

UTQAP Cyclical Review: Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan

1 Review Summary

Program(s) Reviewed:	Computer Engineering, BAsC Electrical Engineering, BAsC Electrical and Computer Engineering: MASc, MEng, PhD
Division/Unit Reviewed OR Division/Unit Offering Program(s):	The Edward S. Rogers Sr. Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering
Commissioning Officer:	Dean, Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering
Reviewers (Name, Affiliation):	• Ryan (Yunwei) Li, Professor and Department Chair, Electrical & Computer Engineering, University of Alberta • Derek Oliver, Professor and Department Head, Electrical & Computer Engineering, University of Manitoba • Arijit Raychowdhury, Professor and School Chair, Electrical & Computer Engineering, Georgia Institute of Technology
Date of Review Visit:	April 8-9, 2025
Review Report Received by VPAP:	May 15, 2025
Administrative Response(s) Received by VPAP:	March 3, 2026
Date Reported to AP&P:	March 31, 2026

Previous UTQAP Review

Date: June 18 – 19, 2018

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Significant Program Strengths:

- High quality of students with strong academic records
- Flexible undergraduate curriculum
- High level of faculty research activity with strong individual areas of expertise
- Impressive sense of community throughout the department

Opportunities for program enhancement

- Refine the department's mission and take "calculated risks" on how education and research are delivered and conducted
- Explore untapped potential opportunities for new areas of research collaboration and expansion
- Address lengthy time-to-completion for PhD students and the need for supervisory committee meetings
- Clarify expectations for faculty performance
- Refresh faculty complement and balance full professors with junior faculty
- Engage in a review of the undergraduate curriculum that emphasizes "modes of thought" rather than "information transfer"
- Consider whether it still makes sense to offer both the MASc and MEng programs, given the programs' flexibility; track employment and salary outcomes to help in this determination

Current Review: Documentation and Consultation

Documentation Provided to Reviewers

Terms of reference; self-study, including faculty curricula vitae; previous review report (2017-2018) including the administrative response; access to all graduate and undergraduate course descriptions; Faculty academic plan and annual impact report; Dean's presentation on the Faculty; and University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process (UTQAP).

Consultation Process

ECE faculty, students and administrative staff, Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering dean and vice-deans as well as chairs and directors of the Faculty's cognate units (Aerospace Studies, Biomedical Engineering, Chemical Engineering & Applied Chemistry, Civil & Mineral

Engineering, Engineering Science, Materials Science & Engineering, Mechanical & Industrial Engineering, and Transdisciplinary Engineering Education & Practice).

Current Review: Findings and Recommendations

1. Undergraduate Program(s)

Unless otherwise noted, all bulleted comments apply to all programs reviewed.

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Overall quality
 - ▶ Strong undergraduate programs are well-established and effectively meet the broad intended outcomes
 - ▶ Department size and academic excellence allow for a broad and in-depth range of subject offerings
- Admissions requirements
 - ▶ Undergraduate programs consistently admit students with exceptionally high entrance averages, exceeding 96% from high school in recent years
- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Strong interest in evolving the highly flexible undergraduate curriculum; students view the flexibility as a major strength, and department members value the intent behind offering this level of choice
 - ▶ Draft proposals for “guided flexible programs” demonstrate a thoughtful evolution of the curriculum, preserving its original intent while offering clearer pathways and maintaining flexibility for interdisciplinary specializations and exceptional cases
 - ▶ Proposed undergraduate program revisions honour the original vision while enhancing student guidance across program offerings
 - ▶ Newly introduced 2nd-year design course received strong positive feedback from students as a valuable and engaging experience
 - ▶ Mode of delivery of the programs is appropriate
 - ▶ Program curricula appropriately address the current state of the discipline and suit their respective program levels
 - ▶ Reopening of the undergraduate thesis course provides added opportunities for student research and experiential learning
 - ▶ Flexibility of the Computer Engineering and Electrical Engineering programs has served the department well over many years
 - ▶ Highly flexible undergraduate curriculum and focused foundational research portfolio have effectively served the department
- Accessibility and diversity
 - ▶ Since 2020, the proportion of women in ECE programs has doubled, reaching 40% in Computer Engineering and 34% in Electrical Engineering
 - ▶ Various FASE committees and advisors actively address barriers and promote an inclusive, welcoming culture

- ▶ Information on accessibility and accommodation support is easily accessible to students via the university website
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Undergraduate clubs cover diverse activities, supported by USRA allocations and the recently reopened ECE Thesis Undergraduate Course
 - ▶ Undergraduate clubs demonstrate strong inter-departmental collaboration
- Quality indicators – alumni
 - ▶ Graduates achieve employment rates that are on par with or exceed the Engineering average

The reviewers identified the following **areas of concern**:

- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Students reported feeling intimidated by the senior-level curriculum, citing an overwhelming degree of flexibility and difficulty navigating course choices
 - ▶ High degree of flexibility has resulted in significant class size imbalances across subdisciplines, making it difficult to manage resource allocation due to the numerous student pathway permutations
 - ▶ Strong interest in computer engineering, software engineering, and AI/ML has led to significant enrollment imbalances across ECE subdisciplines; the program's flexibility limits the department's ability to manage this, creating challenges in resources, class sizes, workload, and student experience
 - ▶ Curriculum initiatives largely stem from course-based improvements and individual instructor efforts
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Uncertainty in the number of "Track One" and "Core 8" students electing ECE at the start of second year creates significant resource planning challenges for the department, compromising the ability to refine and enhance the quality of 2nd year core courses

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Admissions requirements
 - ▶ Collaborate with FASE to review admissions and transfer processes to better anticipate resource impacts
- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Continue developing the proposed "guided flexible programs," which maintain the spirit of the current curriculum while offering clearer pathways within ECE, including shared specializations and flexibility for exceptional cases
 - ▶ Investigate the reasons behind low uptake of the reopened undergraduate thesis course to support increased participation and maximize experiential learning opportunities
 - ▶ Complete the undergraduate program review and implement its recommendations

- Innovation
 - ▶ Consider the development of online programs or certificates, in line with emerging trends at other major universities
- Assessment of learning
 - ▶ Strengthen collective processes to review teaching and learning success through the revised undergraduate curriculum framework

2. Graduate Program(s)

Unless otherwise noted, all bulleted comments apply to all programs reviewed.

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Overall quality
 - ▶ MEng, MAsC, and PhD programs are well-established and meet the broad intended outcomes
 - ▶ Research requirement for degree completion in the PhD (including direct entry) and MAsC programs is suitable
 - ▶ MEng program generates significant revenue and benefits from financial incentives encouraging its growth
 - ▶ ECE has well-established MAsC and PhD research programs, alongside a rapidly growing MEng program
- Admissions requirements
 - ▶ Department demonstrates consistent attention to international trends, especially in graduate recruitment and program competitiveness, which is key to attracting top research students and refining the MEng program's goals and structure
 - ▶ Ongoing high demand for admission across all graduate programs
- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Mode of delivery of the programs is appropriate
 - ▶ Good range of graduate course offerings, with efforts underway to formalize special topic courses
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Strong engagement with experiential learning, with all faculty supervising capstone projects and encouraged to propose projects for MEng students
 - ▶ Graduate students are involved in diverse research projects and receive positive supervision
 - ▶ The optional MEng project promotes increased engagement with PIs and helps bridge the gap between PI research focus and the professional goals of the MEng cohort
- Quality indicators – graduate students
 - ▶ Although time-to-completion in the PhD program is longer than desirable, the review panel is pleased with the development of a program aimed at addressing this challenge
 - ▶ Implementation of a Time-to-Completion Tracking System has led to a significant increase in annual supervisory committee meetings and provides advisors with a comprehensive dashboard to support timely graduate student progress

- Quality indicators – alumni
 - ▶ Graduates achieve employment rates that are on par with or exceed the Engineering average
- Quality indicators – faculty
 - ▶ Supervisory loads appear to be appropriately distributed based on faculty qualifications and appointment status
 - ▶ Faculty possess recent research or professional/clinical expertise that sustains the program, promotes innovation, and fosters a strong intellectual climate
- Student funding
 - ▶ Minimum PhD funding of \$40,000/year is a strong level of support and sets a positive example for U15 institutions; ECE's plan to guarantee TA allocations for incoming PhD students reinforces this commitment.

