are changes to courses and curriculum that do not change the nature or essence of a program or the learning outcomes.

The University of Toronto considers minor modifications to include:

- Minor changes to existing program requirements (no impact on learning outcomes)
- Changes to admission requirements (no impact on learning outcomes)
- Changes to existing courses, including changes to mode of delivery
- Creation of a new course, including a new modular course
- Creation of a new minor within an existing program
- Creation of a new undergraduate focus or graduate emphasis
- Change to the name of a program (or change to the name of any other offering that can appear on the academic transcript; e.g., emphasis, focus, field, etc.)
- Creation of a for-credit, undergraduate certificate (Category 2)
- Creation of a for-credit microcredential

Development and approval of minor modifications are managed by the divisions. Deans' Offices will consult with the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs in the specific cases identified below and otherwise as needed; this may include determining whether a particular change is a major or minor modification. The minor modification process ensures a consultative and collaborative discussion not only within the academic unit but within the division and other related units.

Minor modifications require approval by divisional governance processes only.

With the exception of course creation or course name change, minor modifications that involve the creation new offerings that can appear on the academic transcript (e.g., emphasis, focus, category 2 certificate, for-credit microcredential), or changes to the name of existing offerings, require consultation with the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs prior to approval. Approval of such minor modifications is reported to the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs to allow for appropriate reports to University governance and external bodies as required by policy (e.g., *Policy on Certificates (For-Credit and Not-For-Credit)*) and to allow for implementation, including but not limited to requests for OSAP for microcredentials eligibility from the Ministry.

Most minor modifications are not reported to the Quality Council. The Vice-Provost, Academic Programs' annual report to the Quality Council on major program modifications includes program name changes that were approved as minor modifications through the University's internal approval process in the past year.

Cyclical review of offerings created through a minor modification normally take place according to the pre-existing cycle for the relevant program, within eight years. In some cases (e.g., a category 2 certificate with connections to multiple programs; a for-credit microcredential) the provisions for appropriate review are confirmed in the minor modification proposal.

4.2 Not-For-Credit Programming

Not-for-credit programming (i.e. offerings that are not taken for credit towards a degree, diploma or for-credit certificate, and/or offerings that cannot be later applied towards a degree, diploma, for-credit certificate) fall outside the UTQAP. Such programming includes category 3 certificates and not-for-credit microcredentials.

In accordance with the *Statement of Policy on Continuing Education*, "the quality and level of the University's continuing education courses and programs should be consistent with the University's general objectives, and meet the same standards of excellence."

The *Policy on Certificates (For-Credit and Not-For-Credit)* and the associated *Guidelines for Continuing, Professional and Executive Education* define the categories of such offerings and establish provisions for their development, approval, reporting and review.

5 Program Closure Protocol

Proposals for program closures are vehicles of academic change. The University of Toronto views the closing of academic activities as a normal and positive part of quality assurance and program evolution.

There are a number of possible reasons for closing a program including low enrolment, a changing disciplinary landscape and poor quality of the academic program. These reasons may be articulated in external review reports or may be identified by members of the University community.

5.1 Proposal

The proposal for a program closure will include the following criteria together with any additional requirements that the academic division chooses to apply (see the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs' website):

- Rationale for the closure including alignment with the unit's academic plan and connection to any previous reviews
- Impact on the nature and quality of the division's program of study
- Impact of closure on other units including inter-divisional and inter-institutional agreements/contracts
- Impact on and accommodation of any students currently enroled in the program
- Consultation with affected divisions, units, faculty and students
- Resource implications

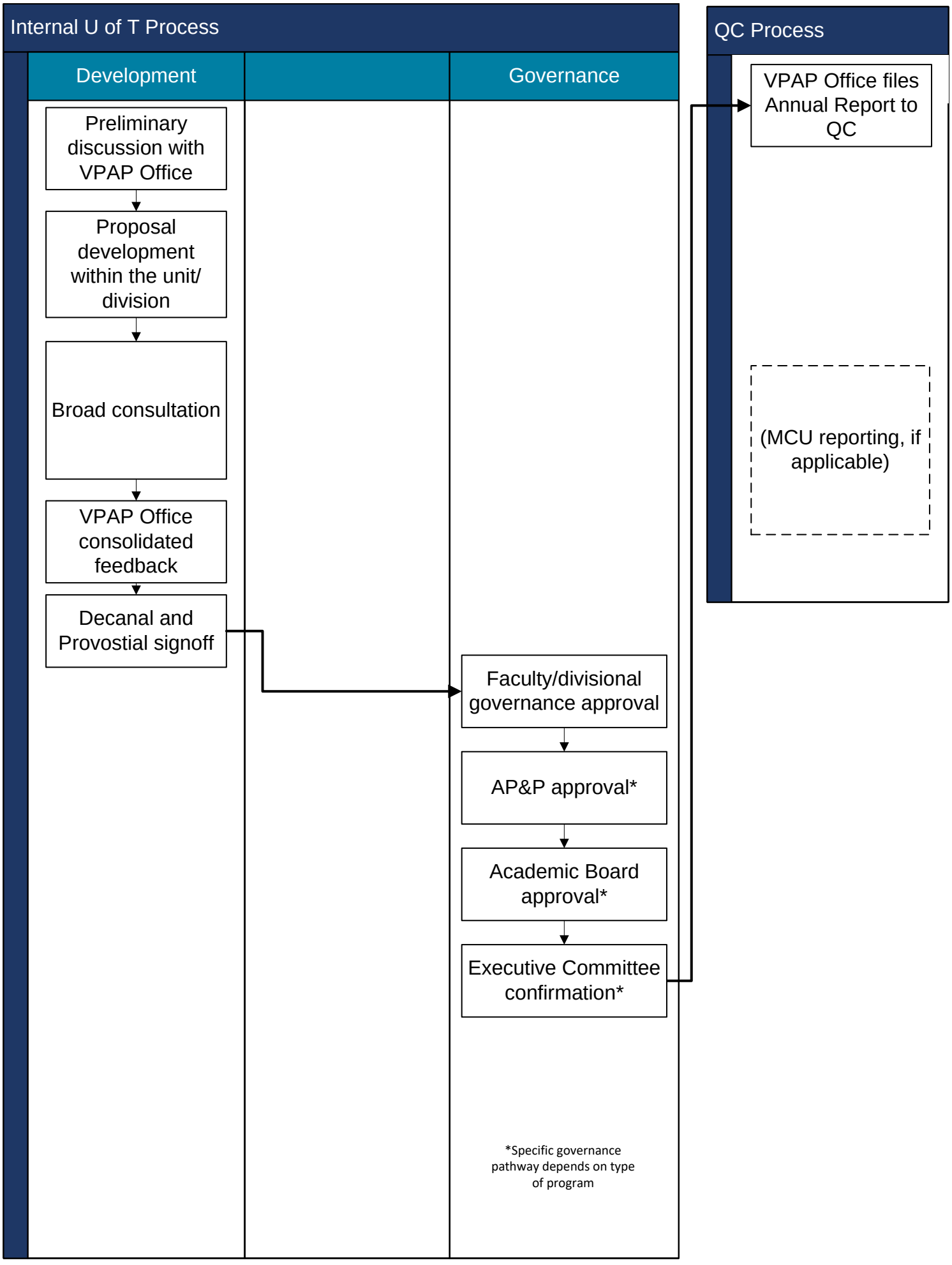
The steps required to develop and approve these types of proposals are summarized in figure 3.

