

Complete Policy Title

Policy on Academic Program Development and Review

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Responsible Executive

Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning

Policy Specific Enquiries

[MacPherson Institute](#)

General Policy Enquiries

[Policy \(University Secretariat\)](#)

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SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

DEFINITIONS

McMaster University uses the term “program goals” to mean clear and concise statements of the goals of the program. “Program goals” are therefore synonymous with what the Quality Assurance Framework refers to as “program objectives.”

PREAMBLE

1. McMaster University is widely recognized for innovation in teaching and learning and for the quality of its programs. Nevertheless, knowledge of our disciplines and the scholarship of teaching and learning are constantly evolving. Our reputation can only be maintained and improved if we, as academics and educators, critically review what we do in our programs and seek opinions and advice from colleagues at McMaster and at other institutions.
2. Although the primary objective for these reviews is the improvement of our academic programs, the processes that we adopt is also designed to meet our responsibility to the government on quality assurance. Every publicly assisted Ontario university that grants degrees and diplomas is responsible for ensuring the quality of all of its programs of study, including modes of delivering programs and those academic and student services that affect the quality of the respective programs under review, whether or not the program is eligible for government funding.
3. The process by which institutions meet this accountability to the government is outlined in the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF), developed by the Ontario Council of Academic Vice- Presidents (OCAV), and approved by Executive Heads. Institutions’ compliance with the QAF is monitored by the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance, also known as the Quality Council, which reports to OCAV and the Council of Ontario Universities (COU).
4. As part of the Quality Assurance Framework, McMaster was required to develop an Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), which is contained within this Policy. In addition to the 15 guiding principles contained within the QAF, McMaster determined the following internal principles to guide the development of the IQAP Policy:
 - a) curriculum development and improvement is an ongoing, iterative process that is initiated, developed and controlled at the departmental level;
 - b) McMaster’s IQAP incorporates input from all principal stakeholders; and
 - c) McMaster’s IQAP is designed primarily to help improve programs and shape them to have characteristics that are most valued at our University, while also meeting the responsibility for quality assurance.
5. Thus, the goal of McMaster’s IQAP is to facilitate the development and continued improvement of our undergraduate and graduate academic programs, and to ensure that McMaster continues to lead internationally in its reputation for innovation in teaching and learning and for the quality of its programs.

McMaster's IQAP is intended to complement existing mechanisms for critical assessment and enhancement, including departmental reviews and accreditation reviews. The uniqueness of each program at McMaster will emerge in the IQAP self-study.

6. The IQAP is subject to approval by the Quality Council when it is initiated and thereafter, when it is revised. The Quality Council will audit the University on an 8-year cycle under the terms outlined in the Quality Assurance Framework.

Cyclical Audit

7. One-year prior to the scheduled Cyclical Audit, McMaster's key contact to the Quality Council (or their delegate) will participate in a half-day briefing by the Quality Council Secretariat and an Audit Team member.
8. In advance of the cyclical audit, the Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning and Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies, or their delegates, will prepare a self-study of McMaster's Institutional Quality Assurance Process, highlighting its strengths as well as areas for improvement and enhancement. The self-study will also identify the institutional response to any issues identified in the previous audit. To prepare this self-study, consultation with Faculty representatives as well as key stakeholders from central university supports, such as the Registrar's Office, the MacPherson Institute, Institutional Research and Analysis and the Library will take place, as appropriate. The self-study will be submitted to the Quality Council's Secretariat as part of the Cyclical Audit process.
9. The Cyclical Audit provides accountability to the principal stakeholders of Ontario's university education system. The purpose of the Cyclical Audit is to evaluate the alignment of past and current practice with policy as well as the university's approach to continuous improvement. Cyclical Program Reviews that were undertaken within the period since the previous Cyclical Audit are eligible for selection for the university's next Cyclical Audit. Any new undergraduate and graduate programs that have been approved since the previous Cyclical Audit are eligible for selection in the next university's cyclical audit. Graduate Diplomas that were approved through the expedited approvals process as well as major modifications to existing academic programs are not normally subjected to the institution's cyclical audit.
10. Excluding any confidential information, the Audit Report and any follow up response report will be posted on McMaster's Quality Assurance webpage. If an area of concern is identified during the Cyclical Audit, the Quality Council may determine that a focused audit of a specific process is necessary. Reports related to a Focused Audit will be posted on McMaster's Quality Assurance webpage.

CONTACT

11. The authority responsible for the IQAP is the Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning. The authorities responsible for its application will be the Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning for undergraduate programs and the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies for graduate programs. When undergraduate and graduate programs are reviewed concurrently, the Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning and the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies will be jointly responsible for its application.

12. The person responsible for all contact between the University and the Quality Council is the Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning.
13. Throughout this Policy, the Chair refers to the head of the academic unit (usually a Department, sometimes a School or an interdisciplinary group) that is proposing a new program or is responsible for an existing program, although we recognize that the official title of such person varies across programs and Faculties. Similarly, the Dean refers to the head of the Faculty or equivalent individual responsible for the program, again recognizing that official titles vary.
14. In the case of joint academic programs (e.g., a combined honours program or a collaborative program with another educational institution), the relevant Chair and Dean shall be those at McMaster University who have the administrative responsibility for the program.

PURPOSE

15. This Policy on Academic Program Development and Review guides the development of new undergraduate and graduate programs (including for-credit graduate diploma programs) and aids in the ongoing improvement of existing programs. It has also been designed to meet the University's responsibility of ensuring the quality of such programs. It applies to all undergraduate and graduate programs offered at McMaster University, as well as programs offered in collaboration with other institutions that lead to McMaster University degrees or graduate diplomas.

DEFINITION OF NEW PROGRAMS

16. A new program is considered to be any new degree or degree program that has not been previously offered at McMaster University. In contrast to the normal evolution of academic programs, a new program will generally involve some combination of new courses, new learning outcomes, and new or re-allocated resources, and will be meant to provide students with an academic path that was previously not available to them.
17. Although not new, a program that has been offered at McMaster University without funding from the Ministry of Colleges and Universities and for which a request for funding is to be made, will follow the procedures for new programs that are outlined in § II.

SECTION II: NEW GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

The steps required for the approval of any new program include:

BEGINNING A NEW PROGRAM PROPOSAL

18. Proponents of a new program may begin by preparing a Statement of Intent and acquiring endorsement from the relevant Dean(s) and Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning or, in the case of graduate programs, the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies.

BROAD CONSULTATION

19. The Chair, in consultation with the Dean, is responsible for ensuring that there is broad consultation. Broad consultation is required as part of the proposal process. It will also be essential to have appropriate discussions with other institutions when the proposed programs are to be offered in collaboration with those institutions.
20. Whenever faculty members from several departments will be involved in a proposed program, these proponents must have the opportunity to discuss the proposal with their respective Dean(s) and Chair(s). Similarly, if there is a proposal to cross-list a course, or to recommend or require students in the new program to take existing courses, the teaching Department(s) must be consulted and agreement obtained, in writing, from the appropriate Chair/Dean. Approvals of the relevant Curriculum Committees are required.
21. Discussions are to be held with central support units such as, but not limited to, the Library, the Registrar, the MacPherson Institute, and other relevant units, to assess the impact of the introduction of the new program. Input also should be sought from relevant groups of students for whom there is a potential impact of the proposal and consideration given to the demographics of the student market for the program.
22. Broad consultation is especially important when proposing interdisciplinary programs, particularly when the initiators of the proposed plan are unfamiliar with all disciplines involved in the proposed program or individual faculty members who might potentially be interested or have expertise. A proposal for a new interdisciplinary program must be presented to any related Faculty/Program to ensure that there is widespread awareness of the program and of its potential impact. If a new interdisciplinary program utilizes or cross-lists one or several new courses from other Departments, the Department(s) offering the course(s), rather than the new interdisciplinary group, must submit those courses for approval. Prior written agreement also must be obtained from Chairs of participating Departments for teaching, graduate supervision and other resources required for interdisciplinary programs. Departments must be given adequate time to consider these requests. The program proponents, in consultation with the appropriate Dean(s), or their delegate(s), will consult and obtain proposed administrative and governance structures from the Faculties involved in interdisciplinary program proposals for inclusion in the new program proposal.

