
Program Review Process

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Objectives

Program review maintains the quality of educational programs at BCIT. BCIT is committed to conducting program reviews in a collaborative, systematic, and evidence-based approach while ensuring transparency and accountability.

This Procedure forms part of Policy 5402, Program Review. It outlines the process for program review and the steps described fully in the Program Review Guides.

Application

This Procedure applies to BCIT employees involved in the review of Institute educational programs.

Procedure

A. Description

Program review promotes educational excellence within programs by identifying opportunities to improve instruction and services to learners. The review process gathers and reports quantitative and qualitative data to describe the program and to determine if the program is meeting its and BCIT's mission and goals.

Program review involves compiling a self-study report, conducting an external review, writing a response to the external review team report, and outlining the program's final recommendations and action plan for the program under review. The final recommendations and action plan are presented to Education Council, and are the subject of a one-year status update provided to the Council on the implementation of the recommendations. The main steps in this process are outlined below.

B. Frequency of Program Reviews

For BCIT to meet the strategic priority of quality programming, Ministry expectations for post-secondary institutions, and requirements of external accrediting bodies, it must have a systematic and objective program review process. This requires a full review of all degree programs and programs that ladder into degrees at least every five years, with the remaining programs reviewed at least every seven years. An Institute schedule is developed by the dean of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance ("dean APQA") in collaboration with the school deans.

C. Duties and Responsibilities

Persons and groups responsible for program review are listed below, along with their roles.

Associate Dean (AD)

Program ADs participate in self-study teams (SSTs) and are responsible for ensuring timely conduct of the program review according to BCIT policy and within budget. In the program review process, ADs keep school deans informed of key findings, recommendations, and associated costs. ADs support the implementation of the final recommendations and submit a report to the school dean, the dean of Academic Planning & Quality Assurance (“dean APQA”), and Provost and Vice President Academic (VPA) one year following the final recommendations, with an update on the progress made in implementing the recommendations.

Dean, Academic Planning & Quality Assurance

The dean APQA oversees program reviews and is responsible for ensuring they meet the Institute’s needs and Ministry’s expectations. The dean APQA ensures that academic leaders are aware of the process, resources, timing, and reporting expectations, and that relevant service groups effectively support program reviews. The dean APQA and Deans’ Council together set the Institutional schedule for program reviews. The dean APQA collaborates with the school deans to select external review team members; receives self-study reports and approves them for forwarding to the external review team; and approves final recommendations and one-year reports for presentation to Education Council.

Education Council

Education Council receives the final program review recommendations from school deans and may request clarifications and make comments as appropriate. The Council must also hear one-year updates on the implementation of the recommendations.

External Review Team (ERT)

ERTs review self-study reports and undertake virtual or in-person site visits to seek input from students, graduates, faculty, industry, and administration to validate the findings and recommendations of self-study reports. They may also provide additional information regarding program strengths and opportunities for improvement. The ERT Chair creates an ERT report and submits it to the school dean and the dean APQA.

Institutional Research and Planning Office (IRP)

The IRP supports program reviews by providing standardized data and acting as a specialized resource for research and data collection and analysis. The IRP provides the program’s key performance indicators (KPIs), additional metrics, customized data as available, and provides summary reports for use by self-study teams (SSTs).

Learning and Teaching Centre Instructional Development Consultants (“IDCs”)

IDCs support SSTs throughout the program review process. IDCs facilitate program review by helping program areas plan and focus their reviews. As educational consultants, they lead the curriculum review process (including developing customized surveys and collecting and analyzing data), and assist with writing self-study reports, responses to external review team reports, and the final recommendations to be presented to Education Council.

Academic Planning & Quality Assurance (“APQA lead”)

The APQA lead is responsible for ensuring program reviews are conducted effectively and efficiently. This includes leading kick-off meetings, reviewing and providing feedback on all program review reports submitted to APQA for the Provost & VPA, coordinating the external review process, ensuring reports are submitted to Education Council, and generally supporting and assisting SSTs in

accordance with all relevant BCIT policies and procedures. The APQA lead advises the dean APQA of any issues relating to effective and timely completion of the review.

Office of the Provost and Vice-President, Academic (VPA)

The Office of the Provost & VPA (through APQA) receives and formally endorses final program review reports and recommendations and notifies Education Council of program review outcomes (by way of an information item presented by a school dean). Any program changes resulting will follow the process for program change approvals outlined in Policy 5401, Program Development and Credentials.