5.2 Institutional Process and Approvals

All proposals for undergraduate and graduate program closures come to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs' Office for preliminary discussion.

Proposals for the closure of degrees and degree programs are brought forward along the same governance path as proposals for new programs. Once the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs' Office has signed off on a proposed closure, the closure is taken forward for approval to divisional governance. Program closures for all components of an undergraduate program are approved by the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs; closures of degrees and all graduate programs are approved by the Academic Board, as recommended by the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs, and confirmed by the Executive Committee of Governing Council.

Figure 3: Program Closure Protocol



University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process (UTQAP)

The closure of one component within an existing undergraduate program, a graduate program field or concentration, undergraduate program stream, or of a freestanding minor is considered a major modification and follows the same governance path as proposals for major modifications.

The closure of a program component or for-credit offering that was created through the minor modification process (e.g., a minor that has an associated specialist or major, a category 2 certificate) is considered a minor modification and follows the same governance path as proposals for minor modifications.

5.3 Annual Report to the Quality Council

The University's Annual Report to the Quality Council includes a summary of program and program component closures that were approved through the University's internal approval process in the past year. (See also 3.4.)

6 Cyclical Program Review Protocol

6.1 Purpose

The Cyclical Program Review Protocol is used to ensure University of Toronto programs meet the highest standards of academic excellence. As outlined in the *Policy for Approval and Review of Academic Programs and Units*, regular reviews allow for ongoing appraisal and quality improvement of programs and the academic units in which they reside.

Consistent with the objectives of the QAF, UTQAP reviews are designed to ensure the continuous improvement of those facets of education that most directly impact the academic experiences of students.

6.2 Application

6.2.1 Degree and Diploma Programs

The Cyclical Program Review Protocol applies to all undergraduate and graduate degree and graduate diploma programs offered by the University, and to degree and graduate diploma programs that are offered by the University with other institutions **including all joint, multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, multisite and inter-institutional programs, and all modes of delivery**. See 1.1.3.1 for the definition of 'Program.'

As indicated in the sections on Major Modifications (3.5) and Other Types of Academic Change (4), small offerings are normally reviewed as part of the UTQAP review of the

larger program. In the case of small standalone offerings such as Category 1 Certificates, provisions for review are identified in the proposal to create the offering.

6.2.2 Collaborative Specializations

Like other for-credit offerings, Collaborative Specializations are reviewed on an eight-year cycle and included in the Schedule of Reviews. Because Collaborative Specializations do not themselves lead to the conferral of a degree, the Collaborative Specialization review process is distinct from the UTQAP review process that applies to degree and diploma programs. Reviews of Collaborative Specializations assess the success with which these offerings provide an additional multidisciplinary experience for students enrolled in the participating degree programs, and alignment with the Collaborative Specialization definition. The Collaborative Specialization review process is described in full in the *Collaborative Specialization Guidelines*. In accordance with those *Guidelines*, reviews of Collaborative Specializations are commissioned by the Dean of the lead division.

6.2.3 Combined, Dual, or Double Degree Programs

Offerings that simply create a defined pathway for completion of two existing degree programs, such as combined degree programs, dual degree programs, and double degree programs are not reviewed separately from the UTQAP review of their existing degree programs. Administrative arrangements for these offerings are reviewed periodically by the Dean of the lead division prior to renewing the agreement that governs the pathway.

6.2.4 Closed or Suspended Programs

Programs that have been closed, or for which admission has been suspended, are out of scope for a Cyclical Program Review.

6.3 Institutional Authority

The Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs is responsible for ensuring that cyclical reviews of academic programs and/or units are undertaken. Where quality concerns are raised in the cyclical review, the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs monitors the timely implementation of improvements.

6.4 Schedule of Reviews

The University's full complement of undergraduate and graduate degree and diploma programs as defined in 6.2 and academic units as defined in the *Policy for Approval and Review of Academic Programs and Units* are reviewed on a planned cycle. The Schedule of Reviews is available on the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs website.

The Schedule of Reviews includes all independent offerings of each program and confirms the offerings and academic units to be considered in each review, as well as the commissioning division for each review and the “Unit of Review” (see 6.4.2) as defined by the commissioning officer (see 6.4.1). The Schedule is maintained by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs, in consultation with commissioning officers or their representatives.

Reviews are conducted on a regular basis, frequent enough to ensure that Chairs, Deans and the Provost are kept informed of developments in all academic units, but at sufficiently long intervals that the effects of given actions can be assessed and that the system is not over-burdened by the logistical demands of the process. The interval between program reviews must not exceed eight years.

The review of an academic program can be completed through a review of the academic unit offering the program. Reviews of the various programs, undergraduate and graduate, offered by a given academic unit may be synchronized. Reviews may also be conducted concurrently with professional accreditation. Depending upon the range of a division's academic programs, it can elect to conduct quality reviews at the level of the degree or the program. Where possible, the UTQAP process should aim to streamline the review process by aligning the scheduling of undergraduate program reviews, graduate program reviews and reviews of academic units.

