Academic Quality Assurance Policy

AUTHORITY:	RESPONSIBILITY:	EFFECTIVE DATE:	DATE LAST REVISED:
General Faculties Council (GFC)	Provost & Vice-President (Academic)	May 2, 2016	February 6, 2017 (format change only)

AUTHORITY:	RESPONSIBILITY:	EFFECTIVE DATE:	DATE LAST REVISED:
General Faculties Council (GFC)	Provost & Vice-President (Academic)	May 2, 2016	February 6, 2017 (format change only)

ACADEMIC QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

1. Purpose

The primary purpose of academic quality assurance is to ensure continuous improvement in all academic programs and units, and in research Centres and Institutes, through a process of internal reflection and constructive, formative criticism by qualified external reviewers.

The primary purpose of a quality assurance review is to evaluate five aspects of a program or unit:

(1) Quality.

(2) Resource use.

(3) Contribution to the Mandate and Vision of the institution.

(4) Adaptability.

(5) Transferability and recognition of qualifications.

A program review is also a tool for critical reflection and change.

2. Goals

The Academic Quality Assurance Policy has three main goals:

(1) Ensure high standards and continuous improvement of the academic units and programs of the University of Lethbridge.

(2) Standardize the process of evaluating academic units and programs.

(3) Document and communicate the results of academic quality assurance processes.

3. Jurisdiction

All academic units and programs at the University of Lethbridge are subject to the Academic Quality Assurance Policy. The academic quality assurance review process can be applied to the review of Type A research Centres and Institutes.

4. Definition of Academic Quality Assurance

Academic quality assurance is a collection of systematic evaluation processes to monitor and review performance, identify quality outcomes, and recommend improvement of the academic units and programs of the University of Lethbridge.

5. Principles of Academic Quality Assurance

Academic quality assurance is based on three major principles:

(1) The members of the University of Lethbridge community are collectively responsible for maintaining and enhancing the quality of its academic programs, and for improving the quality of the student learning experience.

(2) Judgements about the quality of academic programs will be based on review by academic and professional peers.

(3) Program quality will be judged based on a collection of evidence, and not on any single piece of evidence.

6. Communicating Academic Quality Assurance Information

Summaries of academic quality assurance reviews will be published online, subject to the University's confidentiality guidelines and Alberta's *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

7. Schedule of Reviews

The Academic Quality Assurance Committee establishes, maintains, and publishes the schedule of current and future academic quality assurance reviews.

8. Approving and Revising the Academic Quality Assurance Policy

The General Faculties Council approves this policy and any revisions to it. Any member of the University of Lethbridge community can submit a request for Academic Quality Assurance Policy revision to the Academic Quality Assurance Committee.

Every five years, or as directed by the senior administration of the University of Lethbridge, the Academic Quality Assurance Committee will conduct a review of the Academic Quality Assurance Policy and the Program Review Process. This review will ensure that the policy and the process continue to effectively and efficiently ensure the quality and continuous improvement of the academic programs of the University of Lethbridge. The review must include input from members of the University and external communities. The General Faculties Council approve any revisions that arise through this review.

9. Objectives

There are two main objectives for a quality assurance review: (1) identify areas of excellence and areas for improvement; and (2) demonstrate accountability within the framework of the *Post-Secondary Learning Act* or other appropriate regulatory bodies.

10. Principles

The review process is based on six principles:

(1) The process is fair and open.

(2) All program reviews must include experts external to the University.

(3) Program faculty, staff, and student involvement is critical.

(4) Review documents must be concise and easily understood.

(5) The Deans are responsible for ensuring academic quality assurance reviews are completed within the recommended time limits (six months for Self Study Report completion, and 12 months for completion of the entire review process).

(6) The Academic Quality Assurance Committee is responsible for ensuring all program and unit reviews follow the academic quality assurance process appropriately and consistently, and for monitoring and comparing the outcomes of reviews.

11. Definition of Program Quality

Program quality is the degree to which an academic program has positive impacts on students' knowledge and personal development and on faculty members' scholarship and teaching.

12. Criteria for Quality Assurance Review

The review of an academic program or unit is based on the degree to which it satisfies seven criteria. The self study and the external review should in turn be based on these criteria, and the reports arising from these steps should reflect them:

(1) The program or unit is consistent with the University of Lethbridge Mandate and Strategic Plan.

(2) The degrees awarded by the program or unit are recognized for further study or employment.

(3) The curricula and learning environment meet disciplinary and institutional standards of quality.

(4) The research and scholarly activity of faculty members has broad relevance to and enriches teaching and learning in the program or unit.

(5) Student achievement aligns with the objectives of the program or unit, and the University of Lethbridge Strategic Plan and Academic Plan.

(6) The students in the program or unit can access effective support for academic and career planning.

(7) The deployment of resources in the program or unit is effective and consistent with the objectives of the program.

If required by the nature of the program or unit, the Self Study Committee may deviate from this standard set of criteria, with the approval of the Academic Quality Assurance Committee.

13. Criteria for External Reviewers

To maintain the integrity of the Academic Quality Assurance process, the External Reviewers:

(1) Must be from outside the University of Lethbridge.

(2) Must have attained the rank of full professor.

(3) Must have at least five years experience in a continuing or tenured appointment as a faculty member at a university.

(4) Must have doctoral degrees or terminal degrees in a discipline that is the same as, or closely related to, the program or unit under review.

(5) In at least one case, should be from an institution similar in size to the University of Lethbridge.

(6) Are normally Canadian residents, but can be from outside Canada if costs are feasible.

(7) Must not have any of the following connections within the past five years with the University of Lethbridge:

- Collaboration with a University of Lethbridge faculty member, professional librarian, instructor, or adjunct faculty member.

- Mentorship of a University of Lethbridge faculty member, professional librarian, instructor, or adjunct faculty member.

- Served as an external examiner for a Ph.D. of a faculty member or professional librarian of the program or unit under review.

(8) Must not have been an External Reviewer for a previous academic quality assurance review of the program or unit under review.

The Self Study Committee can write to the AQAC Chair to request an External Reviewer be exempt from one or more of criteria 1 to 8. This request for exemption will then be reviewed at an AQAC meeting and a motion for granting or not granting the request will be voted upon by the committee.

(9) Must not have any of the following connections within the past five years with the University of Lethbridge:

- Served as a faculty member, instructor, adjunct faculty member, or employee of the University of Lethbridge.

- Received a degree from the program or unit under review.

- A close family relationship with a member of the program or unit under review.

- Served as a Master's or Doctoral supervisor of anyone in the program or unit under review.

- Served on the supervisory committee of anyone in the program or unit under review.

- Co-authorship with a University of Lethbridge faculty member, instructor, or adjunct faculty member.

ACADEMIC QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES

> **NOTE:** For multidisciplinary programs, several departments or faculties/school will be involved in the program review process. For simplicity's sake, the following description of the program review process assumes the involvement of one department and faculty/school.

1. Overview

A program or unit is normally reviewed once every seven years, or as required. In consultation with Deans and senior administrators, the Academic Quality Assurance Committee develops the schedule of reviews. Program or unit reviews that are outside of this schedule can occur, if they are deemed necessary.

A program or unit review features both quantitative and qualitative analysis. The quantitative analysis consists of gathering and analyzing numerical data related to the program. These data are reported in the self study report. The qualitative analysis is embodied in two parts: a self study completed by program or unit representatives, and a study by an external review team that augments and validates the self study.

With a balance between quantitative and qualitative analysis, the review process can ensure accountability and fairness.

The academic quality assurance review process must be completed within one calendar year.

1.1 Graduate Level Program Reviews

For graduate level programs, the program review process has four differences:

(1)   The Dean of the School of Graduate Studies initiates the program review process.

(2)   Program reviews are at the degree level and may involve more than one faculty or department.

(3)   The Dean of the School of Graduate Studies and the Dean of the Faculty involved will share the roles and responsibilities listed for the Dean of the Faculty in *Table 1* (below).

(4)   Not all sections of the self study report may be applicable. The Self Study Committee develops a modified version of the report, in consultation with the Academic Quality Assurance Committee.

1.2 Reviews of Research Centres and Institutes

This review process can be adapted to the quality assurance review of Type A research Centres and Institutes. Such a review is similar to the quality assurance review of an academic unit, like a department within a Faculty. However, there are several differences:

(1)   The Vice President (Research) or Associate Vice President (Research) initiates the review process and plays the same role in the process as the Dean.

(2)   The Director of the Centre or Institute plays the same role in the process as the Program or Unit Chair.

(3)   Instead of a Dean's Response, a Vice President (Research) Response is developed.

(4)   The Implementation Expectations Response is developed by the Vice President (Research) and is addressed to the Director of the Centre or Institute.

The differences in the process are noted in *5. Description of Steps* (page 10).

2. Participants

There are ten main individuals or groups involved in the review process, as shown in *Table 1*.