NEW PROGRAM PROPOSAL

23. The Chair is responsible, in collaboration with relevant groups and/or individuals, for the preparation of a New Program Proposal. Both the Chair and the Dean, or Dean's delegate, ensure that the proposal has met all of the New Program Proposal criteria outlined below and both will sign off on the completeness of the proposal. For an interdisciplinary program, all affiliated program Chairs and appropriate Deans, or the Deans' delegates, sign off on the completeness of the proposal.

NEW PROGRAM PROPOSAL: EVALUATION CRITERIA

24. Program proponents are to complete McMaster's New Program Proposal template and address the evaluation criteria for the New Program Proposal as outlined below.

Program Overview

- a) Description of the extent and method of the consultation process undertaken during the development of the proposal, including the diversity of groups and /or individuals who were engaged in and informed the preparation of the proposal;
- b) Consistency of the program's goals with the University's tripartite research, teaching, and service excellence mission, its values and purpose, and its academic priorities and plans;
- c) Ways in which the program addresses the institution's current Strategic Mandate Agreement;
- d) Ways in which the program addresses the institution's current strategies, frameworks and/or principles regarding equity, diversity and inclusion, and how the program advances EDI-related academic goals (e.g., Indigenous perspectives, international relevance, interdisciplinarity, intercultural competencies, social and environmental equity and sustainability); and
- e) Clarity and appropriateness of the program's requirements and the Program Learning Outcomes in meeting the University's Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations (UDLEs) or Graduate Degree Level Expectations (GDLEs), as outlined in Appendix A;
- f) Appropriateness of degree nomenclature and program's goals.

Admission Requirements

- a) Appropriateness of the program's admission requirements for meeting its goals and the Program Learning Outcomes established for completion of the program;
- b) Alternative requirements, if any, for admission into the program, such as minimum grade point average, additional languages or portfolios, along with how the program recognizes prior work or learning experience; and
- c) Consideration of accessible and equitable admissions processes and practices.

Structure

- a) Appropriateness of the administrative, governance, and communication processes proposed in support of the program;
- b) Appropriateness of the program's structure and requirements to meet specified Program Learning Outcomes;

- c) Appropriateness of the program's structure and requirements to meet Degree Level Expectations; and
- d) For graduate programs, a clear rationale for program length, which ensures that the program requirements can be reasonably completed within the proposed time period.

Program Content, Curriculum, and Teaching

- a) Ways in which the curriculum addresses the current state of the discipline or area of study, and extent to which a comparative review of the state of the discipline informs the curriculum;
- b) Identification of any unique curriculum or program innovations or creative components with attention to experiential and community-engaged pedagogy;
- c) Appropriateness of the proposed mode(s) of delivery to meet the intended Program Learning Outcomes and Degree Level Expectations and availability of the necessary physical resources including infrastructure and technologies for accessible education;
- d) Ways in which the program addresses current institutional, faculty, or departmental priorities (e.g., experiential learning, diversity and inclusion, accessibility, community engagement, entrepreneurship, et cetera);
- e) Ways in which the program addresses the current Strategic Mandate Agreement;
- f) For research-focused graduate programs, clear indication of the nature and suitability of the major research requirements for degree completion; and
- g) For graduate programs, verification that the courses included meet university requirements in terms of the minimum number of courses required, the level of courses required, and the appropriate inclusion of other required elements appropriate for the degree level (e.g., transfer exams, comprehensive exams). At least two thirds of the course requirements must be at the 700-level.

Assessment of Teaching and Learning

- a) Plans to monitor and assess the overall quality of the program and whether the program is achieving its proposed goals, ensuring evaluation methods are accessible and inclusive and audiences are diverse;
- b) Appropriateness of the proposed methods for the instruction and assessment of student achievement of the intended Program Learning Outcomes. The Program Learning Outcomes must meet the Degree Level Expectations;
- c) Completeness of plans for documenting and demonstrating the level of performance of students, consistent with the Degree Level Expectations; and
- d) Description of how the resulting information from level of student performance will be documented and used to inform continuous program improvement.

Resources

25. For all programs:

- a) Adequacy of the administrative unit's planned utilization of existing human, physical and financial resources including any implications for the impact on other existing programs at the University and any institutional commitment to supplement those resources to support the program;

- b) Participation of a sufficient number and quality of faculty who are competent to teach and/or supervise in the program in order to achieve the goals of the program and foster the appropriate academic environment;
- c) Evidence that there are adequate resources to sustain the quality of scholarship produced by undergraduate students, as well as graduate students' scholarship and research activities, including library support, information technology support, and laboratory access;
- d) If applicable, discussion/explanation of the role and approximate percentage of adjunct and part-time faculty/limited term appointments used in the delivery of the program and the associated plans to ensure the sustainability of the program and quality of the student experience;
- e) If applicable, provision of supervision of experiential learning opportunities; and
- f) If applicable, additional institutional resource commitments to support the program in step with its ongoing implementation.

26. For undergraduate programs:

- a) Evidence of plans for adequate numbers of faculty and staff to achieve the goals of the program;
- b) Evidence of plans to provide the necessary resources in step with the implementation of the program;
- c) Planned/anticipated class sizes; and
- d) Provision of supervision of experiential learning opportunities, if applicable.

27. For graduate programs:

- a) Evidence that full-time tenured/tenure-track/CAWAR faculty have the recent research and/or professional/clinical expertise needed to sustain the program, promote innovation, foster an appropriate intellectual climate, and provide excellent supervision of students in academic and research components of the program;
- b) Where appropriate to the program, evidence that financial assistance for students will be sufficient to ensure adequate quality and numbers of students;
- c) For programs with a research component, evidence that faculty research supervisors have current and ongoing research programs and funding, and space and relevant research infrastructure appropriate to support students' research in the program;
- d) Evidence of how supervisory loads will be distributed, and the qualifications and appointment status of faculty who will provide instruction and supervision; and
- e) Evidence of prior experience in graduate teaching and research supervision for faculty participating in the program.