The reviewers identified the following **areas of concern**:

- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Requiring 8 courses for direct entry PhD may be uncompetitive; current course load expectations could limit flexibility
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ MEng students have limited on-campus space for group work, relying mostly on the library
 - ▶ Lack of dedicated space hinders collaboration and weakens the optional project component compared to undergraduate capstone support
 - ▶ Current TA performance assessment is limited by union constraints, lacks connection to future TA assignments, and may negatively affect undergraduate learning and graduate TA training, especially as guaranteed TA positions for PhD students are introduced
 - ▶ With the rapid increase of MEng students and their specific needs, there is demand for more dedicated, MEng-oriented courses
 - ▶ Graduate students desire more opportunities to connect beyond their immediate research groups and department; addressing this would foster multidisciplinary collaboration and expand local research networks
- Quality indicators – graduate students
 - ▶ PhD time-to-completion remains longer than desirable
 - ▶ Time to completion for MASc remains static or slightly increasing
 - ▶ PhD completion times are increasing, influenced by subdisciplinary factors, advising cultures, industry involvement, and post-pandemic work patterns, complicating efforts to improve completion timelines

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Overall quality
 - ▶ Balance further expansion of the MEng program with considerations of sustainability and program quality to ensure long-term success

- Curriculum and program delivery
 - ▶ Develop the MEng program's identity beyond revenue generation by establishing international benchmarks for pedagogical innovation, distinct from PhD and MASc courses
 - ▶ Explore online delivery options to enhance the flexibility of the MEng program
 - ▶ Consider developing standalone, application-focused courses specifically for the MEng program to better distinguish it from MASc and PhD offerings, while also establishing enrolment guidelines to avoid replicating resource imbalances seen in the undergraduate programs
 - ▶ Re-evaluate the requirement of 8 courses for direct entry PhD to ensure competitiveness, and consider expanding initiatives like Flexible Summer Graduate Course Options to support greater flexibility in degree completion
 - ▶ Continue efforts to convert special topic courses into formal graduate courses and consider developing more dedicated, application-focused courses to meet the specific needs of the growing MEng student population
 - ▶ Develop MEng-specific courses carefully to avoid replicating the undergraduate program's resourcing challenges
 - ▶ Develop and promote the MEng program as a world-class, professionally focused postgraduate option for motivated professionals seeking advanced learning, helping to mitigate uncertainties in IRCC regulations
 - ▶ Further develop the MEng program structure and courses to clearly differentiate from MASc and PhD offerings, enhancing quality and establishing international leadership
- Assessment of learning
 - ▶ Extend the collective processes used at the undergraduate level, such as CEAB-defined graduate attribute monitoring and coordinated curriculum initiatives, to the MEng program, as the outcomes and needs of this cohort parallel those of undergraduate students
- Student engagement, experience and program support services
 - ▶ Provide dedicated on-campus group workspaces for MEng students, comparable to those available for undergraduate capstone projects, to enhance the optional project component
 - ▶ Create more opportunities for graduate students to connect beyond their immediate research groups and areas to foster multidisciplinary collaboration and enhance local research networks
 - ▶ Establish a more robust Teaching Assistant performance review process that complies with collective agreements while enhancing consistency in quality and performance

3. Faculty/Research

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Overall quality
 - ▶ Excellent faculty and scholarship contribute to high-quality teaching and training for both undergraduate and graduate students
 - ▶ Faculty leadership roles in Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), including two society presidents, highlight the department's strong global reputation in engineering
- Research
 - ▶ Department has a strong research portfolio with upcoming hires positioned to support strategic renewal efforts
 - ▶ ECE professors demonstrate diverse, interdisciplinary engagement and maintain strong productivity in research input and output
 - ▶ ECE receives the highest total funding among all FASE departments and institutes
 - ▶ Annual publications, citations, and patent disclosures are impressively high
 - ▶ ECE includes many renowned researchers holding nationally and internationally recognized fellowships
 - ▶ Researchers address significant problems, producing high-impact publications, patents, and successful commercialization outcomes
 - ▶ ECE researchers actively participate in multidisciplinary projects within U of T research centres and institutes, as well as external collaborations
 - ▶ Initiatives like the Distinguished Lecture Series and cross-appointed faculty foster academic engagement and collaboration
 - ▶ Non-teaching research space is managed through a senior committee with representation from major subdisciplinary groups, operating under well-established guidelines
- Faculty
 - ▶ Recently developed ECE workload policy enhances coordination and transparency in teaching load assignments, supporting improvements in the overall teaching and learning experience
 - ▶ Sufficient number and quality of core faculty to support program goals and foster a strong academic environment, with over 70% of courses currently taught by core faculty
 - ▶ Transparency and thoroughness of initiatives like the new academic workload guidelines effectively address operational complexity and support improved transparency and morale
 - ▶ Department leadership's systematic development of a mentorship program and Progress Through the Ranks scheme are commendable initiatives that should be expanded with incoming junior faculty
 - ▶ Centralized teaching assignments paired with workload guidelines are effective; extending this model to multidisciplinary research collaborations and supporting Teaching Stream professors' pedagogical scholarship will enhance departmental impact

- ▶ Supported by world-class faculty, including 17 new hires since the last review; upcoming hiring cycle offers a chance to balance subdisciplines and advance the department's global leadership in foundational and future ECE areas

The reviewers identified the following **areas of concern**:

- Research
 - ▶ Senior committee managing non-teaching research space may become misaligned with evolving and expanding research group portfolios, potentially limiting effective oversight
- Faculty
 - ▶ Faculty composition is heavily weighted toward senior ranks, with over 70% Full Professors and only 13% Assistant Professors, which may limit opportunities for renewal and innovation in teaching and research
 - ▶ Faculty composition remains senior-heavy, though planned junior hires over the next five years aim to improve balance following retirements
 - ▶ Institutional policy restricting teaching relief for prestigious research chairholders limits their ability to pursue large-scale, multidisciplinary research

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Research
 - ▶ Investigate the decline in tri-agency funding despite high total funding and consider incentives to encourage researchers to combine industry support with tri-agency grants like NSERC Alliance to maintain Research Support Fund allocations
 - ▶ Encourage ECE researchers to take on greater leadership in large multidisciplinary research initiatives nationally and internationally, leveraging funding from industry and government agencies (e.g., NSERC Alliance, CREATE, CFI Innovation Fund, NFRF) to boost tri-agency support and address lab renovation challenges
 - ▶ Maintain and support diversity of research expertise within ECE to preserve breadth despite short-term fluctuations in program demands
 - ▶ Strengthen links and collaboration between ECE and peer departments within the Faculty to complement existing industry and external academic partnerships, addressing perceived gaps in interdepartmental connectedness
 - ▶ Reimagine and enhance the public-facing description of the research portfolio to improve communication beyond technical audiences and increase broader public recognition
 - ▶ Define a strategic vision to guide the renewal and evolution of the department's research portfolios
 - ▶ Develop international benchmarks for research performance to clearly demonstrate the department's leadership and stature
- Faculty
 - ▶ Prioritize junior-rank hiring to balance the currently senior-heavy faculty composition, supporting continued innovation in teaching and research

- ▶ Provide targeted seed funding to teaching-stream professors to support collaborative studies demonstrating international pedagogical impact, potentially leveraging MEng project involvement and industry partnerships as stepping-stones
- ▶ Recruit teaching-focused personnel, especially teaching-stream professors, to support increased undergraduate and graduate enrollment by delivering courses and supervising MEng student projects
- ▶ Allocate teaching relief to prestigious research chairholders (CRC/CERC holders and PIs of large grants) within departmental workload guidelines to support large-scale research without reducing undergraduate access to their expertise
- ▶ Continue building and expanding the mentorship program and Progress Through the Ranks scheme to support the integration and development of junior faculty members
- ▶ Extend the centralized teaching assignment approach to support multidisciplinary research collaborations and provide opportunities for Teaching Stream professors to highlight their pedagogical scholarship
- ▶ Use upcoming faculty hires to strategically balance subdisciplinary expertise and strengthen the department's position as a global leader in foundational and emerging areas of ECE
- ▶ Create seed grants to support teaching-stream professors in developing and showcasing their pedagogical impact internationally

4. Administration

Note: Issues that are addressed through specific University processes and therefore considered out of scope for UTQAP reviews (e.g., individual Human Resources issues, specific health and safety concerns) are routed to proper University offices to be addressed, and are therefore not included in the Review Summary component of the Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan.

The reviewers observed the following **strengths**:

- Relationships
 - ▶ Strong sense of community and clear commitment to student success, with opportunities to strengthen internal communication and further engage the Industry Advisory Board
 - ▶ Good staff support for students and researchers, with undergraduate and graduate students expressing strong appreciation for advising availability and quality
 - ▶ Students across all programs experience a strong sense of community, well supported by student-facing administrative staff
 - ▶ Numerous departmental initiatives foster student engagement and feedback, including the ambassador program and student councils
 - ▶ Department leadership shows a determined and collegial approach to tackling departmental challenges
 - ▶ ECE maintains strong relationships with external government, academic, and professional organizations

- ▶ Department's Communications and Marketing Strategy is effective and well-executed
- ▶ Department delivers content with high production quality and strong viewership, distinguishing its online presence from peer departments in Canada
- ▶ Strong commitment to engagement and outreach shown through initiatives like the ECE Amplifier Series and ECE Industry Days
- ▶ Smooth coordination between Faculty-level and departmental student support, as reported by students and staff
- ▶ ECE's active communication team produces high-quality videos that effectively support a strong social media presence and actively promote the department and student activities
- ▶ Strong advancement, philanthropy, and industrial partnerships position the department well to capitalize on emerging opportunities amid uncertainties in international university support
- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Department's use of human resources is appropriate
 - ▶ Proactive approach to administrative staff development, including dedicated resources for professional growth and encouragement for advancement into senior departmental roles
 - ▶ Current organizational and financial structure effectively supports the ECE department
 - ▶ FASE financial model offers adequate financial stability for large departments like ECE
 - ▶ Despite budget constraints, the ECE department has effectively streamlined support services and centralized IT
 - ▶ Students and researchers generally find support levels appropriate, and staff report satisfaction with workload despite a 20% reduction in non-academic staff in recent years
 - ▶ ECE has sufficient lab space for teaching and multidisciplinary research, including redeveloped and new facilities
 - ▶ ECE's diverse initiatives in recruitment, market expansion, domestic outreach, and alumni engagement support program success and financial sustainability, with confidence in continued budget management through streamlined support and fundraising
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ Department has developed its internal mission and vision to a point of maturity
 - ▶ Strategic plan aligns well with University and Faculty priorities; while not behind institutional progress, the department is well-positioned to lead more explicitly on Decolonization and Reconciliation
- International comparators
 - ▶ Department remains Canada's leading and internationally respected department; despite pandemic disruptions, it holds both opportunity and obligation for leadership

- ▶ ECE programs are highly regarded nationally and internationally, with a strong reputation compared to peer institutions
- ▶ Department ranks consistently first in Canada and within the top 20-30 internationally, positioning it to lead the discipline's evolution and pedagogical innovation

The reviewers identified the following **areas of concern**:

- Relationships
 - ▶ Large student cohort limits elected representatives' ability to gather widespread feedback, though strong confidence exists in responsive department leadership
- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Infrastructure resources are mixed; while some spaces have been refreshed, the age and condition of buildings present significant challenges, with costs for major renewal being prohibitive
 - ▶ Recent administrative reconfiguration has helped address budgetary challenges, but current staff, especially student-facing roles, are operating near capacity given existing enrolment levels
 - ▶ Department's distributed building layout presents significant challenges, including convoluted accessibility, outdated lab infrastructure, and limited potential for meaningful upgrades without major institutional investment
 - ▶ Reduction of non-academic staff by 20% in recent years may impact support capacity and workload sustainability
 - ▶ Efficiency improvements noted, but senior admin staff report diminishing capacity to manage ongoing budget pressures
 - ▶ Aging buildings and high maintenance costs pose ongoing financial challenges for maintaining teaching and research lab facilities
 - ▶ Some research and teaching labs lack adequate accessibility, presenting challenges that require prioritized institutional support for renovations despite building age constraints

The reviewers made the following **recommendations**:

- Relationships
 - ▶ Build on the department's strong sense of community by enhancing internal communication and developing a more overt and engaged role for the Industry Advisory Board
 - ▶ Further develop the Industry Advisory Board to integrate its perspectives on broad curriculum goals and graduate success beyond academia, enhancing considerations of student success in Undergraduate and MEng programs
 - ▶ Develop a more transparent and direct feedback process to better capture student perspectives
 - ▶ Strengthen communication channels between department leadership and the wider student body to improve feedback collection beyond elected representatives

- ▶ Improve communication and visibility of departmental connectivity to external stakeholders to address challenges posed by the department's large size
- ▶ Further integrate the Industry Advisory Board by defining clearer portfolios and sub-group activities, ensuring specific aims and measurable outcomes are established before the next review
- ▶ Expand efforts to engage alumni and promote philanthropy to further enhance the department's impact and support
- ▶ Continue expanding pathways for students to share feedback on their departmental experiences
- ▶ Expand the Industry Advisory Board's roles to include advisory groups focused on undergraduate and MEng programs
- Organizational and financial structure
 - ▶ Monitor and balance incentives created by MEng tuition revenues to ensure equity across units, especially those without graduate programs
- Long-range planning and overall assessment
 - ▶ Build on alignment with institutional strategic plans by developing more explicit consideration of Decolonization and Reconciliation, positioning the department to take a leadership role in this area
 - ▶ Republish the 2023 strategic plan's action items, indicating which are completed or in progress, outlining short-term implementation plans, and documenting steps for addressing longer-term or more complex challenges
 - ▶ Encourage greater integration and coordination among autonomous research groups to enhance department-wide optimization of teaching, research collaborations, and initiatives
 - ▶ Publish strategic plan action items with clear indicators of completed tasks and timelines for those still in progress
 - ▶ Prioritize infrastructure renovations to improve accessibility of research and teaching labs, such as wheelchair access, despite challenges posed by building age and history
- International comparators
 - ▶ Leverage the department's top national and strong international ranking to take a leadership role in advancing the discipline and innovating pedagogy

2 Administrative Response & Implementation Plan



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF APPLIED SCIENCE & ENGINEERING

March 3, 2026

Professor Nicholas Rule
Vice-Provost, Academic Programs
University of Toronto
27 King's College Circle, Room 225
Toronto, ON M5S 1A1
vp.academicprograms@utoronto.ca

Dear Professor Rule,

I write in response to your letter of August 20, 2025 regarding the April 2025 external review of The Edward S. Rogers Sr. Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering (ECE) and its undergraduate and graduate programs.

On behalf of the Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering, I would like to thank the reviewers, Professors Ryan (Yunwei) Li, University of Alberta; Derek Oliver, University of Manitoba; and Arijit Raychowdhury, Georgia Institute of Technology for their very comprehensive review of the department. I would also like to thank the ECE chair, Deepa Kundur, and the department's faculty, administrative staff and all those who contributed to the preparation of the self-study, as well as the many staff, students and faculty members who met with the external reviewers and provided thoughtful feedback.

The external review process is a valuable exercise that affords us the opportunity to take stock of the state of our academic units and of the Faculty as a whole. We are extremely pleased with the reviewers' recognition of ECE's strong national and international reputation and its favourable comments on the department's quality of faculty and students, excellence in research, transparent and collegial leadership, and strong sense of community.

The quality of the unit and its program notwithstanding, the review report raises a number of issues and challenges. These have been addressed in the attached table, which was developed in consultation with the ECE chair. For each area addressed, an implementation plan is provided that identifies actions to be accomplished in the short (six months), medium (one to two years) and longer (three to five years) terms, and who will take the lead.

I also attach comments on the draft *Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan Summary*.

I anticipate the next review of The Edward S. Rogers Sr. Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering will be commissioned in 2028-2029 with a visit to be scheduled for 2029-2030.

Chairs and directors in FASE are required to submit to me a written update on progress made toward the goals in their implementation plans on an annual basis. I will provide you with an interim report on the status of the department's implementation plans no later than 2027-2028, the mid-point between the department's last and next reviews.

I will attend the March 31, 2026 meeting of the Committee on Academic Policy & Programs along with Professor Kundur to answer any questions that may arise regarding this review.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to respond to the report of the external review team. Their comments and recommendations will help inform the vision and future priorities for The Edward S. Rogers Sr. Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Yip', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Chris Yip
Dean

cc:

Lachmi Singh, Director, Academic Programs, Planning & Quality Assurance (OVPAP)
Emma del Junco, Academic Reviews & Planning Specialist (OVPAP)
Stephanie Machado Fernandes, Administrator, Academic Programs (OVPAP)
Prof. Deepa Kundur, Chair, The Edward S. Rogers Sr. Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering (ECE)
Caroline Ziegler, Governance & Programs Officer (FASE)

Attachments

2024-25 UTQAP Review of The Edward S. Rogers Sr. Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering - Review Recommendations

Submitted to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs on March 3, 2026.

Please do the following for each recommendation in the table:

- If you **intend** to act on a recommendation, please provide an **Implementation Plan** identifying actions to be taken, the time frame (short, medium, long term) for each, and who will take the lead in each area. If appropriate, please identify any necessary changes in organization, policy or governance; and any resources, financial and otherwise, that will be provided, and who will provide them.
- If you **do not** intend to act on a recommendation, please briefly explain why the actions recommended have not been prioritized.
- In accordance with the UTQAP and Ontario's Quality Assurance Framework, "it is important to note that, while the external reviewers' report may include **commentary** on issues such as faculty complement and/or space requirements when related to the quality of the program under review, **recommendations** on these or any other elements that are within the purview of the university's internal budgetary decision-making processes must be tied directly to issues of program quality or sustainability" (emphasis added)
- You may wish to refer to the [sample table](#) provided by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

Request Prompt <i>verbatim from the request</i>	Rec. #	Recommendations from Review Report <i>verbatim from the review report</i>	Unit Response	Dean's Response
The reviewers noted emerging concerns related to the flexible nature of ECE's undergraduate program structure, including enrolment and resource imbalances across subdisciplines, as well as student uncertainty regarding program pathways. They expressed support for in-development proposals aimed at balancing the spirit and intent of the programs' flexibility while enhancing their structure, sustainability, and student experience.	1.	"The review panel noted the resource pressures that have, in part, encouraged a review of the highly-flexible undergraduate program structure. The proposals for the next evolution of this program structure appear to honour the spirit and intent of the original vision, while providing students with greater (and desired) guidance for navigating the breadth of offerings and opportunities within the department." "Complete the review of the undergraduate programs and implement the results of this process."	Short-term (six months) ECE has already approved a major update to the undergraduate curriculum that directly addresses the concerns raised by the review. The revised curriculum was approved at Faculty Council in December 2026 following extensive consultation with students, faculty members, and the Industry Advisory Board, and incorporates input from both the ECE external review and the CEAB accreditation visit. The updated curriculum introduces clearer Electrical Engineering and Computer Engineering course groupings, strengthened kernel and depth requirements, and a revised EE/CE transfer policy. These changes are designed to improve program quality, ensure a sustainable critical mass of students in each degree, and reduce enrolment volatility that has historically created resource challenges.	As the department notes, ECE has addressed the concerns raised by the review team by updating its undergraduate curriculum.