Table 1: Roles and Responsibilities of those Involved in the Quality Assurance Review Process

Dean of the Faculty or School [1]	Initiates the process and responds to the results of the review. Reviews and approves external reviewers. As required, responds to issues that arise related to the management of the program review process. Develops the Dean's Response to the Self Study Report, External Review Report, and Program Response, and submits this to the Academic Quality Assurance Committee (AQAC) Chair. Presents the review results to the AQAC. Ensures, with the Chair of the program or unit, that action plans are implemented. Submits an implementation report to the AQAC one year and three years after review completion.
Program or Unit Chair	Selects the Self Study Committee and the Review Coordinator. Has joint responsibility, with the Dean, to implement action plans that result from the program review.
Self Study Committee	Sets the key deadlines and outlines the tasks and work required. Develops the Self Study Report, which includes all interviews, meetings, data gathering, writing, and revision necessary for the finished document. Communicates progress to faculty members in the program or unit and to the Academic Quality Assurance Committee. Develops the Program Response to the External Review Report.
Review Coordinator	Manages the program review process and ensures it is completed on schedule and to the required level of quality. Sends the Self Study Report to the AQAC Chair. Recommends to the Dean the External Reviewers. Develops the program response to the External Review Report.
Institutional Analysis	Assists in collecting the data required for the Self-Study Report and External Review Report.
External Review Team	Validates and augments the internal self study by conducting an independent external review of the program, including a site visit, and developing the External Review Report.
Site Visit Facilitator	Meets the External Review Team on campus and guides them through their site visit agenda. Addresses issues and requirements as they arise.
Chair of the Academic Quality Assurance Committee	Reviews the Self Study Report, External Review Report, and Program Response for completeness and requests missing information if required. Develops the schedule for completing the final documents. Sends review documents to the External Reviewers, the Dean, and Vice President (Academic). Requests the Dean's Response. Sends the Closing Memorandum to the President and the review outcomes letter to the External Reviewers.
Academic Quality Assurance Committee	Oversees the process to ensure that it is followed appropriately and consistently. Develops the schedule of reviews, in consultation with Deans and senior administrators. Reviews and approves the review results, and provides a written commentary on these for the Provost. Compares the outcomes of all program reviews. Develops a written commentary on the review results for the Vice President (Academic). Develops a letter that informs the External Reviewers of the outcome of the review. Drafts the Closing Memorandum. Reports annually on its activities to the General Faculties Council.
Vice President (Academic)	Develops the response to the Dean that outlines the expectations for implementing the review recommendations.

[1] For graduate programs, these roles and responsibilities will be shared by the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies and the Dean of the Faculty.
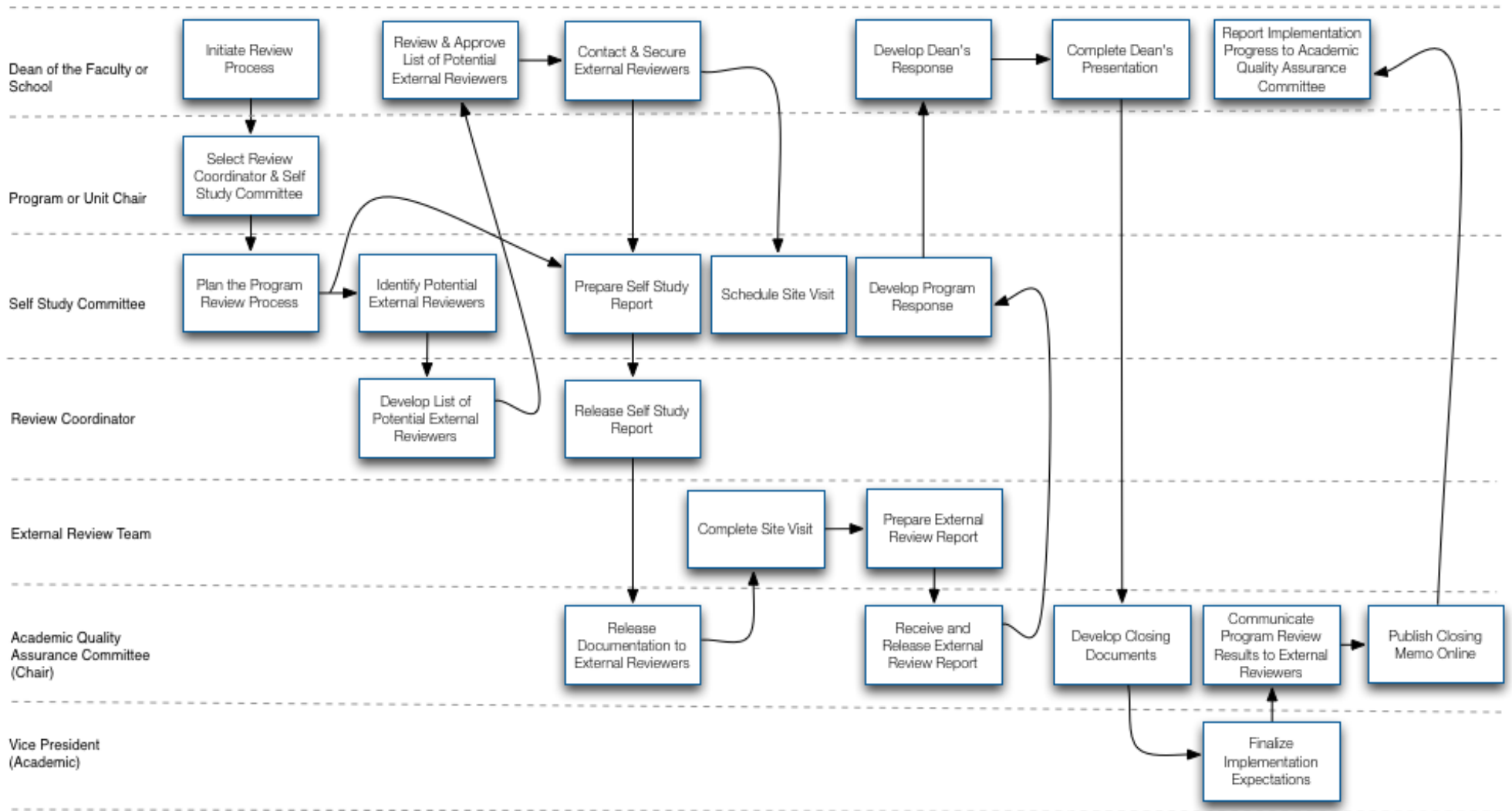
3. Documents