Quality and Other Indicators

28. Specify how program quality and other metrics will be measured, particularly:

- a) Definition and use of indicators that provide evidence of quality of the faculty (e.g., qualifications, research, innovation and scholarly record; appropriateness of collective faculty expertise to contribute substantively to the proposed program);

- b) Evidence of a program structure and faculty research that will ensure the intellectual quality of the student experience;
- c) If applicable, any other evidence that the program and faculty will ensure the intellectual quality of the student experience;

EXTERNAL EVALUATION: REVIEW TEAM

- 29. The Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning or, in the case of graduate programs, the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies, in consultation with the Dean will select a diverse team of reviewers to assess the proposal. The Review Team will consist of two external reviewers and one internal reviewer. Additional members may be added to the team, if appropriate, for instance when evaluating professional programs or interdisciplinary programs.
- 30. External reviews of new undergraduate, Master's and PhD program proposals must incorporate a site visit. Site visits are conducted on-site. All PhD programs must have an on-site visit. Only professional or fully online Master's programs may be allowed an exception to an on-site visit; all other Master's programs must have an on-site visit. Exceptions to on-site visits for new undergraduate program reviews are determined by the Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning or, in the case of new professional and fully online Master's programs, the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies, in consultation with the appropriate Dean or Dean's delegate and agreed to by the Review Team prior to the commencement of the review. The Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning or, in the case of new graduate programs, the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies, will provide clear justification for the decision for an exception to an on-site visit.
- 31. If it is determined that a site visit can take place virtually, the virtual site visit will require all elements of the Review Team's site visit using videoconferencing software and/or other suitable platforms. A virtual site visit will still include elements such as virtual meetings with students, faculty, and other stakeholders. It may also include remote attendance at performances or events, and virtual facilities tours.
- 32. As appropriate, the Review Team shall meet with the following:
 - a) Chair or Director;
 - b) Full-time faculty members (a broad cross section, in groups);
 - c) Part-time faculty members (a broad cross section, in groups);
 - d) Program students (a broad cross section of students is to be invited by the program to participate in a meeting with the review team);
 - e) Departmental/Program support staff;
 - f) Associate Dean;
 - g) Dean;
 - h) For graduate programs, the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies;
 - i) For undergraduate programs, the Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning; and
 - j) Provost and Vice-President (Academic), if available.

33. External members of the Review Team will be individuals who are in the same discipline as the program under review (or across disciplines for interdisciplinary programs) and who are distinguished senior academics of broad experience, with an established commitment to higher education. External reviewers will not be faculty members from McMaster University. Internal reviewers are faculty members from McMaster but from outside of the discipline (or interdisciplinary group) engaged in the proposed program. Non-academics with relevant expertise and experience are permitted to serve as reviewers in addition to the two academic reviewers when it would enhance the diversity of relevant disciplinary or interdisciplinary perspectives, or in community-engaged or professional programs. Reviewers must have an impartial, arm's-length relationship to the program. For example, reviewers should not have been a research supervisor or student of members of the proposed program; and should not have collaborated with members of the proposed program within the past six years or have made plans to collaborate with those individuals in the immediate future. There also should be no other potential conflicts of interest (e.g., personal or financial). Wherever possible the review team will represent broad institutional categories and/or geographic regions.
34. External reviewers will be selected from a list of at least six suggested individuals compiled by the Department and endorsed by the Dean. An internal reviewer will be selected from a list of at least three suggested individuals compiled by the Department and endorsed by the Dean.
35. The lists shall include, for each proposed external reviewer:
 - a) Name;
 - b) Rank and position;
 - c) Institution or company and current address, telephone, e-mail address, and URL if available;
 - d) Professional (including administrative) experience or expertise relevant to the Program under review;
 - e) Details of any previous or current affiliation with the University, and any association with individual members of the Program under review (e.g., co-author, previous student/supervisor, close relationship); and
 - f) For graduate programs, a description of research expertise, and a partial listing of recent scholarly publications.
36. The New Program Proposal, all relevant faculty CVs, the McMaster's Review Team Guidelines and other materials specific to the review will be provided to all members of the review team no less than two weeks prior to their visit.

REVIEWERS' REPORT

37. Excepting when contrary circumstances apply, the Review Team will submit a co-authored report, including an Executive Summary, for the program(s) under review within four weeks of the visit to the Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning, or, in the case of graduate programs, the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies. The report will be written primarily by the external reviewer(s), and then sent to the internal reviewer for their review and comment. The report will appraise the standards and quality of the proposed program, and address the criteria set out in § III. 24-28 above, including the associated faculty and the

adequacy of existing physical, human, and financial resources. Reviewers also will be invited to acknowledge any clearly innovative aspects of the proposed program, together with recommendations on any essential or otherwise desirable modifications to the program. The report may include a confidential section (e.g., where personnel issues can be addressed). The Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning or, in the case of graduate programs, the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies, will review the reviewers' report for completeness. If satisfactory, the Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning or, in the case of graduate programs, the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies, will approve the reviewers' report and disseminate it to the Chair. If there are concerns with the completeness of the report, the Review Team will be asked to provide more clarity.

INTERNAL RESPONSE

38. Separate responses to the reviewers' report from both the Chair and the Dean, or their delegates, should be prepared, as per the New Program Response template, and attached to the reviewers' report. Any substantive revisions (e.g., revisions to Program Learning Outcomes; modes of delivery; curriculum and/or assessment practices) to the New Program Proposal required by the Reviewers' Report and agreed to by the Chair and Dean must be made to the proposal prior to submission for approval at Undergraduate Council or Graduate Council.

INSTITUTIONAL APPROVAL

39. In addition to the completion of the external review, approval of new program proposals by the following University bodies, in the order listed below, is required:
 - a) The Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning or, in the case of graduate programs, the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies, will review the New Program Proposal to ensure that the program is consistent with McMaster's principles and priorities and existing strengths of the University, the program is of high academic quality; there is convincing evidence of student demand and societal need for the program; and, sufficient financial support, infrastructure, and human resources can be made available to initiate and support the program either within the Faculty budget or based on the program being a full revenue generating program;
 - b) The Faculty Curriculum Committee(s), representing a diversity of faculty members and equipped to consider EDI principles, reviews the New Program Proposal to ensure that the new program adds sufficient value to the programs already offered in the Faculty;
 - c) the Faculty(ies) reviews the New Program Proposal to ensure that the program is consistent with the Faculty's strategic plans and that the necessary resources are available if these are to be provided from within the Faculty's envelope;
 - d) the Executive Director of Finance and Planning reviews the Resource Implications and Financial Viability document to ensure that all potential University resource requirements are captured, and the program is properly costed. In addition, for interdisciplinary or partnership programs, ensures that an MOU is properly completed;
 - e) for Undergraduate programs, the Undergraduate Curriculum and Admissions Committee reviews the New Program Proposal to assess the impact of the new program on students enrolled in other Faculties;

- f) the University Student Fees Committee reviews the proposed Resource Implications and Financial Viability document and ensures that Ministry and University fee policies are adhered to, are reasonable relative to market and that fee collection can be properly administered within existing systems;
- g) Undergraduate Council or Graduate Council reviews the New Program Proposal to provide a venue for a broad discussion on the new program by elected faculty and student members with specific knowledge of and expertise in undergraduate or graduate programming, and ensure that the program is consistent with University-wide goals and criteria specifically related to undergraduate or graduate programming;
- h) University Planning Committee reviews the New Program Proposal and the Resource Implications and Financial Viability documents to understand the financial implications of the new program, evaluate the impact University-wide, and assess value-for-money for the intended student; and
- i) Senate reviews the New Program Proposal and Resource Implications and Financial Viability documents to ensure that the program is consistent with the University's general strategic plans with respect to academic programs.

These bodies should consider the criteria outlined in § III. 24-28 above when evaluating the proposal.

- 40. The site visit with external reviewers will be held after the Faculty Curriculum Committee(s) and prior to approval at Undergraduate Council or Graduate Council and Senate.
- 41. Special considerations, such as collaboration agreements or non-standard distribution and full revenue generating programs are to refer to the *Academic Revenue Generating Activity Policy for Revenue Generating Certificate and Diploma Programs Administered through a Faculty* and other relevant University policies, as applicable.

QUALITY COUNCIL SECRETARIAT

- 42. Once all approvals outlined in § III. 39 above are obtained, the institution will submit the New Program Proposal, together with the Reviewers' Report, the internal response to the Report, and a brief commentary on the two external reviewers selected to review the proposed program in regard to their qualifications, to the Quality Council Secretariat. The submission template will require information on whether or not the proposed program will be a cost-recovery program. The same standards and protocols apply regardless of the source of funding.
- 43. The Quality Council Appraisal's Committee will review the new program proposal submission and determine if additional information is required. If sufficient, the Quality Council will review the new program proposal submission and will make one of the following decisions:
 - a) Approved to commence.
 - b) Approved to commence, with report.
 - c) Deferred for up to one year during which time the university may address identified issues and report back.
 - d) Not approved.
 - e) Or such other action as the Quality Council considers reasonable and appropriate in the circumstances.

Within 30 days of being notified, the university may appeal Quality Council's decision.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEW PROGRAMS

44. Following its submission to the Quality Council, the University may announce, per guidelines within the New Program Proposal Guidebook, its intention to offer the program, provided that clear indication is given that approval by the Quality Council is pending, and that no offers of admission will be made until the program has been approved by the Quality Council. Ministry approval may also be required. When such announcements are made at this stage, they must contain the following statement: "Prospective students are advised that the program is still subject to formal approval."

APPROVED NEW PROGRAMS

45. After a new program is submitted to the Quality Council, the University may seek Provincial funding for the program. Once Quality Council has approved the new program, the program must begin within thirty-six months of the date of approval; otherwise, the approval will lapse. If program approval lapses, the program must begin the new program proposal process again.
46. Between eighteen and twenty-four months after onset of the program, the Chair will provide the Dean and Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning or, in the case of graduate programs, the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate studies, with a brief progress report on the program, that assesses the program's success in realizing its goals; addresses any concerns from the program reviewers' report and notes from the Appraisal Committee; and highlights any unanticipated changes in curriculum, resources, enrollment, funding mechanisms, or governance structure. If, after consultation with the Dean, the Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning or, in the case of graduate programs, the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies, it is deemed appropriate, an informal internal assessment of the program may be undertaken, including interviews with current faculty, students, and staff, to determine if a more complete, early cyclical review is warranted.
47. The first cyclical review for any new program must be conducted no more than eight years after the date of the program's initial enrolment. Outcomes identified in the program progress report, described above, must be included in the programs first cyclical review.
48. New undergraduate and graduate programs that have been approved are eligible for selection in the university's next cyclical audit.

SECTION III: EXPEDITED APPROVALS

49. The Protocol for Expedited Approvals applies when one or more of the following applies:
- a) an institution requests endorsement of the Quality Council to declare a new Field or to revise Fields in a graduate program (note: there is no requirement to declare fields in either master's or doctoral programs);
 - b) there are proposals for new for-credit graduate diplomas; including new graduate diplomas (Type 2) offered in conjunction with a Master's or Doctoral degree program and usually represent an additional interdisciplinary qualification; and
 - c) new graduate diplomas (Type 3) as a stand-alone, direct-entry program, generally developed by a unit already offering a related master's or doctoral degree
 - d) situations where although the changes to the program meet the definition of a major modification, the changes are of such significance that a more immediate review is desirable. In such cases, the Department, the Faculty, Undergraduate Council or Graduate Council may, if it deems it advisable after consultation with the relevant Dean(s) and Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning and/or Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies, initiate an expedited program review and request that the Quality Council review the Expedited Proposal.
50. The Expedited Proposal will describe the new graduate field or graduate diploma (including, as appropriate, reference to Program Learning Outcomes, Degree Level Expectations, faculty and resource implications), or provide a brief account of the rationale for the changes, addressing the evaluation criteria where they apply (e.g., program goals, program requirements, assessment of teaching and learning, admission requirements, resources, quality and other indicators) for the program.
51. The Expedited Approvals process requires all the approvals listed in § III. 39 above and the submission to the Quality Council of an Expedited Proposal. Expedited approvals do not require external reviewers be involved in the approval process and provides for a faster turn-around on decisions by the Quality Council. Common decisions by Quality Council are: a) approved to commence b) approved to commence, with a report or c) not approved.
52. Type 3 graduate diplomas are included in the schedule for cyclical reviews and will be subject to external review during the cyclical program review process. Graduate Diplomas not associated with a parent program are reviewed by desk audit. A desk audit is conducted independently of the university (i.e., does not typically include interviews or in-person or virtual site visits). Graduate Diplomas that were approved through the expedited approvals process as well as major modifications to existing academic programs are not normally subjected to the institution's cyclical audit.

SECTION IV: CYCLICAL PROGRAM REVIEWS

53. All academic programs are scheduled to be reviewed on a seven-year cycle and must be reviewed no more than eight years from the previous review. New programs must be reviewed no more than eight years after the date of the program's first enrolment. The steps taken to address any issues that have been identified in monitoring reports of the new program or in follow up by Quality Council are to be identified in first cyclical review self-study.
54. The primary purpose for cyclical program reviews is continuous improvement of existing academic programs. An academic program is defined as a complete set and sequence of courses, combinations of courses and/or other units of study, research and practice as outlined by the university for the fulfillment of the requirements for either undergraduate or graduate degrees. Combined programs do not require review if their constituting programs are reviewed separately. Undergraduate diplomas, Emphases, Options and Minors are not required to undergo the cyclical program review process outlined in this policy; however, Chairs are to consult with the Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning to determine if other review processes are required. The list of programs that require review including those that are joint/inter-institutional, multi-disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and at multiple sites, as well as the schedule of such reviews, will be maintained by the Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning in consultation with the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies. Programs that are closed or that have suspended admissions are not subject to cyclical program review. Program Chairs will be notified of a scheduled review by the Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning or their delegate. Each of the specific programs to be reviewed will be listed in the notification.
55. Departments can choose to review undergraduate and graduate programs jointly or separately. If the reviews are done jointly, the evaluation criteria and quality indicators described below must be applied to each program included in the self-study and there must be sections within the report to address different situations that apply to each program. Program reviews may also be done jointly with accreditation reviews, at the discretion of the Chair, in consultation with the Dean (see § IV. 86-89 below). Where programs seek to combine previously separate undergraduate and graduate reviews, they shall adopt the timeline of the earliest scheduled program review. For academic programs delivered in partnership with other educational institutions, the Chair must ensure that representatives from all educational institutions in the partnership are consulted during all key stages of the cyclical review process, including self-study, site visit, implementation, and monitoring. For professional programs, the Chair must ensure the views of employers and professional associations are solicited and included in the self-study and site visit.
56. The key outcome of a cyclical program review is the Final Assessment Report and its associated Implementation Plan which become the basis of a continuous improvement process through monitoring of key performance indicators. It is the primary responsibility of the program Chair to ensure that the implementation plan is achieved and to provide clear timelines and communication requirements throughout the process.
57. The review consists of the following steps, outlined below.