Request Prompt <i>verbatim from the request</i>	Rec. #	Recommendations from Review Report <i>verbatim from the review report</i>	Unit Response	Dean's Response
			The revised curriculum will take effect for the incoming cohort starting in Fall 2026. Medium-term (1-2 years) n/a Long-term (3-5 years) n/a	
The reviewers noted that although the Faculty's TrackOne and Core 8 frameworks support student flexibility in program choice, they also create unpredictability and pose significant challenges for planning class sizes, allocating resources, and providing student support. They recommended that the Department explore ways to mitigate these impacts in collaboration with decanal leadership.	2.	"As the precise numbers of 'Track 1' and 'Core 8' students electing to enter ECE at the beginning of their second year are not known until the end of the academic year, resource planning for the shared core courses in the ECE second year is compromised. The department acknowledges the wider goals of these programs and the student-centred aspects of the frameworks, but highlighted the planning challenge as being significant, and a barrier to refining and enhancing the quality of student experience in the 2nd year core courses." "Collaborate with the Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering to review the admissions/transfer processes so that the resource impacts can be better-anticipated"	Short-term (six months) ECE acknowledges the reviewers' observations regarding the planning challenges created by the Faculty's TrackOne and Core 8 frameworks. While these frameworks were designed to support student flexibility and choice, they have introduced uncertainty in enrolment forecasting that complicates class-size planning, resource allocation, and student support within ECE. In response, TrackOne admissions have been paused at the Faculty level, which is expected to reduce enrolment volatility and improve planning predictability. ECE will continue to work with decanal leadership to mitigate any residual impacts and to improve alignment between admissions pathways and program capacity, while supporting the broader student-centred goals of these frameworks. Medium-term (1-2 years) n/a Long-term (3-5 years) n/a	The Faculty's Track One program has been placed on hiatus with admissions suspended for the 2027-2028 and 2028-2029 cycles while its future is assessed. This undeclared pathway traditionally allows first-year students to decide on and transfer into the Core 8 discipline of their choice starting in Year 2 (subject to meeting a GPA threshold) which makes managing enrolment difficult for departments. This is especially true for ECE, which is a popular destination for many Track One students. During the hiatus, the 90-100 students who might have been admitted to Track One each year will instead enter directly into a Core 8 program, thus ensuring more certainty, stability, and balanced enrolments.

Request Prompt <i>verbatim from the request</i>	Rec. #	Recommendations from Review Report <i>verbatim from the review report</i>	Unit Response	Dean's Response
The reviewers recommended that ECE continue to develop the MEng program as a professionally focused offering with a pedagogical identity distinct from the MSc and PhD programs. They noted opportunities to enhance program quality and emphasized the need for careful strategic planning around program enrolments and resources.	3.	“Continue to develop the MEng program structure and course offerings to be distinct from those provided for MSc and PhD students – enhancing the program quality and developing identifiable international leadership in this domain”	Short-term (six months) ECE currently maintains partial differentiation between the MEng and research programs through MEng-only courses. In the short term, the department will conduct an internal review of existing MEng offerings to assess whether the current level of distinction is sufficient and to identify areas for further enhancement. This review will be led by the ECE Graduate Matters Committee.	Reviewing existing offerings and consulting with industry stakeholders will allow the department to best align the MEng program with professional and industry needs. At the Faculty level, the Dean's Office is strengthening graduate programs, including the MEng, by developing stronger partnerships with student organizations such as the Graduate Engineering Council of Students (GECOS). We are meeting monthly with GECOS to better understand the needs of graduate students and to ensure resources are allocated to support their professional needs. We have created an MEng co-op option with the first cohort to be admitted in Sept 2026, bringing a professional, work-integrated component into the program. To further support this initiative, we are coordinating with our Engineering Career Centre (ECC) to hire an additional staff member to support graduate student internships. We will also explore the role of the Institute for Studies in Transdisciplinary Engineering Education & Practice (ISTEP) as a service provider within the Faculty to support enhanced teaching practice and pedagogy. We recognize the value of input from industry and alumni and encourage the department to consult with the Faculty's Engineering Alumni Relations office on best practices for engaging alumni.
			Medium-term (1-2 years) ECE will consult industry stakeholders through surveys and targeted engagement to evaluate how well the MEng curriculum aligns with professional and industry needs. Findings will inform curriculum refinements and the potential expansion of experiential learning opportunities, including applied projects, internships, or co-op pathways, reinforcing the professional identity of the MEng program.	
			Long-term (3-5 years) n/a	
	4.		Short-term (six months)	

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		“While there is a demonstrable need for MEng-specific course offerings, the review panel notes that care will be required to avoid replicating the resourcing challenges evident in the undergraduate program.”	n/a Medium-term (1–2 years) ECE will implement a targeted set of cross-listed senior undergraduate courses that have appropriate depth and professional relevance for MEng students, following the required Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering curriculum approval processes. This approach will enhance MEng offerings while minimizing additional instructional and staffing demands, thereby avoiding replication of the resourcing challenges observed in the undergraduate program. Long-term (3–5 years) ECE will evaluate the effectiveness of cross-listed courses in meeting MEng professional learning objectives and will assess their impact on program quality and resource sustainability through student feedback and enrolment data. Findings from this evaluation will inform future curriculum planning and resourcing decisions for the MEng program.	We support ECE's plans to enhance MEng offerings while minimizing the replication of resource challenges. Broadly, the Faculty is working strategically with all departments and institutes around alignment and complementarity of MEng offerings.
The reviewers noted concerns regarding the performance assessment process for Teaching Assistants, observing an apparent disconnect between evaluations and future assignments that may result in uneven teaching quality. They recommended exploring ways to ensure teaching consistency to support strong undergraduate learning experiences and graduate training opportunities.	5.	“Develop a more robust approach to reviewing the performance of Teaching Assistants that conforms to the appropriate collective agreement, but provides the department with greater consistency of quality/performance”	Short-term (within six months) ECE will undertake a structured review of Teaching Assistant assignments and workload distributions over the past five years to identify patterns that may affect teaching quality and graduate training, including excessive total hours, multiple concurrent appointments, or uneven allocation across courses. In parallel, the Department will continue active consultation with union	The Dean's Office supports the department's plans to increase consistency of quality and performance of its Teaching Assistants within the parameters of the relevant collective agreement. We encourage ECE to draw upon the expertise of the Teaching Methods and Resources Committee, a standing committee of Faculty Council that develops criteria for recognizing outstanding TA performance while reflecting evaluation norms such as impact on student learning, quality of

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			representatives to ensure that any planned evaluation processes are aligned with the Collective Agreement and grounded in collaborative, early intervention approaches to supporting TA performance.	instruction, and constructive feedback practices.
			Medium-term (1–2 years) Building on the findings of the workload and assignment review, ECE will implement measures to promote more equitable and transparent TA allocation practices, taking into account TA experience, training needs, and program requirements. Actions may include discouraging assignments exceeding 240 hours per year, improving coordination between the Graduate Office and course instructors, and formalizing mechanisms for identifying and addressing performance concerns early in the term. During this period, the Department will design a structured TA evaluation framework, developed in consultation with union representatives, that supports teaching consistency while remaining fully compliant with the Collective Agreement.	
			Long-term (3–5 years) ECE will implement the TA evaluation system, and will assess its impact on undergraduate learning experiences, TA development, and graduate training outcomes. The Department will use evidence from this assessment to refine TA allocation practices and evaluation processes over time, ensuring sustained teaching quality and consistency within the	

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			constraints of existing policies and collective agreements.	
The reviewers noted opportunities to strengthen communication with students through more transparent and direct feedback mechanisms; they also observed that ongoing revisions to undergraduate programs present an opportunity to strengthen processes related to program-level review of teaching and learning.	6.	“Continue to develop pathways for students to provide feedback on their experiences within the department”	Short-term (six months) ECE will create a working group to develop diverse pathways for students to provide feedback on their experiences within the department. These pathways will span in-person, online, written, and oral formats, ensuring accessibility and multiple points of engagement. In parallel, ECE will launch a targeted communications initiative to raise awareness of existing feedback channels, including the Student–Staff Committee, Hot Chocolate with the Chair, and ECE Open Houses, and to make it easier for students to share their experiences.	We encourage ECE to strengthen communication pathways with their students. As stated in recommendation 3, the Dean’s Office is developing stronger partnerships with student organizations such as the Graduate Engineering Council of Students (GECoS) and are meeting with them monthly to better understand their needs. We will share relevant information with the department. We also encourage the department to draw upon the expertise of the Faculty’s Engineering Strategic Communications (ESC) office where feasible and appropriate.
			Medium-term (1–2 years) ECE will implement the new communication pathways developed by the working group, alongside enhanced versions of existing mechanisms. The Department will also introduce a content series highlighting changes made in response to student feedback, reinforcing transparency while supporting student engagement and recruitment.	
			Long-term (3–5 years) n/a	
	7.	“The development of a revised undergraduate curriculum framework is an important opportunity for the department to strengthen collective processes that review	Short-term (within six months) ECE will reinforce and formalize existing student feedback mechanisms to strengthen program-level review of teaching and	We are pleased that ECE has increased undergraduate student participation in the department’s curriculum governance. They can also encourage interested ECE students

