In accordance with Queen’s University Quality Assurance Processes (QUQAP), the Department of Geological Sciences and Geological Engineering submitted a self-study in August 2013 to the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science, the School of Graduate Studies and the Office of the Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic) to initiate the cyclical program review of its undergraduate and graduate programs. The approved self-study presented program descriptions, learning outcomes, library report and analyses of data provided by the Office of Institutional Planning and the School of Graduate Studies. Appendices to the self-study contained CVs for each full-time member in the Department of Geological Sciences and Geological Engineering.

Three arm’s-length reviewers (Dr. David Eaton, Professor, Department of Geoscience, University of Calgary, Dr. Douglas Stead, Professor and FRBC Chair, Simon Fraser University and Dr. Ralph Whitney, Associate Professor, Department of Chemistry) examined the materials and conducted a site visit on January 23 & 24, 2014. The site-visit included interviews with the Vice-Provost (Teaching and Learning), Vice-Provost and Dean of the School of Graduate Studies, Dean and Associate Dean of Arts and Science, Dean and Associate Dean of Engineering and Applied Science and meetings with undergraduate students, graduate students, post-doctoral fellows, librarians, cognate heads, staff and faculty.

In their report (February 14, 2014), the review team provided feedback that describes how the Department of Geological Sciences and Geological Engineering’s programs meet the QUQAP evaluation criteria and are consistent with the university’s mission and academic priorities. The review team noted that the undergraduate academic programs offered by the Department of Geological Sciences and Geological Engineering were excellent and the Department has maintained an internationally-recognized and broadly-based program of research and graduate supervision in earth-science related fields. The department also received high praise for fostering a positive atmosphere of learning and critical thinking while maintaining a tradition of addressing societal needs and practical applications in earth-science related problems.

The review team did report on a number of challenges including: time-to-completion for thesis-based graduate students within the Faculty of Arts and Science; lack of a renovation and equipment budget for teaching laboratories; heavy reliance on external funding to support some essential operations, including teaching assistants and technical staff; and, the lack of assistant professors on staff which places the faculty demographics in a vulnerable position.

Based on all of the above documentation, a Final Assessment Report and an Implementation Plan were prepared by the Vice-Provost (Teaching and Learning) and approved by the Provost (October 3, 2014).
The academic programs in the Department of Geological Sciences and Geological Engineering have been approved to continue and are scheduled for their next review in eight years (2021-2022)

Prepared by the Vice-Provost (Teaching and Learning)
September 30, 2014