There are seven main documents produced during a quality assurance review, as shown in *Table 2*.

Table 2: Quality Assurance Review Documents

Document:	Produced by:	Description:
Self Study Report	Self Study Committee	Documents the findings and reflections of the self study. See *Appendix One: Framework for Self Study Report and External Review Report*.
External Review Report	External Review Team	Documents the findings and recommendations of the External Review Team. Based mainly on the Team's site visit. See *Appendix One: Framework for Self Study Report and External Review Report*.
Program Response	Self Study Committee	Presents the Self Study Committee's response to the External Review Report. Addresses the issues and areas identified for improvement in the External Review Report.
Dean's Response	Dean of the relevant Faculty or School	Presents the response of the Dean to the Self Study Report, External Review Report, and Program Response. Includes an action plan, with timelines, for addressing any issues raised by the review.
Review Commentary	Academic Quality Assurance Committee	Provides brief comments on the review results by the Academic Quality Assurance Committee.
Closing Memorandum	Academic Quality Assurance Committee	Summarizes the results of the entire review. Addressed to the President and published online.
Implementation Expectations Response	Vice President (Academic)	A response from the Vice President (Academic) to the Dean of the relevant Faculty or School that presents the expectations for implementing the recommendations from the review.

4. Flowchart of Review Steps

Dean of the Faculty or School	Initiate Review Process	Review & Approve List of Potential External Reviewers → Contact & Secure External Reviewers	Develop Dean's Response → Complete Dean's Presentation	Report Implementation Progress to Academic Quality Assurance Committee

Dean of the Faculty or School
- Initiate Review Process
- Review & Approve List of Potential External Reviewers
- Contact & Secure External Reviewers
- Develop Dean's Response
- Complete Dean's Presentation
- Report Implementation Progress to Academic Quality Assurance Committee

Program or Unit Chair
- Select Review Coordinator & Self Study Committee

Self Study Committee
- Plan the Program Review Process
- Identify Potential External Reviewers
- Prepare Self Study Report
- Schedule Site Visit
- Develop Program Response

Review Coordinator
- Develop List of Potential External Reviewers
- Release Self Study Report

External Review Team
- Complete Site Visit
- Prepare External Review Report

Academic Quality Assurance Committee (Chair)
- Release Documentation to External Reviewers
- Receive and Release External Review Report
- Develop Closing Documents
- Communicate Program Review Results to External Reviewers
- Publish Closing Memo Online

Vice President (Academic)
- Finalize Implementation Expectations

5. Description of Steps

5.1 Initiate Review Process

The Dean of the faculty or school that houses the program or unit contacts its Chair or Coordinator to request that he or she begin the review process.