Regardless of the number of programs or academic units included (“bundled”) in the “Unit of Review” (see 6.4.2), the quality of each academic program and the learning environment of the students in each program must be addressed explicitly in the self-study and the external reviewers’ report as set out in the steps defined in this protocol.

6.4.1 Commissioning Officer

In departmentalized divisions, reviews of academic programs and the units in which they reside are commissioned by the Dean. The Vice-Provost, Academic Programs commissions reviews of academic divisions and associated programs that are being reviewed at the time of a divisional review.

In the case of programs that involve more than one unit (see 6.4.4), the commissioning officer is identified in the Schedule of Reviews.

6.4.2 Unit of Review

The commissioning officer defines the scope of a review, identifying the specific program or programs that will be reviewed (e.g., undergraduate program(s), graduate program(s), etc.) and, where there is more than one mode of delivery or site involved in delivering a specific program, the distinct versions of each program that are to be reviewed, as well as any academic units that are part of the review. Normally the

expectation is that programs and program components or options (e.g., a specialist, major, and minor in a specific discipline; a PhD program with multiple fields; a professional master's program with online and part-time in-person delivery options, etc.) that support a distinct set of Program Learning Outcomes are considered together to ensure that all avenues for achieving the Program Learning Outcomes support a robust student learning experience, and that areas of strength and areas of improvement are identified.

6.4.3 Accreditation and Other Externally Commissioned Reviews

University-commissioned reviews are not waived because an externally commissioned review, such as an accreditation, has recently been conducted. Reviews of academic programs for professional accreditation bodies form part of collegial self-regulatory systems intended to ensure that mutually agreed-upon threshold standards of quality are maintained in new and existing programs. Such reviews may serve different purposes than those commissioned by the University under the UTQAP. In some cases, however, the University process may be streamlined if the mandates of externally and internally commissioned reviews are closely aligned and any deficits can be easily remedied through providing supplementary documentation as necessary. In such cases, the Dean or designate of a division with an accredited program can submit a written request for approval from the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs for adaptation of the UTQAP process to reflect appropriate elements of an accreditation review. Approval will only be given if the request can establish that the proposed adapted approach is fully consistent with the requirements established in the UTQAP and QAF, including the addressing of all evaluation criteria. In the event that approval is granted, the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs will work with the Dean's Office to produce a Record of Substitution or Addition based on the Dean's written request in each case where some elements of the UTQAP review process are substituted or augmented with elements from an accreditation review. The Record of Substitution will include the grounds on which decisions were made.

A Record of Substitution or Addition, and the grounds on which decisions were made, is eligible for Cyclical Audit.

6.4.4 Reviews of Interdivisional Programs

Interdivisional degree programs offered by more than one University of Toronto division may be reviewed as entities distinct from the larger academic units which support them. Such programs must have an identified commissioning division for the purpose of administering the Cyclical Program Review Protocol. Programs offered across academic units (whether interdivisional or within a single division) should follow the

Recommended Practices for Reviewing Programs Offered Across Units and/or Divisions.

6.4.5 Reviews of Inter-Institutional Programs

Inter-institutional programs offered in partnership with other higher education institutions (colleges and universities) through affiliation, federation and other formal agreements are reviewed as entities distinct from the larger institutions within which they may be included. Where a program is held jointly with an Ontario institution that does not have an IQAP that has been ratified by the Quality Council, the UTQAP will serve as the guiding document and the University of Toronto will be the lead institution. Where a program is held jointly with an Ontario institution that does have an IQAP that has been ratified by the Quality Council, a lead institution will be selected.

General guiding principles for such reviews include:

- Selection of reviewers will involve participation by each partner institution
- There will be a single self-study
- The site visit will involve all partner institutions and sites
- The self-study will clearly explain how input was received from faculty, staff and students at each partner institution
- Feedback on the reviewers' report will be solicited from participating units at each institution
- Preparation of a Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan will contain input from each partner
- A single Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan will be prepared and presented to the appropriate governance processes at each partner institution
- Partner institutions will agree on an appropriate monitoring process for the Implementation Plan

6.5 Overview of the Review Process

The Protocol for the conduct of Cyclical Program Reviews has five principal components:

1. Initiation and Self-study (see sections 6.6 and 6.7)
2. External evaluation (peer review) with report and recommendations on program quality improvement (see section 6.8)
3. University evaluation of the self-study and the external review report resulting in recommendations for program quality improvement (see section 6.9)
4. Preparation and adoption of plans to implement the recommendations and to monitor their implementation (see section 6.9.2)

5. Follow-up reporting on the principal findings of the review and the implementation of the recommendations (see section 6.9.2.2)

These components are summarized in figure 4.

6.6 Initiation of the Review

The commissioning officer formally initiates the review process in accordance with the timing provided in the Schedule of Reviews.

6.6.1 Terms of Reference

The terms of reference identify all programs and units that are part of the review as they appear on the Schedule of Reviews, the key issues to be addressed by the review, and must address the evaluation criteria laid out in section 6.7.2. Commissioning officers may enlarge or enhance the criteria to meet the needs of the disciplines. Standard terms of reference for reviews may be found on the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs website.

For reviews that include a program undergoing its first cyclical review, the Terms of Reference should include any areas the new program monitoring report identified for consideration in the first cyclical review of the new program, along with any items the Quality Council identified for follow-up in its approval letter.