SELF-STUDY: INTERNAL PROGRAM PERSPECTIVE

58. The Chair is responsible, in collaboration with relevant groups and/or individuals such as faculty, students and staff, for preparing a self-study document that is broad-based, reflective, forward-looking, and inclusive of critical analysis. The self-study must address and document the consistency of the program's learning outcomes with the University's mission and Degree Level Expectations, and how its graduates achieve those outcomes. Both the Chair and the Dean, or the Dean's delegates, ensure that the self-study has met all of the self-study criteria and sign off on the completeness of the self-study. For interdisciplinary programs, all affiliated program Chairs and appropriate Deans, or the Deans' delegates, sign off on the completeness of the self-study.
59. The self-study criteria and quality indicators are as follows:

Program Description and Overview

- a) Program goals are consistent with the University's tripartite research, teaching, and service excellence mission, its values and purpose, and its academic priorities and plans;
- b) Ways in which the program addresses the institution's current strategies, frameworks and/or principles regarding equity, diversity and inclusion, and how the program advances EDI-related academic goals (e.g., Indigenous perspectives, international relevance, interdisciplinarity, intercultural competencies, social and environmental equity and sustainability, etc.);
- c) Program structure and requirements are appropriate to meet the program's goals and Program Learning Outcomes; and
- d) Program Learning Outcomes are clear, appropriate and align with the Degree Level Expectations.

Admission Requirements

- a) Admission requirements are appropriately aligned with the program's goals and the Program Learning Outcomes established for completion of the program;
- b) Sufficient explanation of alternative requirements, if applicable, for admission into a graduate, second-entry or undergraduate program, e.g., minimum grade point average, additional languages or portfolios, and how the program recognizes prior work or learning experience; and
- c) Consideration of the demographics of the student market for the program, and accessible and equitable admissions processes and practices.

Curriculum

- a) How the curriculum reflects the current state of the discipline or area of study, and extent to which a comparative review of the state of the discipline informs the curriculum;
- b) Evidence of any significant innovation or creativity in the content and/or delivery of the program relative to other such programs, with attention to experiential and community-engaged pedagogy;
- c) How the mode(s) of delivery are appropriate and effective at meeting the Program Learning Outcomes, including infrastructure and technologies for accessible education; and

- d) Ways in which the program addresses current institutional, faculty, or departmental priorities (e.g., experiential learning, equity, diversity and inclusion, accessibility, community engagement, entrepreneurship) and the current Strategic Mandate Agreement.

Teaching and Assessment

- a) Methods for assessing the overall effectiveness of the program quality are appropriate and effective, ensuring evaluation methods are accessible and inclusive, and audiences are diverse;
- b) Methods for assessing student achievement of the defined Program Learning Outcomes and Degree Level Expectations are appropriate and effective;
- c) Appropriateness and effectiveness of the means of assessment, especially in the students' final year of the program, in clearly demonstrating achievement of the Program Learning Outcomes and the Degree Level Expectations and the program's goals; and
- d) Appropriateness and effectiveness of the plans to monitor and assess the overall quality of the program; achievement of the program's goals and a description of how the information will be documented and used to inform continuous program improvement.

Resources

- a) Appropriateness and effectiveness of the academic unit's use of existing human, physical and financial resources in delivering and maintaining the quality of its program(s), in relation to the University's priorities for and constraints on funding, space, and faculty allocation;
- b) Given the program's class sizes and cohorts, as well as its program level learning outcomes, describe the participation of a sufficient number of qualified core faculty who are competent to teach and/or supervise in and achieve the goals of the program and foster the appropriate academic environment;
- c) If applicable, discuss the role and approximate percentage of adjunct and part-time faculty/limited term appointments used in the delivery of the program and the associated plans to ensure the sustainability of the program and quality of the student experience; and
- d) If applicable, outline the supervision of experiential learning opportunities.

GRADUATE PROGRAMS ONLY

- a) Given the program's class sizes and cohorts as well as its program-level learning outcomes, provide evidence that faculty have the recent research or professional/clinical expertise needed to foster an appropriate intellectual climate, sustain the program, and promote innovation;
- b) Evidence of how supervisory loads are distributed, in light of qualifications and appointment status of the faculty; and
- c) If appropriate, evidence that financial assistance for students is sufficient to ensure adequate quality and numbers of students.

Quality Indicators

60. Information on the quality of the program under review. Standard quality indicators, outlined in the McMaster's Self-Study Guidebook, are available to Chairs from the Office of Institutional Research and Analysis, the Office of the Registrar, the School of Graduate Studies, or from the departments themselves.

Chairs will be expected to provide context and commentary on the data. When possible and appropriate, Chairs will also refer to applicable professional standards.

61. Evidence of the quality of the faculty (e.g., qualifications, funding, honours, awards, research, innovation and scholarly record; appropriateness of collective faculty expertise to contribute substantively to the program and commitment to student mentoring).
62. For students: grade-level for admission, scholarly output, success rates in provincial and national scholarships, competitions, awards and commitment to professional and transferable skills, and times-to-completion and retention rates.
63. Any other evidence that the program and faculty ensure the intellectual quality of the student experience.
64. Additional graduate program criteria:
 - a) Evidence that students' time-to-completion is both monitored and managed in relation to the program's defined length and program requirements;
 - b) Quality and availability of graduate supervision;
 - c) Evidence that each graduate student in the program is required to take a minimum of two-thirds of the course requirements from among graduate level courses;
 - d) For research-focused graduate programs, clear indication of the nature and suitability of the major research requirements for degree completion;
 - e) Definition and application of indicators that provide evidence of faculty, student and program quality, for example:
 - (i) Faculty: funding, honours and awards, and commitment to student mentoring;
 - (ii) Students: grade-level for admission, scholarly output, success rates in provincial and national scholarships, competitions, awards;
 - (iii) Program: evidence of a program structure and faculty research that will ensure the intellectual quality of the student experience, and commitment to development of professional and transferable skills; evidence of sufficient and regular graduate level course offerings to ensure that students will be able to meet university requirements in terms of the minimum number of courses required, the level of courses required, and the timely completion of other required elements appropriate for the degree level (e.g., transfer exams, comprehensive exams).

Quality Enhancement

65. Concerns and recommendations raised in previous reviews especially those detailed in the Final Assessment Report, Implementation Plan, and subsequent monitoring reports from the previous Cyclical Review of the program and how concerns and recommendations raised in the previous reviews have been addressed.
66. Initiatives that have been undertaken to enhance the teaching, learning and/or research environments thus far, the quality of the program, and how these will be sustained.

67. Areas identified through the conduct of the self-study as requiring improvement.
68. Areas that hold promise for continued enhancement.

System of governance

69. Evidence that a consultative and inclusive system of governance has been used on an ongoing basis to assess the program and implement changes as appropriate.

Academic Services

70. Evidence that there are adequate resources to sustain the quality of scholarship and research activities produced by students, including library support, information technology support, and laboratory access.

Self-Study Participation

71. Describe participation of program faculty, staff, and students in the self-study and provide commentary on how their views were obtained and taken into account. A description of how the self-study was developed and written will also be included. For professional programs, the Chair must ensure the views of employers and professional associations are solicited and included in the self-study and site visit.

External Participation

72. The input of others deemed by the Chair to be relevant and useful, such as graduates of the program, representatives of industry, the professions, practical training programs, and employers is to be included in the self-study.