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		the success of their teaching and learning. Judicious extension of these processes to the MEng program is encouraged as the outcomes/needs of this cohort parallel the needs of the undergraduates.”	learning. This includes strengthening the role of the MEng Student Advisory Group as a structured forum for collecting and communicating student feedback on teaching and learning outcomes. In parallel, as part of the recent undergraduate curriculum renewal, ECE has embedded student participation more directly into curriculum governance through a voting student member on the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee and continued engagement through the Student–Staff Committee.	to seek nominations to the Faculty-level undergraduate and graduate curriculum committees. As stated in recommendations 3 and 6, we are strengthening partnerships with student organizations such as the Graduate Engineering Council of Students (GECoS) and will share relevant information with the department. In addition, the Vice-Dean, Graduate supports a recent GECoS initiative to create a Graduate Experience advisory group and we will monitor this progress.
			Medium-term (1–2 years) ECE will expand the Graduate Management System (GMS) portal to support more structured collection and review of feedback from students and Teaching Assistants in graduate courses, including extending GMS functionality to MEng students. This will enable more systematic analysis of teaching and learning experiences and support judicious extension of undergraduate review processes to the MEng program.	The Faculty is also building upon the current practices of the Teaching Methods and Resources Committee, a standing committee of Faculty Council responsible for teaching methods, resources/aids, evaluating and rewarding teaching effectiveness, to communicate teaching and experiential learning best practices with academic units.
			Long-term (3–5 years) ECE will use the GMS portal to support coordinated course assignment and program-level monitoring of course content, alignment, and overlap across undergraduate and MEng programs. These capabilities will strengthen ongoing review of teaching and learning and support continuous curriculum improvement informed by student feedback.	
	8.		Short-term (six months)	

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The reviewers recommended exploring ways to support and showcase the pedagogical impact of teaching-stream faculty members, potentially through collaborative initiatives or engagement with industry-facing projects.		“Develop seed grants to enable teaching-stream professors to develop and showcase their pedagogical impact on the international stage.”	ECE currently provides an annual allocation of \$3,000 to each teaching-stream faculty member to support pedagogical development and, where appropriate, supplements this support for dissemination activities. In the short term, the Department will focus on leveraging philanthropic opportunities and existing initiatives, such as summer workshops, to support pedagogical impact projects, and will identify a teaching-stream faculty lead to support industry-funded MITACS initiatives aligned with teaching-stream expertise.	We encourage ECE to explore ways to increase support of pedagogical impact projects and suggest they consult with the Faculty's offices of Engineering Alumni Relations and Engineering Advancement on best practices for engaging alumni and potential donors. The Faculty is exploring other approaches to help teaching-stream faculty secure support for their initiatives, including working closely with our Partnerships Office. We will also explore the role of the Institute for Studies in Transdisciplinary Engineering Education & Practice (ISTEP) as a service provider within the Faculty to support enhanced teaching practice and pedagogy.
			Medium-term (1-2 years) ECE will further advance MITACS partnerships, supported by the identified faculty lead, to create clearer pathways for teaching-stream faculty to secure external funding for pedagogical and applied scholarly activities. In addition, the Department will develop a more mature and targeted portfolio of pedagogically focused initiatives that can be shared with alumni and donors, with the aim of supporting high-impact teaching innovation and international dissemination.	
			Long-term (3-5 years) ECE will work toward establishing a small, sustainable seed-grant framework for teaching-stream faculty, supported through a combination of philanthropic contributions, industry partnerships, and external funding programs. These seed grants would enable teaching-stream faculty to develop, evaluate,	

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			and showcase pedagogical innovations on the international stage through conferences, collaborative projects, and scholarly dissemination, reinforcing ECE's leadership in engineering education.	
The reviewers broadly recommended that ECE develop a strategic plan for the renewal and evolution of its research portfolios. They encouraged the Department to pursue strategic faculty complement planning aligned with research goals, explore strategies for increasing tri-agency funding support, and articulate international benchmarks to highlight its status as a global leader. They also identified opportunities to enhance public-facing communication about ECE's research excellence and to expand graduate student engagement in multidisciplinary research initiatives.	9.	"Articulate a strategic vision for renewal and evolution of the research portfolios of the department"	Short-term (six months) ECE will update its research themes to better reflect current strengths, emerging areas, and interdisciplinary connections. The Department will hold a department-wide faculty consultation, including a summer research retreat led by the Associate Chair, Research, centred on the Canada Excellence Research Chair in Intelligent Digital Infrastructures and the Department's thrust in Compute Acceleration, to identify priority research areas and a shared strategic vision. Key outcomes will be discussed at ECE Advisory Committee meetings and summarized by the Chair.	The department is encouraged to consult with the Vice-Dean, Research in furthering the renewal and evolution of its research portfolios. These efforts can also be informed by the Faculty's Strategic Academic Plan 2025-2030, which was approved by Council December 2025, and was recently reviewed by Planning and Budget and Academic Board. The department is encouraged to work closely with other Engineering departments and institutes to identify new collaborative and complementary research strategies and opportunities.
			Medium-term (1-2 years) ECE will establish a representative working group drawn from across research areas and career stages to translate the agreed strategic vision into actionable research themes. This group will recommend updates to the ECE Strategic Plan, including refinements to research priorities and mechanisms for implementation. In parallel, the Department will develop a clear "research themes playbook" to support faculty in aligning funding applications, industry partnerships, and collaborative	

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			initiatives with the identified strategic priorities, including guidance on leveraging tri-agency programs and industry-matched funding opportunities. The updated ECE Strategic Plan will be finalized and communicated to internal and external stakeholders.	
			Long-term (3-5 years) ECE will implement the updated strategic vision through coordinated faculty complement planning, targeted industry partnerships aligned with priority research areas, and sustained investment in those areas. Emphasis will be placed on fostering a collaborative research ecosystem that connects senior and junior faculty, bridges traditional subdisciplines, supports co-development with industry where appropriate, and enables engagement by faculty whose primary appointments lie outside ECE but whose research aligns with departmental priorities. These efforts will support the continued renewal and evolution of ECE's research portfolios, strengthen international visibility and competitiveness, and reinforce the Department's position as a global leader in electrical and computer engineering research.	
	10.	"...the profile of the department shows that a number of hires can be anticipated in the forthcoming cycle. This opportunity for evolution of the department's research	Short-term (six months) ECE will explicitly incorporate faculty hiring considerations into department-wide discussions on research priorities, focusing on	As above, the department is encouraged to consult with the Vice-Dean, Research as it discusses research priorities. These efforts can also be informed by the Faculty's

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		portfolio provides an opportunity to strike balances between subdisciplines that honour the department's desire to achieve global stature in all foundations of ECE, while leading the discipline into the future."	how upcoming hiring opportunities can help rebalance strengths across Electrical and Computer Engineering while maintaining excellence in core areas. Input from these discussions will be reviewed by the ECE Advisory Committee to inform near-term hiring decisions.	Strategic Academic Plan 2025-2030, which is expected to approved by university governance in 2025-2026.
			Medium-term (1–2 years) ECE will develop clear guiding principles for faculty hiring as part of updates to the ECE Strategic Plan. These principles will emphasize balance across subdisciplines, support for interdisciplinary and emerging research areas, and alignment with long-term research and educational priorities, while retaining flexibility to respond to exceptional opportunities.	
			Long-term (3–5 years) ECE will implement these hiring principles across multiple recruitment cycles, supporting a balanced and forward-looking faculty complement that sustains global leadership in foundational areas and enables growth in emerging and convergent fields.	
	11.		Short-term (six months) ECE will continue the development of a research data analytics system to analyze historical patterns in tri-agency funding applications and outcomes across research disciplines and individual principal investigators. Using this system, the Department will examine trends over time to identify potential drivers contributing to the	We support the department's plans to investigate reasons behind the trend of decreased tri-agency funding, and to support researchers in strengthening future applications and diversity of applications. We also encourage ECE to expand its analytics system to support more advanced analysis across research themes and collaborative networks, and to explore opportunities to