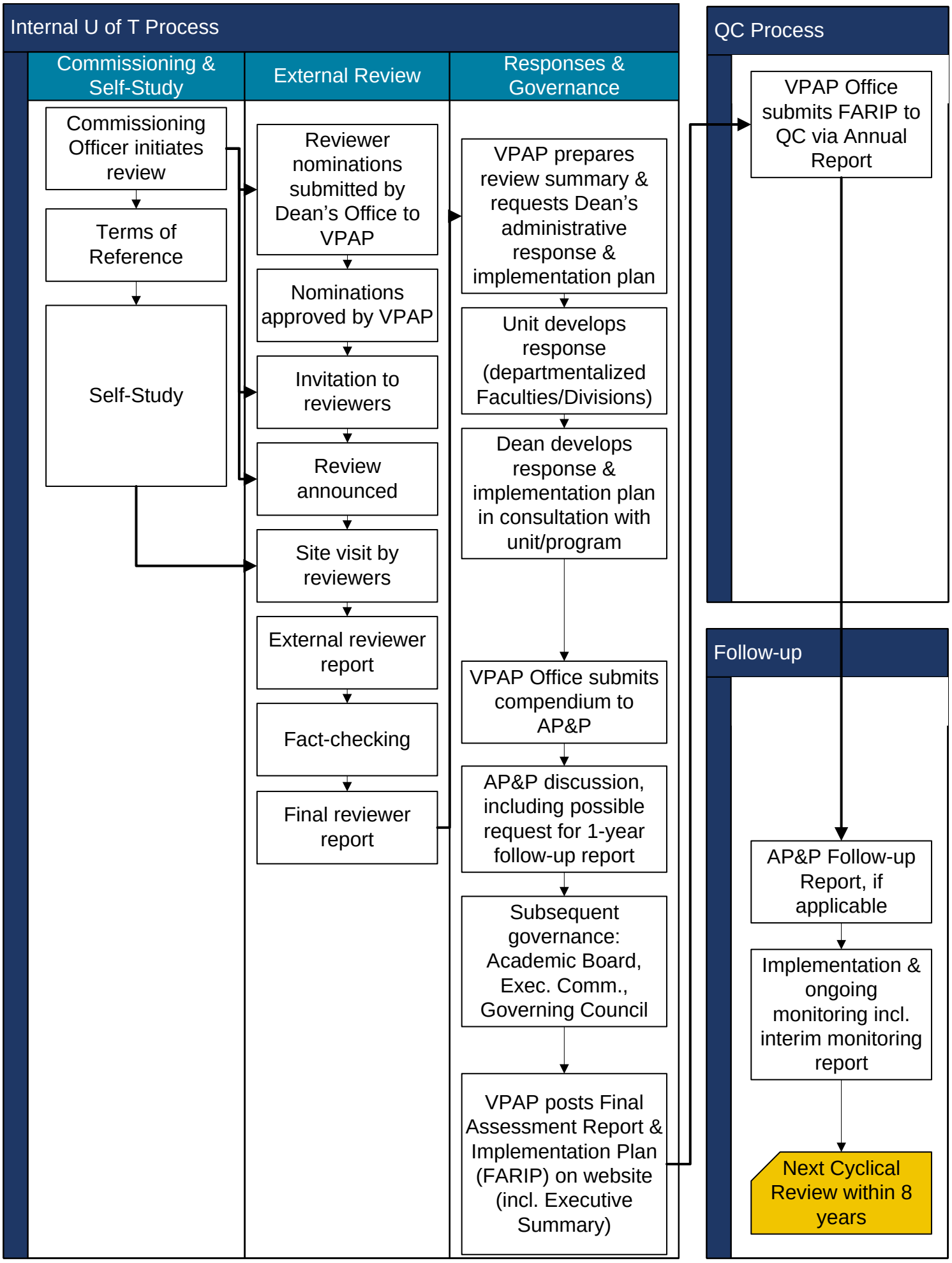
Issues that are addressed through existing, specific University procedures are considered out of scope for UTQAP reviews (e.g., individual Human Resources issues, specific health and safety concerns). Any such issues raised at any point during a review process (self-study, site visit, review report) must immediately be brought to the attention of the commissioning officer and routed through appropriate University channels for resolution.

6.6.2 Announcement

A review is publicly announced by the commissioning officer through appropriate unit and/or program channels and University and/or divisional media as appropriate. Submissions are invited from teaching and administrative staff, students, alumni and members of the program and/or unit community.

Any submissions provided to the commissioning officer in response to the Announcement are shared in confidence to the external reviewers, and are never part of the public web posting of materials (see 6.9.2.3).

Figure 4: Cyclical Program Review Protocol



6.7 Self-Study Requirements: Internal Program Perspective

6.7.1 Self-Study Contents

The degree program(s) and/or academic unit(s) under review shall prepare a self-study. The self-study is a broad-based, reflective and forward-looking report that includes critical self-analysis. It is an assessment of the strengths and challenges facing the program(s) and/or unit(s), the range of their activities and the nature of their future plans. The self-study should address the terms of reference, including the program evaluation criteria, as these will be provided to the external reviewers and will form the basis of their assessment.

The process of preparing a self-study must involve faculty, students and staff. The input of others deemed to be relevant and useful, such as graduates of the program and representatives of industry, the professions, practical training programs and employers may also be included.

In accordance with the QAF and University of Toronto policy, the self-study must address and document the following:

- Through a detailed description, the involvement of program faculty, staff and students in the self-study and how their views have been obtained and taken into account
- The terms of reference, including, for each discrete program that is part of the review according to the Schedule of Reviews and Terms of Reference, the evaluation criteria and quality indicators identified in section 6.7.2
- Program-related data and measures of performance, including applicable provincial, national and professional standards (where available), with a notation of all relevant data sources
- How concerns and recommendations raised in previous reviews have been addressed, especially those detailed in the Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan and subsequent monitoring reports from the previous Cyclical Review of the program
- For the first Cyclical Review of a new program, the steps taken to address any issues or items flagged in the monitoring report for follow-up, and/or items identified for follow-up by the Quality Council in its approval letter
- Areas that the program's faculty, staff and/or students have identified through the conduct of the self-study as:
    - Requiring improvement
    - Holding promise for enhancement and/or
    - Opportunities for curricular change

- Assessment of the adequacy of all relevant academic services that directly contribute to the academic quality of each program under review
- In the case of professional programs, the views of employers and professional associations, solicited by the unit/program (the commissioning officer may choose, instead or in addition, to make these views available to the Review Committee through the site visit meeting(s), see 6.8.4)

An outline of the core elements of the self-study is provided on the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs' website.

The self-study is reviewed and approved by the commissioning officer to ensure that it meets the requirements outlined in 6.7.1.

6.7.2 Evaluation Criteria

Reviews of undergraduate and graduate degree programs and graduate diplomas require, at minimum, the evaluation criteria set out below. Commissioning officers may enlarge or enhance the criteria to meet the needs of the disciplines.