EXTERNAL EVALUATION: REVIEW TEAM AND REPORT

73. The Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning or, in the case of graduate programs, the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies, in consultation with the Dean (or the Dean's designate), will select a diverse team of reviewers to evaluate the program. The Review Team shall consist of two external reviewers. If appropriate, additional members are to be added to the review team, such as when evaluating professional programs or interdisciplinary programs. The team will also include one internal reviewer from outside the discipline selected by the Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning or, in the case of graduate programs, the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies, in consultation with the Dean (or the Dean's designate).
74. External members of the Review Team shall be individuals in the same discipline as the Program under review (or across disciplines for interdisciplinary programs) who are distinguished senior academics of the rank of associate or full professor of broad experience, with an established commitment to higher education. Where it would enhance the diversity of relevant disciplinary or interdisciplinary perspectives, or in community-engaged or professional programs, non-academics with relevant expertise and experience are permitted to serve as reviewers in addition to the two academic reviewers with the approval of the Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning or, in the case of graduate programs, the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies. Reviewers must have an impartial, arm's-length relationship to the Program (as defined in § III. 29-36, above). Wherever possible the Review Team shall represent broad institutional categories and/or geographic regions.

75. External reviewers will be selected from a list of at least six suggested individuals compiled by the Program/Department under review and endorsed by the Dean. An internal reviewer will be selected from a list of at least three suggested individuals compiled by the Department Chair and endorsed by the Dean. The lists shall include, for each proposed reviewer:
- a) Name;
 - b) rank and position;
 - c) institution or company and current address, telephone, and e-mail address, and URL if available;
 - d) professional (including administrative) experience or expertise relevant to the Program under review;
 - e) details of any previous or current affiliation with the University, and any association with individual members of the Program under review (e.g., co-author, previous student/supervisor, close relationship); and
 - f) for graduate program or combined reviews, a description of research expertise, and a partial listing of recent scholarly publications.
76. Cyclical Program Reviews must incorporate a site visit. Site visits are conducted on-site. All PhD programs must have an on-site visit. Only professional or fully online Master's programs may be allowed an exception to an on-site visit; all other Master's programs must have an on-site visit. Exceptions to on-site visits for undergraduate program reviews are determined by the Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning or, for professional Master's or fully online graduate programs, the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies, in consultation with the Dean or Dean's delegate prior to the commencement of the review and agreed to by the Review Team prior to the commencement of the review. The Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning or, in the case of graduate programs, the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies, will provide clear justification for the decision for an exception to an on-site visit.
77. If it is determined that a site visit can take place virtually, the virtual site visit requires all elements of the external reviewers' site visit using videoconferencing software and/or other suitable platforms. A virtual site visit will still include elements such as virtual meetings with students, faculty, and other stakeholders. It may also include remote attendance at performances or events, and virtual facilities tours.
78. The Self-Study, the Guidelines for Review Team, and other materials specific to the current review will be provided to all members of the Review Team no less than two weeks prior to their visit. If applicable, the results of the previous accreditation review also will be made available to the Review Team to provide them with the views of the relevant professional association(s). The Guidelines for Review Team describes the review process and the roles and obligations of the Review Team, which include:
- a) to identify and comment on the program's notably strong and creative attributes;
 - b) to describe the program's respective strengths, areas for improvement, and opportunities for enhancement;
 - c) to recommend specific steps to be taken to improve the program, distinguishing between those the program can itself take with existing resources and those that require external action;

- d) to recognize the University's autonomy to determine priorities for funding, space, and faculty allocation; and
- e) to respect the confidentiality required for all aspects of the review process.

79. As appropriate, the Review Team shall meet with the following:

- a) Chair or Director;
- b) Full-time faculty members (a broad cross section, in groups);
- c) Part-time faculty members (a broad cross section, in groups);
- d) Program students (a broad cross section of students is to be invited by the program to participate in a meeting with the review team);
- e) Departmental/Program support staff;
- f) Associate Dean;
- g) Dean;
- h) for graduate programs, the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies;
- i) for undergraduate programs, the Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning; and
- j) Provost and Vice-President (Academic), if available.

80. The Review Team will submit a co-authored report, including an Executive Summary, for the program(s) under review within four weeks of the visit to the Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning, or, in the case of graduate programs, the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies. The report will be written primarily by the external reviewer(s), and then sent to the internal reviewer for their review and comment. The Review Team's report is to describe the program's respective strengths, areas for improvement, and opportunities for enhancement, as well as address the substance of both the self-study report and the evaluation criteria set out in § IV. 58-72 above. The report should comment on the adequacy of existing physical, human and financial resources; and the report should acknowledge any clearly innovative aspects of the proposed program together with recommendations on any essential or otherwise desirable modifications to it. The report may include a confidential section (e.g., where personnel issues can be addressed). In the case that the self-study addresses more than one program, for example when a self-study describes both an undergraduate and graduate program or multiple undergraduate programs, reviewers in their report must make specific reference to each program described in the self-study. The intent of these reports is to be formative and constructive. Reviewers are required to make at least three recommendations for specific steps to be taken that will lead to the continuous improvement of the program, distinguishing between those the program can itself take and those that require external action. Any commentary on issues such as faculty complement and/or space requirements made by the reviewers must be directly tied to issues of program quality and/or sustainability. The reports are intended to provide counsel rather than prescriptive courses of action. The Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning or, in the case of graduate programs, the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies, will review the Review Team's report for completeness. If satisfactory, the Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning or, in the case of graduate programs, the Vice-

Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies, will approve the reviewers' report and disseminate it to the Chair. If there are concerns with the completeness of the report, the Review Team will be asked to provide more clarity.

81. Separate responses to the reviewers' report from both the Chair and the Dean, or the Dean's delegate, are prepared, as per the Program Response template, and attached to the reviewers' report.

INSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVE AND FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

82. The self-study, reviewers' report excluding the confidential section, and responses from the Chair and Dean, will be submitted as a package to McMaster's Quality Assurance Committee, a joint committee of Undergraduate and Graduate Councils. The Quality Assurance Committee will assess the review and will submit a Final Assessment Report (FAR) to Undergraduate Council or Graduate Council that:
 - a) provides an Executive Summary;
 - b) identifies significant strengths of the program;
 - c) addresses the appropriateness of resources for the success of the program;
 - d) identifies opportunities for program improvement and enhancement with a view to continuous improvement;
 - e) lists all recommendations of the external reviewers and the associated separate internal responses and assessments from the unit and from the Dean(s);
 - f) includes any additional recommendations that the unit, the Dean(s), and/or the university may have identified as requiring action as a result of the program review;
 - g) includes an Implementation Plan that: prioritizes recommendations that will be implemented; identifies who is responsible for acting on each recommendation; includes specific timelines related to each recommendation; and, as necessary, identifies the unit or individual responsible for providing resources needed to address each recommendation. If any of the external reviewers' recommendations are not selected for further action in the Implementation Plan, there must be a clear explanation for why the recommendations have not been selected. The Implementation Plan may include additional recommendations or comments from the unit, the Dean(s), and/or the University, with commentary as to why these additional recommendations have been made.
 - h) may include a confidential section.
83. The Final Assessment Report from the Quality Assurance Committee along with any recommendations or comments is sent to the Chair and presented to Undergraduate Council or Graduate Council for approval, as appropriate, and then to Senate for information. These governing bodies will consider if additional recommendations or comments are necessary. If so, these recommendations or comments will be presented to the Provost and Vice-President (Academic). These will be communicated to the Chair, the Dean and the Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning or, in the case of graduate programs, to the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies. Any such additional recommendations or comments from the governing bodies are above and beyond those included in the FAR and are included for comment and

information. Once approved, the FAR including an Executive Summary and the associated Implementation Plan is posted on the institution's Quality Assurance webpage. Programs are strongly encouraged to post their FAR and Implementation Plans on their program's webpage as well. As the Final Assessment Report is the synthesis of the cyclical review process and as such is an important tool for a program's continuous improvement it is posted to the institution's Quality Assurance webpage; the information made available for the self-study, the self-study report, the reviewer's report and program and Dean's responses are not made publicly available.

