

Program review – step by step guide

This guide provides step-by-step information for conducting the program review.

The overall program review process is designed to take 44 weeks (approximately one complete academic cycle), and the key steps are shown below together with recommended timing. Individual circumstances may extend this timeline. Programs undergoing subsequent reviews are expected to complete the process in a shorter timeframe benefiting from synergy and efficiency from previous review.

Unless otherwise specified, the self-study team, under the direction of the program champion, conducts the following tasks.

- Participate in kick-off and planning sessions (weeks 1–3)
- Collect and review information (weeks 4-19)
- Prepare Self-study report (weeks 20-26)
- Select external reviewers (week 26)
- Submit Self-study report (SSR) to the SQC (week 26)
- Integrate SQC feedback into SSR (week 30)
- SST submits Self-study report to school dean (week 31)
- School dean submits SSR to the APQA (week 32)
- Plan for external review (week 35)
- Participate in ERT site visit (week 40)
- Receive and write response to ERT report (weeks 42-43)
- Finalize response to ERT report (week 44)
- VP, Academic Office notifies EdCo of the outcome and recommendations of the review (per EdCo schedule)
- Review implementation of recommendations in progress 6 months later
- Status update to EdCo on program review recommendation implementation 1 year later

NOTE: It is expected that program areas will be gathering information, identifying issues and opportunities, and refining their programs on an ongoing basis, thereby minimizing the need to “start from scratch” upon the formal initiation of the program review.

Activities for Each Step of the Review

Below is a brief description of actions in each stage of the review. Unless otherwise specified, the self-study team, under the direction of the program champion, conducts the following tasks. The [roles and responsibilities matrix](#) shows a summary for key participants at each stage. Program teams may wish to use the [Program Review Checklist](#) to track their progress.

1. Participate in kick-off and planning sessions

(weeks 1- 3)

- a. The program area's self-study team (SST), consisting of the associate dean, the program head or department head (referred to as the program champion, or PC), one or more faculty members, and the assigned IDC, meet with the APQA lead (and a representative from IRP if needed) to discuss the overall review process in an initial planning session ("kick-off meeting").
- b. During this meeting, a schedule for the program review is discussed and a date is set for an in-depth program review planning session. Full participation in the planning session is crucial to creating an efficient and engaging start to the program review. Typically, this planning session takes two hours.
- c. Also at the kick-off meeting, copies of available reports such as Program Mix Analysis (PMA), graduate outcome surveys, and other reports as appropriate will be provided by the IRP office.
- d. One to two weeks after the kick-off meeting, the planning session is held and facilitated by the IDC. The APQA lead participates in the meeting as appropriate and responds to participants' questions. Participants are then given opportunities to generate ideas and questions that will have a direct influence on the next steps of the review.
- e. Finally, at the planning session, timeline is established, milestone meetings are scheduled, and the tasks involved in the review are identified and distributed among team members, and documented by the program champion, associate dean, and IDC.

2. Collect and Review Information

(weeks 4 – 19)

- a. In addition to the data provided by IRP at the kick-off meeting, collect readily available information, reports, and other data. Information and data for the Self-study report will typically come from program sources, such as department meeting minutes, course outlines, learner data, and faculty research or reports, Banner, standard Ministry student outcomes reports, and data and information gathered through survey instruments and other processes designed specifically for the review by the IDC and the self-study team.
- b. The program champion arranges for regular communication via meetings, email, or whatever is appropriate for those involved. Keeping in mind the program's goals for the program review, the self-study team and others review information and data gathered in relation to the ideas and questions generated at the planning session and to relevant questions in the Self-study Report.
- c. As appropriate, meet with the APQA lead to determine other data collecting needs, resources, and processes. Liaise with IRP as appropriate.
- d. Using standard program review surveys as a basis, with input from faculty including those from other departments that teach into the program, customize and administer surveys, collect and analyze additional data in conjunction with the IDC, and IRP as appropriate.
- e. While waiting for survey responses, there are several sections of the Self-study report that can be written, specifically Section 1 (program background), Section 5 (quality of program relationships and connections), Section 6 (comparison with previous reviews), and Section 7 (benchmarking with comparable programs).
- f. Review and summarize the information collected.
- g. Analyze data collected with participation of faculty including those from other departments that teach into the program as applicable.
- h. Develop outline for writing Sections 2, 3, and 4 of the Self-study report in conjunction with the IDC, based on the data collected through surveys and other means.

3. Prepare the Self-Study Report

(weeks 20 – 26)

- a. Prepare a complete draft of the Self-study report and distribute it to all in the program, including faculty from other departments who teach into the program. Develop draft recommendations for discussion with the SST, associate dean, and APQA lead. Associate dean keeps school dean informed of key findings, recommendations, and associated costs.
- b. Gather feedback from program faculty regarding the report.
- c. Incorporate feedback into the report. The final Self-study report will reflect the purposes, assumptions, and philosophies under which the program operates. It will also identify the “who” of the program—the learners, faculty (including Flexible Learning), BCIT as a whole, employers, and others—as well as the “what,” such as the program’s courses, activities, numbers of learners, goals met or unmet, and so on.
- d. Prepare the final Self-study report for review by the IDC and associate dean to ensure all areas are appropriately addressed, and formatting is appropriate. The completed report will initially go to the SQC before submission to the school dean.