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		“The panel also noted that, although the total funding of ECE is high and steady, the portion of funding received from tri-agencies is decreasing over the past few years. As this directly influences departmental Research Support Fund allocations, it is recommended that the drivers underpinning this are investigated, and incentives considered to encourage researchers to leverage industry support with tri-agency funding such as NSERC Alliance.”	recent decline in tri-agency funding, and will share insights with faculty through department-wide discussions to inform strategies for strengthening future applications. In parallel, it is noted that ECE maintains active industry engagement through monthly ECE Industry Days, which are fostering early-stage relationships that can seed future industry–tri-agency collaborations.	share relevant tools and insights with the Faculty as this system matures. The department is also encouraged to consider existing institutional resources. It is important to compare and contrast both industry-specific, industry-leveraged, and tri-council only funding. Diversity of funding resources is an important consideration when the overall funding envelope from the tri-council has not changed significantly.
			Medium-term (1–2 years) ECE will evolve the research data analytics system into a continuous monitoring tool capable of identifying gaps and opportunities, including cases where industry-funded research could be more effectively leveraged alongside tri-agency programs such as NSERC Alliance. As new industry partnerships emerge, the Department will use this lens to encourage and support strong participation in appropriate matched funding programs. Findings from this monitoring will be discussed at the ECE Advisory Committee level, including consideration of incentives or supports to encourage principal investigators to pursue aligned industry and tri-agency funding opportunities.	
			Long-term (3–5 years) ECE will expand the analytics system to support more advanced analysis across research themes and collaborative networks. The platform will be used to identify emerging funding opportunities aligned with faculty expertise and strategic priorities and	

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			will operate as a standing departmental resource, with regular dissemination of insights to all principal investigators. As the system matures, ECE will explore opportunities to share relevant tools and insights with the Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering.	
	12.	“Consider how it can articulate international benchmarks for research performance to unequivocally demonstrate the leadership and stature in this domain”	Short-term (six months) ECE will conduct an in-depth analysis of influential research performance indicators used by major international ranking systems, including QS and Shanghai Rankings, such as citations per publication, research awards, and measures of research impact. The Department will identify areas of strength and opportunity when assessed against these indicators, and will contextualize ECE's performance relative to leading international peer institutions to clarify where the Department already demonstrates global leadership.	We encourage the department to collaborate with Engineering Strategic Communications (ESC) to further develop ways to strengthen its international visibility and impact. We are working with our academic units to review shared services, including a fuller service unit for ESC, to centralize and bolster common approaches where possible for the benefit of the entire Faculty.
			Medium-term (1–2 years) ECE will add new features to the research data analytics system to continuously compute and monitor key research performance indicators using public data sources and, where appropriate, machine learning tools. These indicators will be organized by research theme and career stage to provide a more nuanced view of departmental performance. The ECE Advisory Committee will regularly review these data and use them to inform	

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			strategic discussions on research investment, collaboration, and dissemination practices that can further strengthen international visibility and impact.	
			Long-term (3–5 years) ECE will use these benchmarks to inform targeted measures that strengthen research performance while remaining aligned with the Department's values and research culture. The Department will monitor outcomes over time and use this evidence to support clear, data-informed communication of ECE's research standing to external audiences.	
			Short-term (six months) ECE will rework its public-facing presentation of research through a redesigned website hub and expanded video and social media content that highlight the impact of its research portfolios. This includes coordinated communications campaigns such as ECE × Industry, ECE × Excellence, and ECE × Research Chairs, aimed at making ECE's research strengths more visible and accessible beyond the technical community.	
	13.	“In the research domain, the department has an opportunity to re-imagine its public-facing description of the research portfolio. This will help the department communicate its standing beyond the technical community and enhance broader public recognition of its standing.”	Medium-term (1–2 years) ECE will expand and refine its digital storytelling to communicate research impact more effectively and position its portfolios relative to international benchmarks. Content will be developed in clear, non-technical language and adapted for different audiences, including prospective	As above, we encourage ECE to collaborate with Engineering Strategic Communications (ESC) to further develop ways to strengthen its visibility and impact beyond the department and Faculty. We are encouraged by the department's efforts to date and look forward to seeing the fruits of these new approaches.

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			undergraduate and graduate students, industry partners, alumni, and the broader public.	
			Long-term (3–5 years) n/a	
	14.	“...graduate students expressed interest in having more opportunities to connect with others outside of their immediate research group, area cluster of research groups, and the department. A positive response to this will contribute to a culture of multidisciplinary research and collaboration from the bottom-up approach, in addition to adding opportunities for PIs to deepen their local networks.”	Short-term (six months) n/a	We applaud ECE’s plans to enhance interdisciplinary engagement among graduate students. As mentioned above, we are working to strengthen partnerships with student organizations such as the Graduate Engineering Council of Students (GECoS) to better understand graduate student needs and we support the creation of graduate experience advisory committee. We will share relevant information with our academic units, including ECE. The Faculty’s Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Office can also be a resource to explore and mitigate barriers to student participation in research and other initiatives.
			Medium-term (1–2 years) ECE will assess opportunities to enhance interdisciplinary engagement among graduate students, including gathering input from students and research units to better understand current practices, barriers to participation, and interest in structured cross-group activities. Based on this input, the Department will explore the feasibility of periodic research-focused activities, such as a departmental research day or graduate student-focused seminar series, designed to foster broader interaction across research areas while respecting confidentiality, intellectual property, and any applicable non-disclosure requirements.	
			Long-term (3–5 years) ECE will use feedback from these activities to inform ongoing decisions about how best to support interdisciplinary engagement within the graduate student community, with the aim of strengthening research culture and collaboration in ways that are sustainable and aligned with departmental priorities.	

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The reviewers observed that recent increases in undergraduate and graduate enrolment have resulted in challenges meeting teaching obligations. They recommended that ECE's strategic faculty complement planning ensures appropriate instructional support across its programs.	15.	"The student population in both undergraduate and graduate programs has increased in the past few years, resulting in challenges meeting teaching obligations. In the short term it is appropriate to recruit teaching focused personnel (e.g. teaching stream professors), particularly to support the MEng program, who will provide relevant courses and MEng student project supervision."	ECE acknowledges the reviewers' observations regarding enrolment growth and instructional demands. The Department has been able to meet its teaching obligations through a combination of existing faculty resources and the appropriate use of qualified sessional instructors. In addition, ECE has appointed two teaching-stream faculty members whose primary responsibilities include delivering MEng-focused courses, particularly in areas such as AI and software. The principal challenge has not been overall enrolment growth, but a temporary misalignment between student demand in Computer Engineering-focused areas and historical instructional capacity in traditional Electrical Engineering areas. This imbalance placed pressure on certain courses while capacity remained available in others. The approved undergraduate curriculum changes, taking effect for the incoming cohort in Fall 2026, are expected to significantly improve alignment between enrolment patterns and instructional resources by limiting EE/CE transfers and rebalancing program requirements. In parallel, ECE has implemented revisions to its workload policy, including compensation for instructors teaching very large sections, supporting sustainability and fairness. As enrolments become more balanced, reliance on sessional instructors is expected to decrease, while retaining flexibility to address	A proposal to update the transfer regulations between the electrical and computer engineering programs was approved by Faculty Council in December 2025. This will help balance enrolment between the programs. The Faculty acknowledges the proactive approaches taken by the department to better balance and grow their teaching stream complement to help address these imbalances. In addition to this measure, further balance of enrolment will be achieved by the Faculty's move to place the Track One program on hiatus with admissions suspended for the 2027-2028 and 2028-2029 cycles. This undeclared pathway traditionally allows first-year students to decide on and transfer into the Core 8 discipline of their choice starting in Year 2 (subject to meeting a GPA threshold) which has made managing enrolment difficult for departments. This is especially true for ECE, which is a popular destination for many Track One students. During the hiatus, the 90-100 students who might have been admitted to Track One each year – many of whom would ultimately transfer into ECE – will instead enter directly into a Core 8 program, facilitating enrolment planning and balance across our programs.

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			temporary factors such as retirements or leaves. Short-term (six months) n/a Medium-term (1–2 years) n/a Long-term (3–5 years) n/a	
The reviewers noted concerns related to the condition of ECE's spaces and physical infrastructure, including aging equipment, awkwardly configured teaching lab spaces, and a lack of spaces for students to engage in group work. They recommended working with decanal and institutional leadership to explore opportunities to update facilities.	16.	"Infrastructure resources are mixed. While the department has refreshed certain spaces, the age and condition of the buildings makes it challenging to undertake major renewal as the required costs to bring infrastructure to contemporary standards are prohibitive. ...To go beyond cosmetic upgrades (e.g. equipment) requires considerable infrastructure upgrades which are beyond the scope of the department/Faculty and require institutional support in order to meet contemporary standards."	Since 2021, ECE has made significant investments to modernize undergraduate teaching laboratories and expand experiential learning within existing resources. At the same time, the age and configuration of departmental buildings limit the scope of renewal achievable without Faculty- and institution-level capital support. Short-term (six months) n/a Medium-term (1–2 years) ECE will continue a phased approach to infrastructure improvement by prioritizing high-impact upgrades within existing resource constraints. This includes establishing a rolling equipment replacement plan for key teaching laboratories, focusing on areas such as Robotics and Control Systems, Microwave, and Advanced Analog labs. The Department will also pursue external partnerships, including industry sponsorships, equipment donations, and collaborative research and teaching initiatives, to supplement internal resources	We recognize the challenges inherent in ECE's space and physical infrastructure. We are committed to working with chairs and directors on innovative solutions for the Faculty's space needs and have developed a Facilities Master Plan to inform a sustainable and strategic future for engineering teaching and research spaces. The document is being summarized and implementation of near-term priorities (along with those identified in the Strategic Academic Plan 2025-2030) will begin in 2026.