84. Eighteen months after receiving the report from Undergraduate Council or Graduate Council, the Chair will submit a progress report on the program to the Dean. The Dean will provide commentary and response to the progress report and submit the progress report along with their commentary to the Quality Assurance Committee summarizing the status of any actions taken or being taken. The Quality Assurance Committee, in some circumstances, will request follow up reporting on specific components if not satisfactorily addressed in the 18-month report. These reports are posted on the institution's Quality Assurance webpage as an addendum to the program's FAR and Implementation Plan. The Quality Assurance Committee will present progress reports to Undergraduate Council or Graduate Council, if deemed necessary by the Chairs of the Quality Assurance Committee.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

85. The Final Assessment Reports, which include the Implementation Plans, and subsequent Progress Reports are posted on the Provost and Vice-President (Academic) section of the University's website. The Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning provides an annual report to Quality Council that lists the past year's completed Final Assessment Reports and attests that all IQAP-required Cyclical Program Review processes have been followed. This report will also provide the link to the institution's Quality Assurance webpage which houses the completed Final Assessment Reports and Implementation Plans completed during the past year. The annual report of Final Assessment Reports and their related Cyclical Program Review processes will occasionally be reviewed for compliance by the Quality Council and that if issues are found, the Quality Council may decide to initiate a Focused Audit.

USE OF ACCREDITATION AND OTHER EXTERNAL REVIEWS IN THE INSTITUTIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS

86. Programs that periodically undergo accreditation reviews are permitted to request that the associated accreditation documentation serve to meet some of the elements required of the IQAP cyclical review self-study when these elements are fully consistent with the requirements outlined within this policy. The program chair will submit a request form that has been endorsed by the Dean (or the Dean's delegate) and all required supporting documentation to the Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning for undergraduate programs or the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies for graduate programs.
87. If permitted by the accreditation authorities, the site visit by the Review Team is permitted to be performed at the same time as the accreditation review, however there must be at least two external reviewers and one internal reviewer dedicated to the Cyclical Program Review.

88. The Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning for undergraduate programs or the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies for graduate programs will review the request and decide if an accreditation review can be substituted in part for a cyclical review. The program will be notified in writing of the decision. A record of substitutions or additions, and the grounds on which they were made, will be eligible for audit by the Quality Council.
89. Approval for substitution is only applicable for the cyclical review year related to the request. The remaining steps in the cyclical review will then take place. Programs must participate in all reporting related to the cyclical review. If desired by the program, a request to substitute some accreditation documentation in order to meet partial requirements of their program's Quality Assurance review must be submitted for every subsequent cyclical review.

SECTION V: INSTITUTIONAL IDENTIFICATION OF MAJOR MODIFICATIONS TO EXISTING PROGRAMS

90. As part of the continuous improvement of McMaster's academic programs, existing programs are expected to routinely undergo revisions with the aim of improving student experience and quality enhancement. Such revisions and subsequent monitoring provide an opportunity for ensuring the student experience is engaging, rigorous and reflective of the current discipline of study.
91. The revisions must be submitted through the university's curriculum approval process. This is the same approval process as outlined for New Program Proposals in § III. 39 above (excluding the University Planning Committee and University Fees, unless there are significant resource implications).
92. Once per year, the MacPherson Institute and School of Graduate Studies consults with the Registrar's Office and prepares a report of major modifications to existing programs including program closures and submits the report to the Quality Council.
93. In situations where it is unclear or where disagreement exists on whether a planned change constitutes a minor modification, a major modification, or a new program, the determination will be made by the Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning for undergraduate programs or the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies for graduate programs, in consultation with McMaster's Quality Assurance Committee, where appropriate. Quality Council has the final authority to decide if a major modification constitutes a new program and, therefore, must follow the Protocol for New Program Approvals. A record of any decision will be kept with McMaster's Quality Assurance Committee.
94. Minor modifications include: changes to course titles or codes; the addition or deletion of a single course; weighting of courses; creating or closing a minor; and creating or closing an undergraduate certificate.
95. Major modifications are defined as significant changes that have program-wide impact through either change to curriculum and/or program requirements. Such change must last more than one academic year and differ from what was outlined in the last cyclical program review or, if a program review has not taken place yet, from the new program proposal.
96. Major modifications include the following program changes:
 - a) Requirements that differ significantly from those existing at the time of the previous cyclical program review or, if a program review has not taken place yet, from the new program proposal. For undergraduate programs, it would be considered a major modification when more than 30% of the program requirements are being changed from one academic year to the next. For graduate programs, it would be considered a major modification when more than 50% of the program requirements (including requirements such as courses, major exams, and research) are being changed from one year to the next.
 - b) Changes to the faculty engaged in delivering the program and/or to the essential physical resources, for example, where there have been changes to the existing mode(s) of delivery (such as different campus, online delivery and inter-institutional collaboration)

- c) Significant changes to the Program Learning Outcomes that are made outside of the cyclical program review process. Significant changes to Program Learning Outcomes are defined as: changes to the majority of the Program Learning Outcomes such that they differ from those existing at the time of the previous cyclical program review (or, if a program review has not taken place yet, from the new program proposal) but do not, however, meet the threshold of a new program
 - d) Change in program name and/or degree nomenclature, when this results in a change in program learning outcomes
 - e) Program closure
 - f) The inclusion of a new program of specialization where another with the same degree designation already exists
 - g) The addition of a single new field to an existing graduate program. The creation of more than one field at one time or over consecutive years may be required to complete the Expedited Approvals process. This process is outlined in § III.
 - h) A new collaborative specialization, or the addition of a new unit to an existing collaborative specialization
97. Chairs are responsible for ensuring any major modifications align with the Program Learning Outcomes and that the impact of the modification on students has been assessed, where appropriate.
98. Changes to an existing Emphasis, Option, or Minor Program; the creation of a new micro-credential(s); undergraduate certificate(s); and laddering, stacking or similar options, or comparable elements do not require Quality Council appraisal or approval. Micro-credentials are approved using the same internal approval process outlined in § III. 39 above. This approval process is subject to change and proponents of micro-credentials are encouraged to consult with the Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning or the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies prior to seeking institutional approval for a micro-credential.
99. There may be situations where although the changes to the program meet the definition of a major modification, the changes are of such significance that a more immediate review is desirable. This situation may occur, for example, when the fundamental goals of the program change; or there are significant changes to the faculty engaged in delivering the program and/or to the essential physical resources. In such cases, the Department, the Faculty, Undergraduate Council or Graduate Council may, if it deems it advisable after consultation with the relevant Dean(s) and Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning and/or Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies, initiate a program review and request that the Quality Council review the proposal. The proposal must include: a description and rationale for the proposed changes and how they will improve the student experience, and inclusion of a selection of criteria most relevant to the Proposal from the following list, taken from Section 2.1.2 of the Quality Assurance Framework, as approved by the Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning, or in the case of graduate programs, Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies: program goals, program requirements, assessment of teaching and learning, admission requirements, resources, quality and other indicators. The proposal will include input from current students and recent graduates of the program.
100. Major modifications to existing academic programs are not normally subjected to the institution's cyclical audit.