4. Select external reviewers

(week 26)

- a. Make a list of external and internal candidates for the external review team (ERT) and submit it to the APQA lead. ERT members will be determined by the school dean and Dean, APQA, and the APQA lead will contact and invite selected ERT members.
- b. The APQA lead, in collaboration with the self-study team and the school dean's office, will coordinate arrangements for the site visit.

5. Submit Self-Study Report to the SQC

(week 26)

The SST submits the Self-study Report to the SQC for peer review.

6. Integrate SQC feedback into SSR

(week 30)

The SQC reviews the Self-study Report and offers feedback to the SST and school dean as to how effectively it addresses the eight program review categories identified in the Self-study Report template, and whether the recommendations are supported by evidence. The SST considers and incorporates feedback as appropriate prior to submitting the Self-study Report to the school dean.

7. SST submits self-study report to school dean

(week 31)

- a. The SST submits the Self-study report to the school dean in accordance with the program review templates and guidelines.
- b. The school dean reviews the Self-study report and requests clarification or changes before approving and forwarding to the APQA lead.
- c. The school dean should be comfortable that the recommendations are consistent with the findings and with the school’s direction, and is expected to support having the recommendations go forward (including approving any associated costs, ensuring they are accounted for within the school’s budget).

8. School dean submits the Self-Study Report to the APQA Office

(week 32)

- a. The APQA lead reviews the Self-study and provides feedback, as appropriate, to the self-study team.
- b. The APQA lead forwards Self-study Report to Dean, APQA for final review/approval.

- c. Any final feedback is incorporated into the Self-study Report by the self-study team in preparation for distribution to the ERT.

9. Plan for external review (week 35)

- a. In discussion with the APQA lead, establish a date and draft agenda for the site visit.
- b. APQA lead schedules an ERT planning meeting.
- c. The APQA lead invites ERT members and invites one ERT member to be Chair.
- d. The APQA lead distributes the report to the ERT and ensures a minimum of 2 weeks for ERT to review documents prior to site visit.
- e. The self-study team works with the APQA lead to ensure all aspects of the site visit are planned (including participants such as program advisory members, students, alumni, etc.)

10. Participate in external review team's (ERT) site visit (week 40)

- a. In conjunction with the associate dean's office, the APQA lead ensures all details are in place for the site visit.
- b. Conduct the site visit, with full participation from SST, program stakeholders, and program leadership.
- c. Arrange to have a debriefing session about the site visit with all program faculty and the IDC after the site visit. Based on the ERT's verbal report, start drafting the program's response and considering any possible revisions to the recommendations.
- d. The APQA lead assists the ERT Chair in finalizing the ERT Report.

11. Receive and write response to ERT report (weeks 42-43)

- a. The APQA lead receives the ERT Report, and distributes it to the Dean, APQA and school dean, copying the program self-study team for feedback and response.
- b. The PC establishes a procedure for gathering responses to the ERT Report and drafts response.

12. Finalize response to ERT report (week 44)

- a. The PC, in conjunction with the school associate dean, APQA lead, and IDC, writes the Program Response to External Review Team Report. The associate dean reviews the report with the school dean.
- b. The Program Response should appropriately respond to all external review team comments and clearly state final recommendations (with action plan) resulting from the program review. The action plan is part of the program review cycle and provides a seamless transition if there is a resulting program change and to the next program review.
- a. The APQA lead forwards the Program Response to ERT report to the Dean, APQA for final approval.
- b. The Dean, APQA receives the report and confirms on behalf of the VPA that it complies with the program review process.
- c. The APQA lead creates the Final Recommendations and Action Plan (FRAP), and submits it to EdCo for the next scheduled meeting. The APQA lead coordinates with the school dean, associate dean, and Program Champion to attend the EdCo meeting.

13. The VP, Academic Office notifies EdCo of the outcome of the review (per EdCo schedule)

- a. The school dean presents the FRAP to EdCo as an information item, and takes comments and questions as appropriate. This step provides transparency and accountability within the program review process, and represents the institutional response to the program review.
- b. this step marks the formal conclusion of the program review process.

14. Implementation of recommendations in progress (6 months later)

- a. The APQA lead meets with the Program Champion and associate dean at the 6-month point to discuss implementation of recommendations. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss progress on recommendations to date, and plans for additional progress in advance of the 1 year report.

15. Status update to EdCo on program review recommendations (1 year later)

- a. The APQA lead works with the Program Champion and associate dean to develop a one-year status report. The associate dean reviews the report with the school dean.
- b. The APQA lead sends the one-year status report to EdCo for the next meeting (one year after the EdCo report was presented), and coordinates with the school dean to present the report.
- c. The school dean reports to EdCo on the specific actions taken as a result of the program review, noting any deviations from the original recommendations. This step contributes further to transparency and accountability within the program review process.

The following documents associated with this guide can be found on the [APQA site](#):

- Self-study report template
- Recommendations with projected cost template
- External Review Team guidelines
- External Review Team candidate form
- External Review Team report template
- Program response to ERT report template
- Final Recommendations and Action Plan template
- One-year progress report template