Type A Research Centre or Institute Review: The Vice President (Research) or the Associate Vice President (Research) makes the review initiation request.

5.2 Select Review Coordinator and Self Study Committee

The Chair of the program or department/area, in consultation with the Dean of the faculty or school and program faculty, selects the Review Coordinator and the members of the Self Study Committee. The size of this committee varies depending on the program, with a minimum of three members. At least two of the members should be full professors in the program or department/area, wherever possible.

Type A Research Centre or Institute Review: The Director of the centre or institute selects the Review Coordinator and the Self Study Committee. Two of the Self Study Committee members should hold membership in the Centre or Institute under review for the duration of the review.

5.3 Plan the Program Review Process

The Self Study Committee plans the program review process by setting the key deadlines in the program review and sketching out the tasks and work required. The committee must also communicate with program faculty on the program review criteria, key milestones expected, and on progress towards fulfilling those milestones. There is a limit of six months for completion of the Self Study Report and 12 months for the entire process.

5.4 Identify Potential External Reviewers

External Reviewers are essential to Academic Quality Assurance. They provide an independent and objective assessment of the program or unit under review, assess the quality of the program or unit in a broader context, and provide new and valuable insights into improving quality.

The Self Study Committee identifies potential External Reviewers for the External Review Team, based on the criteria in *Academic Quality Assurance Policy – 13. Criteria for External Reviewers* (p. 5). An External Review Team usually consists of two members, but can be larger if required.

In constructing its list of potential External Reviewers, the Self Study Committee can consult with the Chair of the program or department/area, program faculty, senior administrators of the University of Lethbridge, and others. This list is built from publicly available information.

5.5 Select and Approve the List of External Reviewers

The Program Review Coordinator develops a list of two or more potential External Reviewers, ranked in order of preference. The list includes, for each individual:

- Name, position, institution, and email address.

- Brief background information and rationale.

- A curriculum vitae, if freely available online.

The Program Review Coordinator also completes and signs the Statement of Non-Conflict for External Reviewers (see *Appendix Five*).

The Review Coordinator forwards the list of potential External Reviewers and the signed Statement of Non-Conflict for External Reviewers to the Dean.

The Dean reviews the list of potential External Reviewers and then takes one of four actions:

- **Approve the list**—If the Dean approves the list, then the Dean's office informs the Program Review Coordinator and begins the process of contacting the External Reviewer candidates (see below).

- **Amend and approve the list**—The Dean may approve the list, but veto an individual(s) on the list that he or she deems inappropriate, or modify the ranking of the list. After approval, the Dean's office informs the Program Review Coordinator and begins the process of contacting the External Reviewer candidates (see *Contact External Reviewers* below).

- **Amend and return the list for revision**—The Dean may veto any individual(s) on the list that they deem inappropriate. If the Dean vetoes one or more names on the list and the number of potential reviewers falls below two, the Dean returns the list to the Program Review Coordinator for additional names to be added.

- **Add names and approve the list**—If the Dean adds additional External Reviewers to the list, the Dean must sign a Statement of Non-Conflict for External Reviewers and forward the amended list and the form to the Program Review Coordinator. The Program Review Coordinator reviews the amended list, also signs the non-conflict statement, and forwards the list and the statement to the Chair of the Academic Quality Assurance Committee for approval. After receiving approval, the Dean continues with contacting the potential External Reviewers (see *Contact External Reviewers* below).

5.6 Contact External Reviewers

The Dean contacts the individuals on the approved list, proceeding in the ranked order, to secure two of them (or more if required) as External Reviewers.

Once the required number of individuals have agreed to serve as an External Reviewer, the Dean forwards the names of the External Reviewers to the Program Review Coordinator, who is then responsible for arranging the site visit (see *Prepare for Site Visit*). The Program Review Coordinator must forward a copy of the approved list of potential External Reviewers to the Chair of the Academic Quality Assurance Committee.

If the Dean cannot secure the services of two External Reviewers from the list of candidates, then the process of selecting External Reviewers must begin again.

In summary, there are three points of contact with the External Reviewers:

(1) By the Dean, during the selection process.

(2) By the Program Review Coordinator and/or the Administrative Assistant of the program or unit under review, to arrange the details of the site visit.

(3) By the Chair of the Academic Quality Assurance Committee, to send the review documents in advance of the site visit (see page 11), to follow up on the status of the External Review Report, and to inform the External Reviewers about the outcomes of the review.

