

MEMORANDUM

**Office of the Provost
and Vice-Principal (Academic)**

To: Faculty Deans
Associate Deans, Teaching and Learning
From: Gavan Watson, Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning
Copy: Vice-Provosts
Date: November 21st, 2024
Subject: Quality Council Audit Results

In February 2024, Queen's University underwent a comprehensive audit of its quality assurance processes, assessing compliance with our Queen's University Quality Assurance Processes (QUQAP) since the 2014 audit. These processes, aligned with the [Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance's \(OUCQA\) Quality Assurance Framework \(QAF\)](#), ensure rigorous academic reviews of new and existing programs within Ontario's university sector.

Queen's received the Audit Report in August, outlining two categories of feedback:

- **Recommendations** result from the identification of failures to comply with the QUQAP and/or a misalignment between the QUQAP and the required elements of the QAF. The University *must* address these recommendations.
- **Suggestions** are forward-looking and are made when auditors identify opportunities for the university to strengthen its quality assurance practices. Suggestions do not convey any mandatory obligations but do identify ways in which the recommendations can be implemented.

The attached implementation plan, developed by my office, highlights required actions. Please focus particularly on those pertinent to Faculty Deans. Key changes include:

[Streamlining Quality Assurance Processes](#)

To reduce completion times and improve efficiency, we will implement:

- **Removal of the decanal review** for Cyclical Program Review (CPR) Self-Studies, assigning document authorship fully to units. Units, as they author their draft, may solicit Decanal feedback but review stage sign off will no longer be required.
- **Streamlined processes for Major Modifications and New Programs**, to be reviewed by my office for greater expediency without compromising rigour.
- **Exemption of undergraduate certificates from full CPR requirements**, recognizing the lighter quality assurance needs of these programs.

Responsibilities for Faculty Deans

As Faculty Deans, you play a critical role in ensuring our quality assurance practices are robust, efficient, and well-communicated. To this end, Fahim Quadir and I will meet with Deans individually over the coming weeks to discuss the implications of the audit in your faculties. In summary, we expect Deans to:

- **Ensure Suspension and Closure Policies are Clearly Understood:** Communicate policies effectively to units to prevent any misinterpretation, including the criteria, timelines, and procedural expectations surrounding program suspensions and closures.
- **Engage Units Undertaking CPR:** Stay connected with units at each stage of the CPR process to help keep reviews on schedule, stepping in where needed to manage timelines and identify roadblocks.
- **Follow-up on Delays:** Intervene directly with units that are falling significantly behind on their CPR, taking proactive measures to support or re-align the review.
- **Promptly review and rank review team nominations:** Ensure nominations for review teams are reviewed, ranked, and submitted without delay, supporting the effective scheduling of site visits.
- **Respond quickly to review team reports:** Expedite responses to review team reports, aiming to provide feedback within a timeframe that keeps subsequent steps moving.
- **Clarify obligations per FAR/IP:** Clearly communicate obligations outlined in the CPR Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan (FAR/IP) to each unit, ensuring they understand expectations and action items fully.
- **Inform of New Program Development Early:** Notify my office at the earliest point in new program development, allowing ample time for proper alignment with quality assurance frameworks.

Additionally, and as applicable, Deans should integrate quality assurance as a standing item in meetings with Department Heads.

Centralizing Administrative Support for QUQAP

The audit also highlighted the need to strengthen the administrative support structure underpinning the QUQAP processes. A centralized Quality Assurance office would ensure consistent support across all Faculties and enable a more seamless quality assurance experience. Implementing this change, however, would require agreement and financial commitment from academic units, ensuring that each Faculty plays an active role in establishing and sustaining this shared resource.

I look forward to discussing this further with you in person.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Gavan R. Watson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end.

Gavan Watson, PhD
Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning