

## **Institutional Quality Assurance Policy (IQAP)**

<b>Category:</b>	Academic
<b>Approval:</b>	Senate (internal) and Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance (Quality Council) (external)
<b>Responsibility:</b>	Provost and Vice President Academic
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Manager, Office of Provost and Vice President Academic
<b>Effective Date of Policy:</b>	Sept 1, 2019; Sept 1, 2015; initial Sept 1, 2011
<b>Date for Next Review:</b>	Fall 2022
<b>Senate:</b>	Approved Apr 16, Dec 2, 2014; initial approval May 10, 2011
<b>Quality Council:</b>	Approved Aug 26, 2019; Dec 18, 2014; initial approval Mar 31, 2011

Policies superseded by this Policy include:

- Policy on Undergraduate Program Review (February 2003)
- Procedures for New Degree Programs (May 2003)
- Procedure for Approval of New Graduate Programs (April 2005)

### **Purpose of Policy**

The Institutional Quality Assurance Policy (IQAP) and associated Procedures work to ensure the high quality of, and promote standards of excellence in, Trent's new and existing academic programs. The IQAP complies with the [Quality Assurance Framework \(QAF\)](#), developed by the Ontario Council of Academic Vice Presidents (OCAV) and adopted by the Council of Ontario Universities (COU) in April 2010.

This policy governs the:

- [Cyclical Review of Existing Degree and Graduate Diploma Programs](#)
- [Development of New Degree Programs](#)
- [Expedited Approvals of Graduate Diplomas](#)
- [Major Modifications of Existing Degree and Graduate Diploma Programs](#)

The policy and associated procedures governing the periodic [Cyclical Program Review](#) of existing programs help promote, maintain, and improve the quality of education at Trent, and provide Trent's students and prospective students, Trent's partners, the provincial government, and the broader public with the necessary assurance of this quality. Cyclical program reviews provide information upon which the University may make decisions about academic programs. Insight about program quality derived from such reviews may result in recommendations for improvement, modification, or termination of an academic program. Degree-level expectations, combined with peer-review judgment by expert disciplinary and interdisciplinary scholars, provide the benchmarks for assessing a program's standards and quality.

The policy and associated procedures governing the development and review of **New Program Proposals** ensure that new academic programs are consistent with Trent University's vision, mission and strategic directions and with the guidelines for University Undergraduate and Graduate Degree Level Expectations (DLEs) developed by the Ontario Council of Academic Vice Presidents and affirmed by Trent's Senate. The policy also ensures that new programs are of high quality, meet a perceived interest and demand, are supported with available funding and make good use of institutional resources, and draw upon and enhance existing strengths at the University. New program proposals need to be approved by the Quality Council.

The policy and associated procedures governing the **Expedited Approval of New Graduate Diplomas** ensures that these programs meet the quality assurance standards of Trent University and of the Quality Council.

The policy and associated procedures governing **Major Modifications** ensure that any major changes to existing degree programs enhance the quality of the program and are consistent with Trent's strategic directions and the DLEs.

## **Scope of Policy and Policy Statement**

This policy and its procedures are subject to ratification by the Quality Council, both initially and following each revision.

This policy applies to all existing and new undergraduate and graduate degree programs and graduate diplomas offered in full by Trent University or in part/conjointly by Trent University in partnership with another post-secondary institution.

All existing undergraduate degree programs, graduate degree programs, and graduate diploma programs are subject to periodic cyclical review conducted at a minimum once every eight years. Cyclical program review is a self-regulatory process subject to periodic audit by the Quality Council.

All new degree programs are subject to an internal review process that involves an external review component. New degree programs require approval by the Quality Council and may need to be submitted to the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Graduate diplomas are subject to an abbreviated internal review process and are submitted to Quality Council for expedited approval.

Major modifications to existing degree programs and graduate diplomas are approved through existing Senate committees and are reported annually to the Quality Council.

The University is audited by the Quality Council on an eight-year cycle, under the terms outlined in the Quality Assurance Framework, to ensure compliance with its IQAP.