Program area faculty and staff

Program area faculty and staff participate in all aspects of program review, including:

- planning sessions;
- data and information gathering;
- surveys or focus groups;
- providing relevant resources and materials for reports;
- regular program review updates at department meetings;
- ERT site visits; and,
- developing recommendations and responses to ERT reports.

School Dean

School deans ensure the AD, School Quality Committee (SQC), and Program Champion are aware of the commitment and expectations for effective and timely program reviews. School deans will also budget adequate resources to conduct program reviews per the Institute schedule.

School deans approve their program self-study reports (including any associated budget implications) and submit them to the dean APQA for approval and forwarding to ERTs. With the dean APQA, school deans select ERT members and review the final program response and recommendations. School deans deliver the final recommendations and one-year follow-up reports to Education Council.

School Quality Committee (SQC)

The SQC is a resource to the program under review, and provides insights into the process, reporting, and expectations. SQCs review the self-study reports prior to submission to school deans to offer feedback to the SST (copied to the dean) on how effectively the report addresses the program review categories and whether the recommendations are appropriately supported by evidence.

Self-Study Team (SST) and Program Champion (PC)

SSTs are led by a Program Champion, who is a faculty member with knowledge and experience in the program under review (often the program head or department head). SSTs also include the AD and an IDC.

SSTs coordinate the review with the APQA lead. They engage program faculty and staff (including faculty from other departments who teach in the program) in review activities and provide regular program review updates at department meetings. SSTs create the self-study reports, integrating feedback from internal interested parties as appropriate.

Also, SSTs make recommendations to school deans and to the dean APQA for selection of external review team members, participate in external review site visits, coordinate a written response to the external review team report, and write the final recommendations and action plan.

D. Program Review Process

The following describes the main steps in the program review process.

1. Include in Operating Plans

Annually, during the budgeting cycle, each BCIT school develops an operating plan. Plans include a list of programs scheduled for program review according to the established Institute review cycle.

2. Establish Self-Study Team (SST)

For each scheduled program review, the school dean (or delegated AD) assembles an SST. The SST consists of the AD, the Program Champion and the IDC, and possibly other faculty members. The SST works in consultation with the APQA lead and the Institutional Research and Planning Office (IRP). The responsibilities of SSTs are set out in part C.

3. Schedule Kick-off and Planning meetings

The APQA lead schedules a program review kick-off meeting including all members of the SST. The meeting is led by the APQA lead, who outlines the purpose and process for program review, resources available, and expectations for reports and timing. The meeting also includes discussion of key questions to explore during the program review. Additional planning meetings are scheduled by the SST or IDC to plan the timelines, tasks, and responsibilities.

4. Collect and analyze data and information

SSTs collect readily available information from department meeting minutes, course outlines, learner data, faculty research or reports, the IRP office, Banner, student outcomes reports, survey data (using standard survey templates), focus groups, and by using any other methods designed by the IDC for the review. Parties involved in program review include students, alumni, industry, faculty, and staff.

SSTs review and analyze the information gathered in relation to ideas and questions from kick-off and planning meetings, and to questions in the self-study report template. SSTs consult with the APQA lead, IDCs, and IRP as needed throughout to determine other data-collecting needs, resources, and methods.

SSTs summarize the information collected for self-study reports and in consultation with the team's IDC develop plans for writing the report.

5. Develop self-study report

Self-study reports should create a holistic picture of a program, reflecting the purposes, assumptions, and philosophies under which it operates. The self-study report is based on evidence relating to program performance including strengths, desired improvements, and future directions. The reports systematically examine core aspects of the program, including: educational design; relevancy of the curriculum; alignment with program and institute goals; external standards; program-specific educational experiences; student and graduate achievement; admission, teaching, and evaluation practices; program-specific services, resources and facilities; relationships with other programs and the community; and comparisons with comparable programs.

The report includes eight sections:

- 1) Program Background
- 2) Quality of Educational Design
- 3) Quality of Educational Experience
- 4) Quality of Services, Resources and Facilities
- 5) Quality of Program Relationships and Connections
- 6) Comparison with Previous Reviews
- 7) Benchmarking with Comparable Programs

8) Conclusions, Recommendations, and Future Directions

The Program Review Guides and the self-study report template describe each section in detail, outlining the types of questions to address during the review. Programs should use the self-study report template when writing the report. The template is available at the Academic Planning & Quality Assurance website: <https://www.bcit.ca/academic-planning-quality-assurance/>.

6. Review of self-study report

ADs keep school deans informed of key findings and potential recommendations throughout the program review. The APQA lead meets with SSTs to ensure alignment with program review expectations, including involvement of interested parties in the review process, key findings, and resulting recommendations. SSTs gather feedback on the self-study report from program faculty and staff (including faculty from other departments teaching in the program) and incorporate it in the report, then submit it to the SQC and school dean.