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			and support targeted modernization of teaching spaces that serve both undergraduate and MEng programs.	
			Long-term (3–5 years) ECE will work closely with Faculty and institutional leadership to position infrastructure renewal as a strategic capital priority. This will include advocating for a comprehensive facilities master plan aligned with broader institutional renewal efforts, developing integrated, multi-use learning spaces that combine laboratory instruction with collaborative project environments, and establishing a sustainable approach to maintaining facilities at contemporary standards once upgraded.	
	17.	“MEng students would benefit from more space to support group work... The optional project component would be enhanced if they had access to a space equivalent to that available to undergraduate capstone projects.”	Short-term (six months) n/a	The Faculty broadly has been working to develop a Faculty Space Master Plan and student spaces, including collaborative work spaces, is of keen interest. Limited collaborative MEng workspaces are available in the Myhal building for use by students; however, there is clearly a need for more spaces. The Faculty will work with all departments to help address these needs.
			Medium-term (1–2 years) ECE will explore ways to better support MEng project work within existing space constraints, including reconfiguring select multipurpose spaces and teaching laboratories during off-hours when not scheduled for instruction. The Department will also assess mechanisms, such as shared-space booking systems and modest investments in flexible, portable infrastructure, to improve access to collaborative workspaces in a fair and efficient manner.	
			Long-term (3–5 years)	

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			ECE will advocate for the inclusion of dedicated MEng collaboration space in future Faculty- or institution-level capital projects, comparable in function to undergraduate capstone facilities. The Department will work to ensure that MEng project needs are considered in broader facilities planning and will pursue the development of flexible, multipurpose project hubs that can serve both graduate and undergraduate students.	
The reviewers highlighted opportunities for ECE's recently formed Industry Advisory Board to provide valuable external perspectives on matters such as undergraduate and MEng program objectives and student success after graduation. They recommended that ECE continue to engage with the Board and further develop its role over time.	18.	"Further develop the roles of the Industry Advisory Board and, specifically, include groupings that provide counsel with regard to the undergraduate programs and the MEng program"	Short-term (six months) ECE will actively engage the Industry Advisory Board to provide structured input on undergraduate and MEng program objectives, with particular emphasis on graduate outcomes, skills alignment, and preparation for professional practice. Discussions will focus on identifying competencies valued by employers, emerging technical and professional skill needs, and opportunities to strengthen experiential learning, particularly within the professionally oriented MEng program. Medium-term (1–2 years) ECE will establish program-focused subgroups within the Industry Advisory Board, including a dedicated subgroup for the MEng program. These subgroups will provide ongoing counsel on curriculum relevance, professional skill development, and student success after graduation, and will support industry-connected activities such as applied projects, guest lectures, mentorship, and experiential	The Dean's Office recognizes the value of input from industry and alumni and is pleased that ECE has recently formed an Industry Advisory Board. We encourage the department to consult with the Faculty's Engineering Alumni Relations office on best practices for engaging alumni and industry. With regard to the MEng program, the creation of a FASE MEng co-op option was approved in April 2025 with a first cohort to be admitted in September 2026. This option will offer a formal for-credit pathway for MEng students to develop a career strategy and workplace skills, make industry contacts, and obtain significant professional experience prior to graduation. We are coordinating with the Engineering Career Centre (ECC), who manages this and the undergraduate Professional Experience Year (PEY) Co-op Program, to hire an additional staff member to support graduate student internships.

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			learning pathways that reinforce the distinct professional identity of the MEng program. Long-term (3–5 years) n/a	
The reviewers noted opportunities for the Department to provide more explicit consideration of Decolonization and Reconciliation in its strategic planning and encouraged ECE to position itself as a leader within the University in advancing this work.	19.	“While the department’s strategic plan is well-aligned with strategic planning documents from the University and Faculty, the department will have to develop some more explicit consideration of Decolonization and Reconciliation in the coming years. The review panel notes that the department is not lagging the institutional position in this regard, but points to the opportunity for the department to lead in this domain.”	Short-term (six months) ECE will support the Faculty’s ongoing efforts to recruit a new Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Director and acknowledges that the EDI portfolio within the Faculty is currently undergoing transition. During this period, the Department will take a measured approach, allowing new leadership and structures to be established before advancing additional initiatives. Medium-term (1–2 years) Once the Faculty-level EDI office is in place, ECE will work collaboratively with the new leadership to identify appropriate, discipline-relevant ways to integrate considerations of Decolonization and Reconciliation into departmental activities. This collaboration will help ensure that any actions taken are informed by appropriate expertise and aligned with University and Faculty priorities. Long-term (3–5 years) n/a	The Faculty’s Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Office is being reviewed and restructured as part of a broad examination of shared services throughout Faculty, and a job ad for the now vacant director position has been posted. Although the function of professionalism in the engineering community will be transferred to the vice-deans, and student career preparation to the Engineering Career Centre, the EDI office will continue to support and lead initiatives regarding equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility for engineering students, faculty and staff.
Noting that ECE’s internal mission and vision have reached a point of maturity, the reviewers highlighted the importance of developing an external-facing vision for the future of the discipline. They also	20.	“This review panel finds that the department has developed its internal compass and mission/vision to a point of maturity that the next step is the development of an external-facing vision for the future of the discipline.”	Short-term (six months) ECE will establish a small working group to define the scope, audiences, and key messages of an external-facing vision for the future of the discipline, grounded in the	We commend ECE for having a mature mission/vision and strategic plan and encourage them to consult resources such as the Faculty’s Engineering Alumni Relations office, the Vice-Dean, Strategic, the Strategic

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recommended that ECE provide an update for its stakeholders and the community regarding progress on their existing strategic plan, highlighting successes and discussing outstanding priorities.			Department's mature internal mission and strategic priorities. This work will draw on existing engagement activities already underway, including the ECE Critical Connect conference, ECE Industry Days, alumni engagement initiatives, guidance from the ECE Industry Advisory Board, and student-focused forums such as Hot Chocolate with the Chair. Together, these inputs will inform a coherent framework for informing and communicating ECE's role in advancing research, education, and industry engagement to external audiences. Medium-term (1–2 years) As departmental strategies in research, education, and professional programs mature and deliver tangible outcomes, ECE will develop a concrete external-facing vision. This vision will emphasize the integration of research excellence, innovative pedagogical ecosystems, and sustained industry partnership, supported by coordinated communications efforts. During this period, ECE will also reinforce this vision through leadership in large-scale collaborative research initiatives, including pursuing major network grants with universities across Canada and internationally, leveraging the Canada Excellence Research Chair and anticipated outcomes of the Canada Impact+ Research Chair programs. Long-term (3–5 years) Over the longer term, ECE will sustain and refine its external-facing vision as a defining	Academic Plan 2025-2030, Engineering Strategic Communications (ESC), and representatives from student groups such as the undergraduate Engineering Society and the Graduate Engineering Council of Students (GECoS) as they develop an external-facing vision for the future of the discipline. At a broader level, the Faculty actively establishes partnerships with universities, companies and research institutions worldwide to create rich opportunities for engineering students to build their global fluency through study, work and research abroad.

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			expression of the Department's impact and leadership. Through continued prominence in collaborative research networks, ongoing innovation in professional education, and deep engagement with industry, alumni, and community, ECE will position itself as a visible and influential contributor to shaping the future direction of electrical and computer engineering. Strategic communications will ensure that this vision remains current, credible, and clearly aligned with the Department's evolving contributions at the national and international levels.	
	21.	"Publish the action items from the strategic plan showing which have been completed, and outline the timelines to completion for those that are still in progress"	Short-term (six months) ECE will publish an initial consolidated progress summary against the action items outlined in the ECE Strategic Plan (July 2023) on an internal departmental planning site. This summary will identify actions that have been completed, those currently underway, and those scheduled for future implementation, with indicative timelines and responsible leads. The short-term focus will be on establishing a clear baseline rather than exhaustive reporting.	The Dean's Office supports ECE's plans to communicate progress on the implementation of its strategic action items. As appropriate, the Dean's office will help to promote these changes to the broader community.
			Medium-term (1–2 years) ECE will update the internal action-item tracker as key milestones in the Strategic Plan are reached, including implementation of the revised undergraduate curriculum, evolution of the MEng program, progress on research portfolio initiatives and faculty complement planning, and advancements in infrastructure and student support. During this period, ECE	

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			will also publish periodic high-level progress summaries on the public ECE website. Long-term (3–5 years) ECE will embed regular review and reporting of Strategic Plan action items into its ongoing governance and planning processes. This will ensure that the Strategic Plan remains a living document, supporting continuity across leadership cycles and enabling transparent communication with Faculty leadership, students, alumni, industry partners, and the broader community.	
Other recommendations not prioritized in the Request for Administrative Response	22.	“The panel note that more major universities are offering online programs or certificates and suggest that this is something that the department can consider in the near future.”	Short-term (within six months) ECE will initiate internal discussions to identify which courses, if any, may be suitable for online or hybrid delivery and to assess the potential impact of such offerings on student experience, community cohesion, and alumni engagement, which are core values of the University of Toronto. In parallel, ECE will continue to evaluate the pilot online offering of <i>ECE472 Engineering Economic Analysis & Entrepreneurship</i>, with particular attention to student feedback, learning outcomes, and academic integrity measures. Medium-term (1–2 years) ECE will monitor developments and best practices at peer institutions, including evidence related to educational quality, student outcomes, and the resource implications of online graduate courses and certificate programs. Findings from the	The Dean's Office is exploring the role of the Institute for Studies in Transdisciplinary Engineering Education & Practice (ISTEP) as a service provider within the Faculty to support enhanced teaching practice and pedagogy. Increased use of technology, including on-line delivery and better strategic use of in-person time and scheduling, is an area of active development by the Faculty as a whole for its MEng offerings.