6.7.2.1 Program objectives and key features

a) Consistency of the program's objectives with the institution's mission and the University of Toronto's/the division's/unit's academic plans, priorities and commitments, including consistency with any implementation plans developed following a previous review

b) Evidence that the following have been substantially considered in the context of the program and its associated resources:

   1. Universal design principles and/or the potential need to provide mental or physical disability-related accommodations, reflecting the University's *Statement of Commitment Regarding Persons with Disabilities*
   2. Support for student well-being and sense of community in the learning and teaching environment, reflecting the work of the Expert Panel on Undergraduate Student Educational Experience and the commitment to establishing a Culture of Caring and Excellence as recommended by the Presidential and Provostial Task Force on Student Mental Health
   3. Opportunities for removing barriers to access and increasing retention rates for Indigenous students; for integrating Indigenous content into the curriculum in consultation with Indigenous curriculum developers; and for addressing any discipline-specific calls to action, reflecting the commitments made in *Answering the Call: Wecheehetowin: Final Report*

of the Steering Committee for the University of Toronto Response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

4. Opportunities for removing barriers to access and increasing retention rates for Black students; for promoting intersectional Black flourishing, fostering inclusive excellence and enabling mutuality in teaching and learning, reflecting the commitments made in the *Scarborough Charter* and consistent with the recommendations of the *Anti-Black Racism Task Force Final Report*
5. Opportunities for fostering an equitable, diverse, and inclusive teaching and learning environment, reflecting the values articulated in existing institutional documents such as the *Statement on Equity, Diversity, and Excellence*, the *Antisemitism Working Group Final Report*, the aforementioned reports, and future institutional reports related to equity, diversity and inclusion

c) (Where appropriate) Unique curriculum or program innovations, creative components, significant high impact practices

d) Initiatives taken to enhance the quality of the program and the associated learning and teaching environment

6.7.2.2 Program requirements

a) Appropriateness of the program's structure and the requirements to meet its objectives and program-level learning outcomes, including the structure and requirements of any identified streams (undergraduate), fields or concentrations (graduate)

b) Appropriateness of the program's structure, requirements and program-level learning outcomes in meeting the institution's applicable undergraduate or graduate Degree Level Expectations

c) Appropriateness and effectiveness of the mode(s) of delivery (i.e., means or medium used in delivering a program; e.g., lecture format, distance, online, synchronous/asynchronous, problem-based, compressed part-time, flex-time, multi-campus, inter-institutional collaboration or other non-standard forms of delivery) to facilitate students' successful completion of the program-level learning outcomes

d) Ways in which the curriculum addresses the current state of the discipline or area of study and is appropriate for the level of the program

6.7.2.3 Program requirements for graduate programs only

a) Clear rationale for program length that ensures that students can complete the program-level learning outcomes and requirements within the time required

b) Evidence that each graduate student in the program is required to take all of the course requirements from among graduate-level courses; evidence of sufficient graduate-level courses that students will be able to meet this requirement[3]

c) For research-focused graduate programs, clear indication of the nature and suitability of the major research requirements for degree completion

6.7.2.4 Assessment of teaching and learning

a) Appropriateness and effectiveness of the methods for assessing student achievement of the program-level learning outcomes and degree level expectations

b) Appropriateness and effectiveness of the plans to monitor and assess:

1. The overall quality of the program
2. Whether the program is achieving in practice its proposed objectives
3. Whether its students are achieving the program-level learning outcomes
4. How the resulting information will be documented and subsequently used to inform continuous program improvement

6.7.2.5 Admission requirements

a) Appropriateness of the program's admission requirements given the program's objectives and program-level learning outcomes

b) Sufficient explanation of alternative requirements, if applicable, for admission into a graduate, second-entry or undergraduate program, e.g., minimum grade point average, additional languages or portfolios, and how the program recognizes prior work or learning experience

6.7.2.6 Resources

In making assessments related to resources here and in 6.7.2.7, reviewers will be required to recognize the institution's autonomy in determining priorities for funding, space and faculty allocation.

Given the program's class sizes and cohorts as well as its program-level learning outcomes:

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[3] While the QAF requires a minimum of 2/3 courses be at the graduate level, the University of Toronto requires all courses be at the graduate level. See footnote 2 for additional QAF guidance.

a) Participation of a sufficient number and quality of core faculty who are competent to teach and/or supervise in and achieve the goals of the program and foster the appropriate academic environment

b) If applicable, discussion/explanation of the role and approximate percentage of adjunct and sessional faculty/limited term appointments used in the delivery of the program and the associated plans to ensure the sustainability of the program and quality of the student experience (see QAF Guidance)

c) If required, provision of supervision of experiential learning opportunities

d) Adequacy of the administrative unit's utilization of existing human, physical and financial resources

e) Evidence that there are adequate resources to sustain the quality of scholarship and research activities produced by students, including library support, information technology support, and laboratory access

6.7.2.7 Resources for graduate programs only

Given the program's class sizes and cohorts as well as its program-level learning outcomes:

a) Evidence that faculty have the recent research or professional/clinical expertise needed to sustain the program, promote innovation, and foster an appropriate intellectual climate

b) Where appropriate to the program, evidence that financial assistance for students will be sufficient to ensure adequate quality and numbers of students

c) Evidence of how supervisory loads will be distributed, in light of qualifications and appointment status of the faculty.

6.7.2.8 Quality and other indicators

a) Evidence of the quality of the faculty (e.g., qualifications, funding, honours, awards, research, innovation and scholarly record; appropriateness of collective faculty expertise to contribute substantively to the program and commitment to student mentoring)

    1. The quality of the scholarship of the faculty, and the degree to which that scholarship is brought to bear in teaching

b) Any other evidence that the program and faculty will ensure the intellectual quality of the student experience.

c) Quality indicators related to students (e.g., grade level for admission; applications and registrations; attrition/retention rates; times-to-completion; final year

academic achievement; graduation rates; scholarly output; success rates in provincial and national scholarships; competitions; academic awards; student in-course reports on teaching; and commitment to professional and transferable skills)

d) Quality indicators related to program graduates (e.g., rates of graduation; employment six months and two years after graduation; postgraduate study; “skills match”; and alumni reports on program quality when available and when permitted by the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA). Auditors will be instructed that these items may not be available and applicable to all programs).

e) Any additional indicators of quality identified by the division or academic unit, including but not limited to data to support the assessment of progress towards fulfilling the plans, priorities and commitments identified in 6.7.2.1.a and 6.7.2.1.b.

f) How the program compares to the best in its field among peer institutions in Canada, North America and internationally, including areas of strength and opportunities

6.8 External Evaluation: Reviewer Selection and Review Process

Independent expert review is foundational to the Cyclical Program Review process.