## Acronyms

AP&B	Academic Planning & Budget Committee
COU	Council of Ontario Universities
CPRC	Cyclical Program Review Committee
DLEs	University Degree Level Expectations
FAR	Final Assessment Report
GDLEs	Graduate Degree Level Expectations
GSC	Graduate Studies Committee
IQAP	Institutional Quality Assurance Policy
AV	Ontario Council of Academic Vice presidents
OIPA	Office of Institutional Planning and Analysis
PPG	Provost's Planning Group
QAF	Quality Assurance Framework
USC	Undergraduate Studies Committee
UDLEs	Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations

## Definitions

### Collaborative Specialization

A Collaborative Specialization is an intra-university graduate field of study that provides an additional multidisciplinary experience for students enrolled in and completing the degree requirements for one of a number of approved programs. Students meet the admission requirements of and register in the participating (or “home”) program but complete, in addition to the degree requirements of that program, the additional requirements specified by the Collaborative Specialization. The degree conferred is that of the home program, and the completion of the Collaborative Specialization is indicated by a transcript notation indicating the additional specialization that has been attained.

### Degree

An academic credential awarded on successful completion of a prescribed set and sequence of requirements at a specified standard of performance consistent with OCAV's Degree Level Expectations and the institution's own expression of those Degree Level Expectations.

### Degree Level Expectations

The Degree Level Expectations established by OCAV serve as Ontario universities' academic standards and identify the knowledge and skill outcome competencies that reflect progressive levels of intellectual and creative development. Graduates at specified degree levels (e.g., Bachelors or Masters) are expected to demonstrate these competencies.

### Degree Program

The complete set and sequence of courses, combinations of courses or other units of study, research and practice prescribed by an institution to fulfill the requirements of a particular degree.

### Diploma Program

Universities may grant diplomas in acknowledgement of students' participation in either for-credit or not-for-credit activities at the undergraduate and graduate level. Not-for-credit and for-credit undergraduate diploma programs are not subject to approval or audit by the Quality Council. Quality

Council governs for-credit graduate diplomas; new diplomas will be developed and approved using the University's IQAP process and are subject to cyclical review. Reference to graduate diplomas throughout this document will refer to for-credit graduate diplomas unless otherwise stated. New Type 1, 2 and 3 diploma programs that have been conceived and developed as distinct and original entities require submission to the Quality Council for Expedited Approval (no external reviewers required) prior to their adoption. Once approved, they will be incorporated into the institution's schedule for cyclical reviews as part of the parent program.

The Quality Council recognizes three types or categories of Graduate Diplomas:

- **Type 1** – Awarded when a candidate admitted to a master's program leaves the program after completing a certain proportion of the requirements. Students are not admitted directly to these programs.
- **Type 2** – Offered in conjunction with a master's (or doctoral) degree, the admission to which requires that the candidate be already admitted to the master's (or doctoral) program. This represents an additional, usually interdisciplinary, qualification.
- **Type 3** – A stand-alone, direct-entry program, generally developed by a unit already offering a related master's (and sometimes doctoral) degree and designed to meet the needs of a particular clientele or market.

### **Expedited Approval**

Trent University recognizes two types of expedited approvals:

- New graduate diplomas which follow the abbreviated internal approval process of new degree programs (minus the external review component)
- If the university wishes, it may request expedited approval of a Major Modification.

### **Joint Degree Program**

A program of study offered by two or more universities or by a university and a college or institute, including an Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning, in which successful completion of the requirements is confirmed by a single degree document.

### **Major Modification of an Existing Program**

A 'significant change' in the requirements, learning outcomes or human and other resources associated with an existing degree program or program of specialization. Major Modifications include:

- Significant changes to a program's requirements
- Significant changes to the learning outcomes
- Significant changes in modes of delivery and/or to essential resources
- Change to the name of a program
- Termination of a degree program

### **New Program**

Any degree, degree program or program of specialization, currently approved by Senate or equivalent governing body, which has not been previously approved for that institution by the Quality Council, its predecessors, or any intra-institutional approval processes that previously applied. A change of name, only, does not constitute a new program; nor does the inclusion of a new program of specialization where another with the same designation already exists (e.g., a new honours program where a major with the same designation already exists). For the purposes of this Framework, a 'new program' is one that has substantially different program requirements and substantially different learning outcomes from those of any existing approved programs offered by the institution.

### **Program of Specialization** (e.g., a Major, Honours Program, Concentration or similar)

An identified set and sequence of courses, and/or other units of study, research and practice within an area of disciplinary or interdisciplinary study, which is completed in full or partial fulfillment of the requirements for the awarding of a degree and is recorded on the graduate's academic record. A Program of Specialization does not include an Emphasis, Specialization, Option, Minor or similar programming completed on an optional basis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the awarding of a degree. Where changes to an existing Emphasis, Specialization, Option, Minor or similar programming are made, they normally constitute minor or major modifications and do not require approval by the Quality Council.