Up to the point of the Site Visit, no other contact with the External Reviewers should be made.

5.7 Gather Information for Self Study

The self study examines what the program is, what it does, and how it does it. To conduct the self study, the Self Study Committee should interview the Dean of the faculty or school responsible for the program, the department or program Chair, and any other key informants. Program faculty members, program staff, past and current students, graduate students, and other individuals may be surveyed or invited to group meetings.

Data gathering is an important task in developing the self study. The Review Coordinator submits a request to Institutional Analysis for the data for the self study. Institutional Analysis has a standard set of data that is used for academic quality assurance review self studies. The Self Study Committee can also gather additional data from Human Resources, ROSS, and University Advancement as required.

For the outline and content of the Self Study Report, which is the product of the self study, see *Appendix One: Framework for Self Study Report and External Review Report*.

5.8 Prepare Self Study Report

The Self Study Committee develops a self study report that documents the findings of the self study. The Self Study Report must be completed within six months of the selection of Self Study Committee. In developing the Self Study Report, the Self Study Committee may find it useful to consult with other units on campus. The Self Study Committee may choose to make a draft version of the Self Study Report available to the Dean, program committee, or department members for discussion and correction before final submission to the AQAC Chair.

See *Appendix One: Framework for Self Study Report and External Review Report* for directions on preparing the Self Study Report.

5.9 Release Self Study Report

The Review Coordinator sends a digital copy of the Self Study Report to the Chair of the Academic Quality Assurance Committee, who reviews the document. If the AQAC Chair determines that the Self Study Report is incomplete, then he or she returns it to the Self Study Committee, with a request to provide the missing information.

The Self Study Report should be completed at least five weeks before the External Reviewers are scheduled to do their Site Visit.

Once the AQAC Chair has determined the Self Study Report is complete, it can be released to the Dean of the faculty or school and to all faculty members in the department or program under review.

5.10 Establish Final Schedule

The AQAC Chair establishes a schedule for completing the final major documents of the review process (External Review Report, Program Response, Dean's Response).

5.11 Release Documentation to External Reviewers

Next, the AQAC Chair forwards to the External Reviewers a set of information that includes: Self Study Report; the Academic Quality Assurance Policy and Process, directing the reviewers to *Appendix One: Framework for Self Study Report and External Review Report* for guidance on completing their report; and a timeline for the completion of the External Review Report.

This set of information must be sent to the External Reviewers a minimum of four weeks in advance of the Site Visit.

5.12 Prepare for Site Visit

To assess program quality, the External Review Team conducts a site visit, during which its two members interview key personnel involved with the program. Before conducting the site visit, the team arranges the agenda and schedule of the visit with the Self Study Committee, and develops the questions that it will pose during the visit.

For a sample site visit agenda, see *Appendix Two: Template for the Site Visit*.

The Self Study Committee should select an individual who is external to the program or unit to act as the facilitator for the site visit. This Site Visit Facilitator will meet the External Review Team and guide them

through their site visit agenda, addressing questions and concerns as they arise and facilitating access to people and facilities as required.

5.13 Complete Site Visit

Usually taking place over two to three days, the site visit involves the External Review Team meeting with and interviewing several individuals and groups, for example:

- Chair of the Academic Quality Assurance Committee.

- Self Study Committee.

- Program or Department/Area Chair.

- Faculty members (in groups).

- Individual faculty members.

- Students (in a group meeting with the External Review Team).

- University Librarian.

- Dean of the faculty or school.

- Vice Provost.

The Site Visit Facilitator guides the External Review Team through their agenda during the site visit.

5.14 Prepare External Review Report

Following the on-site visit, the External Review Team prepares a report on its findings. The External Review Team submits the report to the Chair of the Academic Quality Assurance Committee.

For directions on completing the External Review Report, see *Appendix One: Framework for Self Study Report and External Review Report*.

5.15 Evaluate External Review Report

The Chair of the Academic Quality Assurance Committee reviews the report and, if necessary, asks the External Reviewers to provide any omitted components. When the Chair is satisfied with the External Review Report, he or she forwards it to the Self Study Committee for their response.

5.16 Develop Program Response

The Self Study Committee develops a response to the concerns and areas identified for improvement from the self study report and the external review report.

The Review Coordinator sends a digital copy of the Program Response to the Chair of the Academic Quality Assurance Committee.

5.17 Develop Dean's Response

The Chair of the Academic Quality Assurance Committee sends, to the Dean of the Faculty or School, digital copies of the: Self Study Report; External Review Report; and Program Response. The AQAC Chair requests that the Dean complete the Dean's Response.