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			ECE472 pilot and peer benchmarking will inform departmental discussions, in consultation with students and Faculty leadership, about whether additional online or hybrid offerings are appropriate. Long-term (3–5 years) n/a	
	23.	"...the panel suggest that the department might consider online options as a development to the flexibility of the MEng program in the near future."	ECE acknowledges the panel's suggestion to consider online options as a means of increasing flexibility in the MEng program. At present, the Department views in-person delivery as a core strength of the MEng degree, supporting hands-on learning, peer interaction, and strong engagement with faculty and the campus community. Given the availability of fully online MEng programs at other institutions, ECE considers its in-person model to be a distinguishing feature rather than a limitation. Short-term (six months) n/a Medium-term (1–2 years) n/a Long-term (3–5 years) n/a	The Faculty acknowledges that MEng course delivery could be accomplished in a number of ways, including in-person, on-line or hybrid, and that course scheduling could also be better optimized to meet the collective objectives of the department, learners and instructors. We will work with ECE to identify appropriate strategies to accomplish the appropriate learning objectives and outcomes.
	24.	"The panel noted that initiatives such as... a structured month-long summer course for full course credit could provide students with additional flexibility in completing their degrees."	Short-term (six months) n/a Medium-term (1–2 years) ECE will assess the feasibility of offering intensive, month-long summer courses for full course credit, particularly within the	The Faculty is actively working with all departments, including ECE, around alternative delivery plans such as summer courses. Regarding Faculty resources, ECE, like all FASE academic units, has been asked to review and revise its five-year workload

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			MEng program, with attention to faculty availability, instructional workload, laboratory capacity, and administrative and financial requirements. This assessment will build on ECE's existing experience with summer offerings, including APS105 <i>Computer Fundamentals</i> and ECE110 <i>Electrical Fundamentals</i>, which support student progression and program mobility. In parallel, the Department will continue to explore the potential introduction of additional summer offerings in selected undergraduate courses with historically higher failure rates, subject to resource availability. Long-term (3–5 years) Based on the outcomes of feasibility assessments and any pilot offerings, ECE will determine whether intensive summer courses should become a regular component of its programs. In doing so, the Department will explicitly consider equity implications, recognizing that expanded summer offerings may advantage some students while posing challenges for others who rely on the summer term for employment.	policy. We will work with ECE, linking in the Teaching Methods and Resources Committee, to better identify strategies and approaches that optimize course delivery and outcomes.
	25.	"...the panel suggests that certain level of teaching support can be allocated to CRC/CERC holders and/or PIs of significantly large grants (similar to the previous NSERC industrial research chairs) without compromising these principles. If undertaken, this ought to be framed within the	Short-term (six months) ECE will review existing workload guidelines to identify transparent mechanisms for supporting CRC/CERC holders and principal investigators of large research programs while maintaining meaningful engagement in teaching.	As above, all academic units in the Faculty have been asked to review and revise their workload policies. In particular, the Faculty's Teaching Methods and Resource Committee will be consulted to help develop and identify best practices.

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		department's workload guidelines document."	Medium-term (1–2 years) ECE will formalize a set of teaching-support options within the Department's workload guidelines for CRC/CERC holders and principal investigators of major grants. These options may include structured co-teaching arrangements, enhanced TA allocations for large or research-intensive courses, temporary instructional assistance during peak research periods, or flexibility in course sequencing, while ensuring continued faculty involvement in core teaching activities. The Department will apply these supports selectively and transparently, tied to the scale and scope of research leadership responsibilities. Long-term (3–5 years) n/a	
	26.	"The panel noted that the implementation of the centralized approach for teaching assignments in conjunction with the workload guidelines is working well. The review panel encourages the extension of this approach to initiatives encouraging multidisciplinary research collaboration with other units."	Short-term (six months) ECE will extend the principles underlying its centralized teaching-assignment approach to the research domain by enhancing the research data analytics system currently under development. In the short term, the Department will add functionality to identify existing and past multidisciplinary research collaborations with other units, including successful, unsuccessful, and pending funding applications. ECE will also examine the relationship between faculty-level seed funding and subsequent collaborative funding outcomes to better understand	The Faculty is encouraged by ECE's proposed strategies for analysing its efforts around research collaborations and coordination. ECE is encouraged to work closely with the Teaching Methods and Resources Committee, Vice-Dean Research, Vice-Dean Strategic, and other members of the decanal offices on how to leverage opportunities in a way that minimizes duplication of effort.

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			effective pathways to multidisciplinary engagement.	
			Medium-term (1–2 years) Building on these insights, ECE will implement a centralized, data-informed process to support multidisciplinary research collaboration when new funding opportunities arise. Using historical data and strategic priorities as guides, this process will help identify potential principal investigators and collaborators across units and reduce the coordination burden on individual faculty members.	
			Long-term (3–5 years) n/a	

3 Committee on Academic Policy & Programs (AP&P) Findings

The spokesperson for the reading group reported that the review summary had accurately reflected the full review and that the Dean's administrative response had addressed the issues identified. The reading group reported that the key concerns had been effectively addressed. The reading group sought additional information about the reviewers raising concerns about graduate students' time to completion for their degrees and the implementation of a departmental dashboard.

Professor Deepa Kundur, ECE Chair, reported that the system was implemented but with the increase in AI the department is working with the faculty to have more comprehensive data so that principal investigators can have a holistic view of the progress of their students and teaching assistants.

No follow-up report was requested.

Members had no questions.

4 Institutional Executive Summary

The reviewers praised ECE as Canada's leading electrical and computer engineering department, with a strong international reputation and well-regarded programs. They commended the highly flexible undergraduate curriculum, the breadth and depth of subjects covered, and recent efforts to enhance experiential learning and research opportunities. They highlighted the Department's competitive graduate programs, the wide range of research projects that graduate students pursue, and promising new initiatives aimed at improving PhD students' time-to-completion. The reviewers applauded ECE's excellence in research, noting the faculty's diverse and interdisciplinary output, and emphasizing the impressive numbers of publications, citations, and patent disclosures. They commended the Department's leadership for its transparency and collegiality, and praised the staff for the strong support they provide to students and researchers. Finally, the reviewers highlighted the Department's strong sense of community, its commitment to engagement and outreach, and the productive, collaborative relationships it maintains with external partners, including industry, government, and alumni.

The reviewers recommended that the following issues be addressed: pursuing proposals aimed at balancing the spirit and intent of the programs' flexibility while enhancing their structure, sustainability, and student experience; addressing unpredictability and challenges related to planning class sizes, allocating resources, and student support in the Faculty's TrackOne and Core 8 frameworks; continuing to develop the MEng program as a professionally focused offering with a pedagogical identity distinct from the MASc and PhD programs; addressing concerns regarding the performance assessment process for Teaching Assistants and exploring ways to ensure teaching consistency to support strong undergraduate learning experiences and graduate training opportunities; strengthening communication with students through more

transparent and direct feedback mechanisms; exploring ways to support and showcase the pedagogical impact of teaching-stream faculty members, potentially through collaborative initiatives or engagement with industry-facing projects; developing a strategic plan for the renewal and evolution of ECE's research portfolios; ensuring appropriate instructional support across programs through strategic faculty complement planning; working with decanal and institutional leadership to explore opportunities to update facilities; continuing to engage with ECE's Industry Advisory Board and further developing its role over time; including more explicit consideration of Decolonization and Reconciliation in strategic planning; and developing an external-facing vision for the future of the ECE discipline.

The Dean's Administrative Response describes the unit's responses to the reviewers' recommendations, including an implementation plan for any changes necessary as a result.

5 Monitoring and Date of Next Review

Chairs and directors are required to submit to the Dean each year a written update on progress made toward the goals in their implementation plans.

The Dean will provide an interim report to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs on the status of the implementation plans no later than 2027-2028, the mid-point between the department's last and next reviews.

The next review will be commissioned in 2028-2029 with a visit to be scheduled for 2029-2030.

6 Distribution

On August 15th 2026, the Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan was posted to the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs website and the link provided by email to the Dean of the Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering, the Secretaries of AP&P, Academic Board and Governing Council, and the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance. The Dean provided the link to unit/program leadership.