The commissioning officer is responsible for the selection of the external review committee in consultation with the unit and/or program(s) to be reviewed. All reviewers must be approved by the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs, before they are invited to serve.

- When the commissioning officer is a Dean, the Dean’s Office forwards reviewer nominations to the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs for approval. The Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs then confirms the final list of approved reviewers and the Dean’s Office issues invitations.
- When the commissioning officer is the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs, the Dean’s Office forwards reviewer nominations to the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs. The Vice-Provost then consults with the Provost, who may also add to the list of nominations. The Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs then confirms the final list of approved reviewers and issues invitations.

6.8.1 Selection of Reviewers

The evaluation will be conducted by a Review Committee composed of at least:

1. Two external reviewers for an undergraduate program qualified by discipline and experience to review the program(s)
2. Three external reviewers for a graduate program qualified by discipline and experience to review the program(s)
3. Three external reviewers for the concurrent review of an undergraduate and graduate program

Where divisional policies and practices are in place to support their selection and participation, commissioning officers, with the approval of the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs, may assign additional discretionary members to the Review Committee, such as qualified and experienced individuals selected from industry or the professions and/or student members.

The external reviewers should be active and respected in their disciplines. They will normally be associate or full professors with program management experience and representatives of peer institutions offering high-quality programs in the field under review.

The commitments articulated in the University's *Statement on Equity, Diversity and Excellence* should inform the nomination and selection of reviewers.

In cases where more than one program is being considered by the Review Committee, reviewers should be selected to ensure the appropriate review of all the programs being considered.

All members of the Review Committee must be at arm's length from the program under review; that is, they should not have a particular interest in the outcome of the review due to personal or professional relationships with members of the unit (see 2.4.3.1).

Nominations are submitted to the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs using the nomination form in order to:

- Streamline the approval of nominations
- Support disclosure of potential conflicts of interest
- Ensure alignment with QAF and University of Toronto requirements

The commissioning officer will ask selected external reviewers to confirm that there is no conflict of interest at the time of being invited to conduct the review.

6.8.2 Role and Obligations of External Reviewers

The commissioning officer is responsible for ensuring that all members of the Review Committee understand their role and obligations, which include:

- Responding to the terms of reference (6.6.1) and the report requirements (see 6.8.5)
- Recognizing the institution's autonomy to determine priorities for funding, space and faculty allocation
- Respecting the confidentiality required for all aspects of the review process

Clear terms of reference provided in advance of the site visit will assist the reviewers in understanding their role and obligations. The commissioning officer will also emphasize reviewers' roles and obligations when meeting with them during the site visit, and provide a template for the review report (see 6.8.5) to the reviewers to ensure that all required elements are addressed.

6.8.3 Documentation to be Provided to the Review Committee

The commissioning officer will identify what reports and information are to be provided to the Review Committee in advance of the site visit. The following core documents must be included:

- Terms of reference
- Self-study
- Previous review report, administrative response(s), and Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan
- Any non-University commissioned reviews (e.g., for professional accreditation) completed since the last review of the unit and/or program
- Any documents required to provide context for the evaluation of "Program objectives and key features" (e.g., institutional or divisional plans, reports or policy statements that articulate priorities or commitments)
- The site visit schedule

External reviewers are provided with access to all course descriptions and the *curricula vitae* of faculty. This can be done through provision of course calendars, web links, etc.

Documentation may be provided electronically or in hard copy. Regardless of format, the commissioning division must ensure that copies of all materials provided to the Review Committee are retained, including any supplementary materials provided at the request of the reviewers during their visit (e.g., supplementary data, policy documents, etc.).

6.8.4 Site Visit

Cyclical program reviews involving a research master's program or a doctoral program must incorporate an **on-site visit**. All provostial reviews conducted under the UTQAP include research master's and/or doctoral programs.

A site visit is also required for cyclical program reviews that do not include research master's or doctoral programs (e.g., reviews of undergraduate programs and/or professional master's programs). For such reviews, the Dean may request that the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs grant approval for a **virtual site visit**, if the external reviewers are satisfied that the off-site option is acceptable. Requests to approve a virtual site visit must provide a clear justification for holding a virtual site visit.

Regardless of format, reviewers should visit together. During their visit, provision must be made for reviewers to meet with faculty, students, administrative staff and senior program administrators as well as members of relevant cognate units as determined by the commissioning officer. In the case of professional programs, provision may be made for reviewers to meet with employers and professional associates in order to make their views available to the reviewers (see also 6.7.1).

6.8.5 Review Report

The Review Committee will normally submit one joint report to the commissioning officer, within two months of the site visit. The Review Committee's report should:

- Address the substance of the self-study, with particular focus on responding to the evaluation criteria set out in section 6.7.2 above
- Address the Terms of Reference
- Identify and commend the program's notably strong and creative attributes
- Describe the program's respective strengths, areas for improvement and opportunities for enhancement
- Provide evidence of any significant innovation or creativity in the content and/or delivery of the program relative to other such programs
- Make at least three recommendations for specific steps to be taken that will lead to the continuous improvement of the program, distinguishing between those the program can itself take and those that require external action
- Identify the distinctive attributes of each discrete program documented in the self-study in those cases where more than one program, program mode, or program location is being reviewed
- Ensure that any commentary or recommendations on issues that are within the purview of the university's internal budgetary decision-making processes (e.g.,

such as faculty complement and/or space requirements) are tied directly to issues of program quality or sustainability

Before accepting the report as final, the commissioning officer, after consulting with the head of the unit under review, will bring to the attention of the reviewers any clear factual errors that can be corrected in the report, and/or omitted UTQAP requirements that can be added to the report. The commissioning officer then formally accepts the final report and submits it to the Office of the Vice Provost, Academic Programs.

6.9 Institutional Perspective and Response

6.9.1 Institutional Authority: Administrative Perspective

The Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs, as the identified institutional authority, assesses the Review Committee report.