The Dean of the faculty or school prepares a response to the program review results. This response can include comments, concerns, and considerations for academic planning. The Dean's Response must include an action plan, with timelines, for addressing the issues raised by the review.

The Dean sends a digital copy of the completed Dean's Response to the Chair of the Academic Quality Assurance Committee, who sends it out to the Chair of the Self Study Committee and, where appropriate, the Chair of the Program or Department under review.

The Self Study Committee will have ten working days to respond to the Dean's Response, if they wish, by sending a digital copy of a letter to the AQAC Chair, who will then send it out to the Dean.

Type A Research Centre or Institute Review: The Chair of the Academic Quality Assurance Committee sends the review documents to the Vice President (Research) and requests his or her response. The Vice President (Research) prepares this Vice President (Research) Response.

5.18 Complete Dean's Presentation

On behalf of the Self Study Committee, the Dean presents the results of the review to the Academic Quality Assurance Committee , and recommends the strategy for implementing the action plan and changes suggested in the review.

Type A Research Centre or Institute Review: The Director of the centre or institute presents the review results.

5.19 Sign-off Program Review Results

The Academic Quality Assurance Committee formally reviews and approves the review results and the implementation strategy. The Committee drafts a brief written commentary on the review (the Review Commentary).

Once the Dean's Response has been formally received by the Academic Quality Assurance Committee, the committee will provide it to all members of the Program Review Committee.

5.20 Release Program Review Results to the Vice President (Academic)

The Chair of the Academic Quality Assurance Committee forwards to the Vice President (Academic): the Self Study Report; the External Review Report; the Program Response; the Dean's Response; and the Review Commentary.

The Dean of the faculty or school in which the program resides and the Chair of the program or department are responsible for ensuring that any action plan developed as a result of a program review is implemented.

Type A Research Centre or Institute Review: As the Vice President (Research) has been involved in developing the Vice President (Research) Response, this step is omitted.

5.21 Publish Program Review Results

The Academic Quality Assurance Committee drafts a Closing Memorandum, which is addressed to the President, and summarizes the results of the review. The Chair of the Academic Quality Assurance Committee sends this Memorandum to the President. This document is published on the quality assurance website.

5.22 Communicate Program Review Results to External Reviewers

The Academic Quality Assurance Committee develops a letter to the External Reviewers that informs them of the outcomes of the review that they were involved in. The Chair of the Academic Quality Assurance Committee sends this letter to the External Reviewers.

5.23 Develop Implementation Expectations

The Vice President (Academic) develops a response to the Dean of the relevant Faculty or School that sets out the expectations for implementing the recommendations and action plan from the review. This

Implementation Expectations Response will reinforce the implementation reports that are due from the Dean to the Academic Quality Assurance Committee (see *Reporting Requirements*).

The response shall be sent to the Dean, the Chair of the Self Study Committee, and the Chair of the Department or Program under review. Following the response, within three months the Vice President (Academic) shall call a meeting of the Vice President (Academic) or designate, the Dean of the faculty or school, the Chair of the Department or Program, and the Chair of the Self Study Committee to discuss the implementation of the recommendations.

Type A Research Centre or Institute Review: The Vice President (Research) develops the response, which is addressed to the Director of the centre or institute.

6.0 Reporting Requirements

The Dean of the relevant Faculty or School must submit a brief report to the Academic Quality Assurance Committee on the status of the implementation of the review recommendations and action plan at two time intervals: one year and three years after review completion.

The Academic Quality Assurance Committee reports each October to the General Faculties Council on its activity.

Appendix One: Framework for Self Study Report and External Review Report

The Self Study Report

The key product of the self study, the Self Study Report should align with the criteria of the program review process. Generally, the sections of the report must include both quantitative data and a qualitative analysis of what this means to the program. The Self Study Committee should contact Institutional Analysis to request the standard data for a program review, and Human Resources, University Advancement, and ROSS as required.

For graduate programs or research centres or institutes, not all sections of the self study report may be applicable. The Self Study Committee can develop a modified version of the report, in consultation with the Academic Quality Assurance Committee.

The Self Study Report is limited to a maximum of 20 pages in length, excluding appendices. If the report should exceed this page limit, then the Self Study Committee must develop an Executive Summary of the document.