The SQC evaluates whether the report effectively addresses the program review categories and whether recommendations are appropriately supported by evidence, and provides feedback to the SST. The SST incorporates SQC feedback, then submits the self-study report to the school dean for review and incorporates any additional feedback. When satisfied, the dean forwards the report to the APQA lead. Accompanying the self-study report is a summary of the projected costs for the recommendations, approved by the school dean.

The APQA lead reviews the report and provides feedback to the SST, who will incorporate any changes into the report. The APQA lead submits the report to the dean APQA for final review and approval. The APQA lead will send the final self-study report to the external review team in advance of the scheduled site visit.

7. External Review

External review is the next stage of the program review. The external review's purpose is to validate the recommendations within the self-study report and provide additional information regarding program strengths and opportunities for improvement.

ERTs usually include at least three members: two external to BCIT and one BCIT faculty member from another school. The school dean and dean APQA select the external team members from a list of candidates submitted by the SST.

Detailed information about the nomination and selection process of the ERT is outlined in the Program Review Guides and in the ERT candidate form template.

The ERT reviews the self-study report and undertakes a site visit, during which it seeks the input of students, graduates, employers, staff, faculty, and administration. The APQA lead is responsible for coordinating and overseeing the ERT review process.

The Program Review Guides provide guidelines for external review as well as External Review Team terms of reference.

Following the site visit, the ERT chair writes the final ERT report with input from the other external reviewers. The ERT chair forwards the report to the APQA lead, who distributes it to the school dean, dean APQA, and the SST.

The SST discusses the ERT report with other members of the program and produces the program area's response to the report.

8. Develop Program Response and Final Recommendations and Action Plan (FRAP)

SSTs create formal program responses to ERT reports (which remain internal), including the final recommendations for the program. The final recommendations and action plan (FRAP) are based on the findings in the self-study report and the ERT report.

The IDC and APQA lead assist the SST with writing the program response, ensuring each aspect of the ERT report is appropriately addressed and any relevant changes to recommendations are incorporated. Programs should use the provided template. The completed document is sent to the school dean for review and any required revisions.

9. Review of Program Response and Final Recommendations and Action Plan

The SST sends its completed document to the APQA lead for feedback, and any changes are incorporated. The APQA lead submits the document to the dean APQA for final review and approval.

Once the dean APQA confirms the Program Response and FRAP fulfills program review requirements, the APQA lead submits the final recommendations and action plan to Education Council.

10. School Dean Report to Education Council

School deans present to Education Council on the outcome of their program reviews, with a focus on the review recommendations, and responds to comments and questions as appropriate.

11. One-Year Status Update: School Dean

School deans, in consultation with the Provost & VPA, oversee the implementation of action plans. One year after the program review is completed, the program submits a status report to APQA for review and approval to submit to Education Council. School deans report to Education Council on the actions taken because of the review, noting any deviations from recommendations. This is the final step in the program review process.

12. Program Review of Related Programs

For the purposes of program review, related programs should be bundled to increase efficiency of review and integration of related programs.

Related programs can be at the same or different credential levels. Program reviews that include various credential levels should normally focus on the higher credentials (e.g. diploma, bachelor) and only brief discussion on implications for lesser related credentials (e.g. flexible learning certificates).

13. Programs with External Accreditation

BCIT may seek external program accreditation where there is evident value for students and other parties. While external accreditation and internal program reviews have some similarities, they serve different purposes. Accredited programs will complete internal program reviews modified to reduce duplication and effort. To the extent possible, programs under review by an external accrediting body should coordinate the work this entails with the internal program review requirements (e.g., using forms and templates required by the accrediting body wherever possible). If the accreditation review requires a comprehensive site visit this is normally adequate for BCIT program review, and no further site visit will be required.

14. Program Review Trends

APQA monitors and periodically reports program review outcomes and trends to Deans' Council and Education Council to inform institutional planning.

Forms Associated with This Procedure

- Program Review Guides
- Self-Study Report Template
- Other relevant templates, guidelines, and resources found on the APQA website

Amendment History

This Procedure is one of a series of policies and procedures created to replace Policy 5004, retired in 2011.

1. Created – version 1	Approved 2011 Nov 22 [replaced]
2. Revised – version 2	Approved 2013 Mar 27 [replaced]
3. Revised – version 3	Approved 2017 Nov 22 [replaced]
4. Revised – version 4	Approved 2025 Oct 07 [in force]