6.9.1.1 Review Summary and Request for Administrative Response and Implementation Plan

The Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs develops a full and accurate Summary of the External Review Report, which identifies the following:

- Significant strengths of the program
- Opportunities for further program improvement and enhancement with a view towards continuous improvement

The Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs provides a draft of the summary to the Dean's Office to ensure any errors can be corrected prior to governance.

The Vice-Provost, Academic Programs also requests a formal administrative response (6.9.1.4) to the Review Committee report from the relevant Dean and provides the Dean's Office with a table listing all recommendations of the external reviewers.

A timeline will be specified by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs, outlining when the Review Committee report and administrative response and Implementation Plan will be brought forward to divisional and University governance.

6.9.1.2 Single Department Divisions

In single department divisions, the Dean of the academic division develops the response and Implementation Plan (6.9.1.4) to the external review report and recommendations. The Office of the Dean ensures that the response is reflected in the table listing all recommendations. If any recommendations have not been selected for further action in the Implementation Plan, the Office of the Dean will ensure the table includes an explanation of why the recommendation has not been prioritized.

6.9.1.3 Departmentalized Divisions

In departmentalized divisions, clearly separate administrative responses to the external review report and recommendations are required:

a) Response of the Dean of the academic division: to develop their response and Implementation Plan (6.9.1.4) to the external review report and recommendations, the Dean will consult with the program and/or unit under review; the Dean's response will reflect this consultation and respond to the key elements of the unit's response
b) Response of the Chair/Director of the program and/or unit: as part of their consultation, the Dean will request that the program and/or unit prepare a brief administrative response to the review report and recommendations; the Dean will specify whether the response is to be provided in the table alone, or whether a brief letter is also expected

The Office of the Dean ensures that the separate responses and assessments are reflected in the table listing all recommendations. If any recommendations have not been selected for further action in the Implementation Plan, the Office of the Dean will ensure the table includes an explanation of why the recommendation has not been prioritized.

6.9.1.4 Administrative Response and Implementation Plan: Required Elements

The Dean's response to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs will discuss the following:

1. The plans and recommendations proposed in the self-study
2. The recommendations advanced by the Review Committee
3. The program's response to the Review Committee's report(s)

The Dean's response includes an implementation plan that sets out and prioritizes those recommendations that are selected for implementation, and describes:

1. Any changes in organization, policy or governance that would be necessary to meet the recommendations
2. The resources, financial and otherwise, that would be provided in supporting the implementation of selected recommendations, and who will provide them
3. A specific timeline for the implementation of any of those recommendations, and who will be responsible for acting on them
4. Any additional recommendations that the unit, the Dean(s) and/or the university may identify as requiring action as a result of the review
5. A specific timeline for monitoring the implementation of those recommendations, which will include a brief report from the Dean to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs due midway between the year of the last and next site visits

Primary responsibility to execute the Implementation Plan lies with the leadership of the program (at the program or academic unit level), who are also responsible for aligning with identified implementation timelines and communicating among stakeholders, including students and the public.

6.9.2 University Accountability and Reporting Requirements

Reviews are important mechanisms of quality assurance accountability. The accountability framework for the review of academic programs and units is contained within the *Policy for Approval and Review of Academic Programs and Units*. The *Framework* outlines the following responsibilities and mechanisms:

- Program and unit reviews are considered by governance in order to allow governors to ensure that academic administrators are reviewing programs and units on a regular basis and are responding to these reviews in a manner that achieves the purpose of maintaining and improving program quality.
- The Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs ensures that reviews are performed on a regular basis, that they are conducted appropriately and that the issues identified in the self-study and by reviewers are dealt with appropriately. Where quality concerns are raised in the cyclical review, the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs will monitor the timely implementation of improvements.
- Concerns may be raised in an external review report that require a long and sustained period of response. In order to ensure that improvements are made, the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs may request a follow-up one-year report from the relevant Dean to bring forward to the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs.
- Occasionally a program may have a review or series of reviews indicating significant problems or deficiencies such that admissions to the program should be discontinued until significant improvements are made. In these situations, the divisional Dean or the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs may suspend program admissions until there is evidence that changes have been made to address quality concerns.

6.9.2.1 Governance Reporting

The Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs submits the summary and the Dean's Administrative Response to the Report (including the implementation plan and excluding all confidential information) to University governance through the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs (AP&P) of the Academic Board on a biannual basis in the form of a compendium of draft Final Assessment Reports and Implementation Plans (see 6.9.2.2).

The Committee's reading groups also receive the reviewers' reports, the program and/or unit responses (in departmentalized divisions in which unit responses include a brief letter in addition to the table), and the self-studies.

As defined in its terms of reference, AP&P, which reports to the Academic Board, "has general responsibility for policy on, and for monitoring, the quality of education and the research activities of the University." The Committee's membership and meeting schedule are maintained online. As with all Governing Council bodies, its membership is broadly representative of the academic divisions including teaching staff, administrative staff, students and alumni.

The compendium is forwarded, together with the record of the Committee's discussion, to the Agenda Committee of the Academic Board, which determines whether there are any issues warranting discussion by the Academic Board. As defined in its terms of reference, "the Academic Board is responsible for consideration of policy in the academic area and for monitoring matters within its area of responsibility. In general, the Board is concerned with matters affecting the teaching, learning, and research functions of the University, the establishment of University objectives and priorities, the development of long-term and short-term plans and the effective use of resources in the course of these pursuits."

The compendium, along with the record(s) of each previous body's discussion, is sent to the Academic Board, the Executive Committee and finally to the Governing Council for information.

6.9.2.2 Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan (FARIP)

The Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan (FARIP) is a key outcome of the Cyclical Program Review. The FARIP forms the basis of a continuous improvement process through monitoring of key performance indicators.

The Vice-Provost, Academic Programs compiles the draft FARIP and brings the draft FARIP forward to AP&P, providing the institutional synthesis of the external evaluation and internal responses and assessments.

The FARIP includes:

1. The full and accurate summary described in 6.9.1.1
2. The Dean's Administrative Response and Implementation Plan described in 6.9.1.4
3. The table described in the subsections of 6.9.1, listing all recommendations of the external reviewers; the responses and assessments from the Dean; (if applicable) the separate responses and assessments of the unit/program; and (if applicable) explanations of why recommendations have not been prioritized

4. Relevant excerpts from the Report of the AP&P meeting, including whether
    a. The Dean's Administrative Response and Implementation Plan adequately addressed all the issues identified;
    b. There were questions, comments or substantive issues that the committee considered;
    c. A follow-up one-year report is required from the Dean
5. A confidential section, if required (e.g., where personnel issues need to be addressed);
6. An institutional Executive Summary, prepared by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs, exclusive of any confidential information and suitable for publication on the web.