APPENDIX A: MCMASTER UNIVERSITY'S STATEMENT ON DEGREE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS

1. A McMaster education enables students to develop sets of life and learning skills that promote a continuing ability and desire to learn, and a set of technical and professional skills that permit a range of career choices. Degree level expectations elaborate the intellectual and creative development of students and the acquisition of relevant skills that are usually widely, yet implicitly, understood.
2. McMaster University has adopted the following Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations (UDLEs) or Graduate Degree Level Expectations (GDLEs) that were developed by the Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents and endorsed by the Council of Ontario Universities in December 2005. These degree level expectations are to be viewed as a minimum threshold for all degree programs at McMaster.

UNDERGRADUATE

	<u>Baccalaureate / Bachelor's Degree</u> This degree is awarded to students who have demonstrated the following:	<u>Baccalaureate / Bachelor's Degree: Honours</u> This degree is awarded to students who have demonstrated the following:
1. Depth and breadth of knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) General knowledge and understanding of many key concepts, methodologies, theoretical approaches and assumptions in a discipline b) Broad understanding of some of the major fields in a discipline, including, where appropriate, from an interdisciplinary perspective, and how the fields may intersect with fields in related disciplines c) Ability to gather, review, evaluate and interpret information relevant to one or more of the major fields in a discipline d) Some detailed knowledge in an area of the discipline e) Critical thinking and analytical skills inside and outside the discipline f) Ability to apply learning from one or more areas outside the discipline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Developed knowledge and critical understanding of the key concepts, methodologies, current advances, theoretical approaches and assumptions in a discipline overall, as well as in a specialized area of a discipline b) Developed understanding of many of the major fields in a discipline, including, where appropriate, from an interdisciplinary perspective, and how the fields may intersect with fields in related disciplines c) Developed ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) gather, review, evaluate and interpret information; and (ii) compare the merits of alternate hypotheses or creative options, relevant to one or more of the major fields in a discipline d) Developed, detailed knowledge of and experience in research in an area of the discipline e) Developed critical thinking and analytical skills inside and outside the discipline

		f) Ability to apply learning from one or more areas outside the discipline
2. Knowledge of methodologies	An understanding of methods of enquiry or creative activity, or both, in their primary area of study that enables the student to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems using well established ideas and techniques; and b) devise and sustain arguments or solve problems using these methods. 	An understanding of methods of enquiry or creative activity, or both, in their primary area of study that enables the student to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems using well established ideas and techniques; b) devise and sustain arguments or solve problems using these methods; and c) describe and comment upon particular aspects of current research or equivalent advanced scholarship.
3. Application of knowledge	The ability to review, present, and interpret quantitative and qualitative information to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) develop lines of argument; b) make sound judgments in accordance with the major theories, concepts and methods of the subject(s) of study; and The ability to use a basic range of established techniques to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) analyze information; b) evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems related to their area(s) of study; c) propose solutions; and d) make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources. 	The ability to review, present and critically evaluate qualitative and quantitative information to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) develop lines of argument; b) make sound judgments in accordance with the major theories, concepts and methods of the subject(s) of study; c) apply underlying concepts, principles, and techniques of analysis, both within and outside the discipline; d) where appropriate use this knowledge in the creative process; and The ability to use a range of established techniques to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) initiate and undertake critical evaluation of arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts and information; b) propose solutions; c) frame appropriate questions for the purpose of solving a problem; d) solve a problem or create a new work; and e) to make critical use of scholarly reviews and primary sources.
4. Communication skills	The ability to communicate accurately and reliably, orally and in writing to a range of audiences.	The ability to communicate information, arguments, and analyses accurately and reliably, orally and in writing to a range of audiences.

<p>5. Awareness of limits of knowledge</p>	<p>An understanding of the limits to their own knowledge and how this might influence their analyses and interpretations.</p>	<p>An understanding of the limits to their own knowledge and ability, and an appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits to knowledge and how this might influence analyses and interpretations.</p>
<p>6. Autonomy and professional capacity</p>	<p>Qualities and transferable skills necessary for further study, employment, community involvement and other activities requiring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the exercise of personal responsibility and decision- making; b) working effectively with others; c) the ability to identify and address their own learning needs in changing circumstances and to select an appropriate program of further study; and d) behaviour consistent with academic integrity and social responsibility. 	<p>Qualities and transferable skills necessary for further study, employment, community involvement and other activities requiring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the exercise of initiative, personal responsibility and accountability in both personal and group contexts; b) working effectively with others; c) decision-making in complex contexts; d) the ability to manage their own learning in changing circumstances, both within and outside the discipline and to select an appropriate program of further study; e) and behaviour consistent with academic integrity and social responsibility.

GRADUATE

	<p><u>Master’s Degree</u> This degree is awarded to students who have demonstrated the following:</p>	<p><u>Doctoral Degree</u> This degree extends the skills associated with the Master’s degree and is awarded to students who have demonstrated the following:</p>
<p>1. Depth and breadth of knowledge</p>	<p>A systematic understanding of knowledge, including, where appropriate, relevant knowledge outside the field and/or discipline, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study, or area of professional practice.</p>	<p>A thorough understanding of a substantial body of knowledge that is at the forefront of their academic discipline or area of professional practice including, where appropriate, relevant knowledge outside the field and/or discipline.</p>

<p>2. Research and scholarship</p>	<p>A conceptual understanding and methodological competence that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Enables a working comprehension of how established techniques of research and inquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline; b) Enables a critical evaluation of current research and advanced research and scholarship in the discipline or area of professional competence; and c) Enables a treatment of complex issues and judgments based on established principles and techniques; and, <p>On the basis of that competence, has shown at least one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The development and support of a sustained argument in written form; or b) Originality in the application of knowledge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The ability to conceptualize, design, and implement research for the generation of new knowledge, applications, or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the research design or methodology in the light of unforeseen problems; b) The ability to make informed judgments on complex issues in specialist fields, sometimes requiring new methods; and c) The ability to produce original research, or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, and to merit publication.
<p>3. Level of application of knowledge</p>	<p>Competence in the research process by applying an existing body of knowledge in the critical analysis of a new question or of a specific problem or issue in a new setting.</p>	<p>The capacity to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Undertake pure and/or applied research at an advanced level; and b) Contribute to the development of academic or professional skills, techniques, tools, practices, ideas, theories, approaches, and/or materials.
<p>4. Professional capacity/autonomy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) The exercise of initiative and of personal responsibility and accountability; and (ii) Decision-making in complex situations; b) The intellectual independence required for continuing professional development; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex situations; b) The intellectual independence to be academically and professionally engaged and current; c) The ethical behavior consistent with academic integrity and the use of appropriate guidelines

	<p>c) The ethical behavior consistent with academic integrity and the use of appropriate guidelines and procedures for responsible conduct of research; and</p> <p>d) The ability to appreciate the broader implications of applying knowledge to particular contexts.</p>	<p>and procedures for responsible conduct of research; and</p> <p>d) The ability to evaluate the broader implications of applying knowledge to particular contexts.</p>
5. Level of communications skills	The ability to communicate ideas, issues and conclusions clearly, orally and in writing, to a range of audiences.	The ability to communicate complex and/or ambiguous ideas, issues and conclusions clearly and effectively, orally and in writing, to a range of audiences.
6. Awareness of limits of knowledge	Cognizance of the complexity of knowledge and of the potential contributions of other interpretations, methods, and disciplines.	An appreciation of the limitations of one's own work and discipline, of the complexity of knowledge, and of the potential contributions of other interpretations, methods, and disciplines.