## **Responsibilities**

### **Provost and Vice President Academic**

The Provost and Vice President Academic is the administrative authority responsible for the University's quality assurance policy and procedures and serves as Trent's authoritative contact with the Quality Council. The Provost and Vice President Academic is the authoritative contact with the Quality Council for new program approvals, cyclical reviews, expedited approvals, and major modifications. The Provost and the Vice President Academic is the arbiter in deciding whether a proposal constitutes a proposal for a new program or a major modification. The Office of the Provost supports the day-to-day workings of the processes governed by the IQAP.

### **Deans**

The Deans are responsible for the following:

- **For Cyclical Review** – meet with the Chairs/Directors or academic units scheduled to undergo cyclical program reviews to make sure that they understand their roles and responsibilities; sign off Self-Study and Appendices; consult with Office of Provost on the ranking of external reviewers; nominate and invite internal representatives to participate in site visit; provide a Decanal Response to the External Reviewers' Report and Departmental Response; consult on the Implementation Plan; and, ensure Academic Departments are considering and acting on the recommendations requiring action
- **For New Programs** – provide guidance and support for the development of new program proposals; develop Initial Proposals for approval by PPG; ensure broad consultation (with interested parties including faculty, academic units and decanal councils); approval of budgets and proposed resources, sign-off Program Proposal and Appendices; consult with Office of Provost on the ranking of external reviewers; and, submitting one-year Monitoring Report to AP&B.

### **Academic Units**

Academic Units refers to a department or a school. Reference to a 'Chair of a department' in this policy is taken to include a Chair or Director of an undergraduate or graduate program or a school. Academic units will be responsible for the following:

- **For Cyclical Review** – Academic Units are responsible for: writing the Self-Study when existing programs for which they are responsible are undergoing cyclical program reviews; nominating external reviewers; drafting the site visit schedule for external reviewers; responding to the External Reviewer's Report; implementing and reporting on those recommendations earmarked for action in the Implementation Plan of the Final Assessment Report; and, providing a final Implementation Report to CPRC.

- **For New Programs** – Academic units are often the proponents of new academic programming and in any event are significantly involved in consultation about new program proposals.

### **Provost's Planning Group (PPG)**

PPG is the senior administrative committee that reviews and approves initial proposals for new programs.

### **Senate**

Senate is responsible for approving the Institutional Quality Assurance Policy and any subsequent revisions. Senate is also responsible for approving new degree programs, new graduate diplomas, major modifications and some minor modifications to existing programs. Senate receives for information Final Assessment Reports on Cyclical Program Reviews, some minor modifications to existing programs, and notification that the cyclical review process is completed following the CPRC's approval of Implementation Reports.

**Academic Planning & Budget Committee (AP&B)** – Terms of Reference and Membership  
AP&B, a standing committee of Senate, is responsible for reviewing and recommending for approval to Senate all new degree programs and graduate diplomas. AP&B – (1) initial review of program proposals prior to external review; (2) final review and approval of program documentation following external review and makes recommendations to Senate; and (3) review of Monitoring Report one year after commencement of program. AP&B is also responsible for recommending to Senate the termination of an existing degree program.

**Cyclical Program External Reviewer (CPRC)** – Terms of Reference and Membership  
CPRC, a standing committee of Senate, is responsible for overseeing cyclical program reviews. CPRC reviews Self-Studies, External Reviewers' Reports, Academic Unit, and Decanal Responses. CPRC drafts Final Assessment Reports (and Implementation Plans) for approval by the Provost and Vice President Academic. CPRC approves Implementation Reports and notifies Senate that the cyclical review process is completed.

**Graduate Studies Committee (GSC)** – Terms of Reference and Membership  
GSC, a standing committee of Senate, is responsible for reviewing and recommending for approval to Senate modifications to existing graduate degree programs and diplomas. In consultation with the Provost and Vice President Academic, the Chair of GSC is the arbiter on whether a proposed change to an existing graduate program constitutes a major or a minor modification. GSC also makes recommendations to AP&B on the degree requirements and curriculum, including new courses, of proposed new academic programs.

**Undergraduate Studies Committee (USC)** – Terms of Reference and Membership  
USC, a standing committee of Senate, is responsible for reviewing and recommending for approval to Senate modifications to existing undergraduate degree programs. In consultation with the Provost and Vice President Academic, the Chair of USC is the arbiter on whether a proposed change to an existing undergraduate program constitutes a major or a minor modification. USC also makes recommendations to AP&B on the degree requirements and curriculum, including new courses, of proposed new academic programs.