At the conclusion of the governance process (6.9.2.1) and following AP&P's approval of the Report of the AP&P meeting, the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs finalizes the FARIP to reflect AP&P's Report approval.

6.9.2.3 Access to Review Materials

6.9.2.3.1 Circulation of the Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan

The FARIP will be posted on the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs website (exclusive of any confidential information) and provided to the Dean and academic unit/program under review to take ownership of and to act on, as appropriate. It is strongly recommended that the FARIP be posted on the academic unit/program's website. For programs offered by an affiliated institution, the FARIP is also to be publicly posted on the affiliated institution's website in an easily discoverable place. The Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs will also provide links to the web posting of the FARIP to the University's governing body through the Governing Council secretariat.

6.9.2.3.2 Circulation of the Review Committee Report

The Review Committee report is a public document and should be circulated within the unit reviewed along with the FARIP.

6.9.2.3.3 Access to Other Review Materials

It is left to the discretion of the program(s) and/or units themselves to decide whether or not they wish to post the full records of the review process including self-study, review report and separate responses on their website. In posting any materials to do with the review all confidential materials must be removed before posting, including any confidential data provided in support of the self-study process.

6.9.2.4 Monitoring Reports

The Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs provides for the timely monitoring of the implementation of the recommendations, and the appropriate distribution, including web postings, of the scheduled monitoring reports.

All review processes require a brief interim monitoring report as described in (6.9.1.4) and confirmed in the FARIP.

In addition, to ensure that improvements are made to address concerns raised in an external review report that require a long and sustained period of response, AP&P may ask the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs to request a follow-up one-year report from the relevant Dean to bring forward to the Committee.

6.9.3 Quality Council Reporting Requirements

The Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs will provide the Quality Council with an annual report, which lists the past year's completed FARIPs and monitoring reports and provides an attestation by the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs that all UTQAP Cyclical Program Review processes have been followed. The report will include a link to the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs web posting of all completed FARIPs, as well as any monitoring reports that have been completed over the prior year.

The annual report and related Cyclical Program Review processes described in 6.9.3 will occasionally be reviewed for compliance by the Quality Council. Only when members find an issue or potential area of concern will the report be discussed by the Quality Council. Should the Council then determine that a substantive issue(s) appears to exist, it may decide to initiate a Focused Audit.

6.10 Quality Council Audit Process

The Cyclical Review of undergraduate and/or graduate programs that were undertaken within the period since the conduct of the previous Audit are eligible for selection for the university's next Cyclical Audit.

7 Cyclical Audit and Focused Audit

As described in the QAF, the Cyclical Audit supports transparency and accountability in the development and review of academic programs, to assure students, citizens, and the government of the international standards of quality assurance processes. The Cyclical Audit plays a role in evaluating past and current quality assurance processes and practices, and the University's approach to continuous improvement.

Under the terms outlined in the QAF, the Quality Council conducts a Cyclical Audit of each university's quality assurance processes and practices, as they are articulated in the university's IQAP, at least once every eight years. The Quality Council publishes the audit schedule, including the date of the next Cyclical Audit of the University of Toronto and its UTQAP.

7.1 Pre-Audit Orientation and Briefing Details

Approximately one-year prior to the scheduled Cyclical Audit, the University, represented by the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs and the Director, Academic Programs, Planning and Quality Assurance, will participate in a half-day briefing with the Secretariat and an Audit Team member. Participation by any additional relevant stakeholders will be coordinated by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs.

7.2 Institutional Self-Study

The Cyclical Audit process requires the preparation of a self-study. The self-study is prepared by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs, in consultation with academic divisions (Deans' Offices, faculty, students, staff), institutional offices, and relevant boards and committees of Governing Council, and submitted to the Quality Assurance Secretariat in advance of the desk audit.

The self-study will:

- Address institutional context
- Assess the University's quality assurance processes, including challenges and opportunities, specifically:
    - The degree to which the University's quality assurance practices contribute to the continuous improvement of its programs through the implementation of the outcomes of cyclical program reviews and the monitoring of new programs
- Pay particular attention to any issues flagged in the previous audit

7.3 Audit Process and Outcomes

As provided for in the QAF, an Audit Team will review the University's self-study, select and conduct a desk audit of documentation associated with a sample of the University's completed new program and cyclical review processes, and conduct a site visit. The Audit Team will prepare a report that shall not contain any confidential information, and a separate addendum with detailed findings related to the audited programs. The report may include findings in the form of Suggestions, Recommendations, or Causes for

concern. As outlined in QAF 6.2.7, the Audit Report will recommend that the Quality Council take one or more steps, as appropriate.

7.3.1 Publication of Main Audit Findings

The Quality Assurance Secretariat publishes the approved report of the overall findings, absent the addendum that details the findings related to the audited programs, together with a record of the recommendations on the Quality Council's website. The University will also publish the report (absent the previously specified addendum) on its website.

7.3.2 Web Publication of Follow-Up Report

If the Quality Council requires a Follow-up Response Report at the Audit Committee's recommendation, the University will submit the Report within the specified timeframe, detailing the steps it has taken to address the recommendations and/or Cause(s) for Concern. The Quality Assurance Secretariat publishes the Follow-up Response Report and the auditors' report on the scope and adequacy of the University's response on the Quality Council website. The Quality Assurance Secretariat provides copies that the University will publish on its website.

7.3.3 Focused Audit and Focused Audit Report

The Quality Council may require a Focused Audit, either at the Audit Committee's recommendation arising from a Cyclical Audit, or based on concerns about the University's quality assurance processes. A Focused Audit may take the form of a desk audit and/or an additional site visit and does not replace the Cyclical Audit. Following the conduct of a Focused Audit, the auditors prepare a Focused Audit Report that may include Suggestions, Recommendations, and/or Cause(s) for Concern. The report will be published on both the Quality Council and University websites. The University of Toronto will participate in a focused audit, as required.