Table 3: Outline and Suggested Content for the Self-Study Report

SECTION:	CONTENT:
1. *Overview*	Reflections on the findings of the self study.
	Synopsis of the reflections on future improvements and initiatives.
	List of issues and concerns upon which the program requires external advice.
2. *Process*	The details of the process used to conduct the present self study, including individuals involved, interviews conducted, and other activities.
3. *Past Reviews*	If applicable, the results of past reviews and what the program or unit did in response.
4. *Program Description*	A statement of objectives and characteristics for the program or unit. Aspects of the program or unit that are unique provincially, nationally, or internationally.
	Courses of study offered and enrolment and completion rates within these courses of study.
	Demand for the program or unit by students and employers. Include the primary career opportunities for graduates.
	How the program or unit liaises with the external community and how this liaison contributes to the program or unit.
5. *Strategic Alignment*	How the program or unit aligns with the University Mandate, the U of L Strategic Plan, the relevant Unit Academic Plan, the Consolidated Academic Plan, Setting Enrolment Directions, and other planning documents.
	Alignment with Key Performance Indicators from the Unit Academic Plan.

SECTION:	CONTENT:
6. *Curricula and Learning Environment*	How the curriculum and learning environment meet disciplinary and institutional standards of quality.
	Description and evaluation of the curriculum. Listing of the courses and labs offered, identifying those that are core and elective and the type of instruction.
	Description and evaluation of the cooperative, internship, and practicum elements of the program or unit, if applicable.
	How the quality of teaching in the program or unit is determined, monitored, and evaluated.
	The individuals and processes that the program or unit uses to advise its students. An evaluation of the effectiveness of advising.
7. *Faculty and Staff*	Profile of academic staff, including rank, tenure, degrees, areas of expertise, and years of experience.
	Profile of the program or unit support staff (APOs, program administration staff, administrative support staff, etc.).
	The roles of visiting scholars, adjunct faculty, and graduate teaching assistants.
	Professional development activities.
	Faculty and staff evaluation methods and evidence of faculty and staff effectiveness.
	Distribution of teaching assignments and workloads.
	Plans for future faculty and staff, including staffing plan.
8. *Students*	Admission standards and procedures.
	Student profile data.
	Trends in student retention and graduation.
	Trends in student and graduate satisfaction with the program or unit.
	Trends in graduate employment and other post graduation activities.
9. *Resources*	An assessment of the deployment and availability of resources and how they contribute to program or unit quality.
	Adequacy and effective management of facilities, equipment, and library resources.
	Adequacy and effective management of program funds and sources of funds.
10. *Research and Scholarship*	An assessment of the research and scholarly activity of faculty and how it relates to teaching and learning.
11. *Reflections*	General reflections on possible future initiatives.

The External Review Report

Prepared by the External Reviewers, based on the findings of their site visit and their other research and insights, the External Review Report assesses the program against the program review criteria, and provides counsel aimed at improving the program.

Table 4: Outline and Suggested Content for the External Review Report

SECTION:	SUGGESTED CONTENT:
1. *Overview*	A summary assessment of the program and recommendations for improvement.
2. *Process*	The details of the process used to conduct the external review, including individuals involved, interviews conducted, and other activities.
3. *Strategic Alignment*	How the program aligns with the University Mandate, the U of L Strategic Plan, the relevant Unit Academic Plan, the Consolidated Academic Plan, and other relevant planning documents.
	Alignment with Key Performance Indicators at the University and unit level.
4. *Curricula and Learning Environment*	How the program's curricula and learning environments meet disciplinary and institutional standards.
5. *Faculty and Staff*	Analysis of academic and program support staff related to program or unit academic quality.
	The roles of visiting scholars, adjunct faculty, and graduate teaching assistants.
	Professional development activities.
	Faculty and staff evaluation methods and evidence of faculty and staff effectiveness.
6. *Students*	Analysis and discussion of: admission standards and procedures; student retention and graduation; student satisfaction; and graduate employment and other post graduation activities.
	How the student learning outcomes align with the objectives of the program and the Mission, Vision, and Fundamental Principles of the University.
7. *Resources*	Analysis of the adequacy of program resources, including technology.
	Analysis of the support the program receives for its students in the areas of academic and career planning.
8. *Research and Scholarship*	Analysis of the research and scholarly activity of faculty members in the program and how it relates to teaching and learning in the program.
9. *Degree Recognition*	Discussion of how the degrees awarded are recognized for further study or employment.
10. *Recommendations & Commendations*	Recommendations for the continued improvement of the program or unit.
	Commentary on what the program or unit is currently doing well.

Appendix Two: Template for the Site Visit

The following template is provided as a guide only, as a starting point for the Review Coordinators and the Self Study Committee to begin to plan the site visit of the External Reviewers.

Site visits are a minimum of two days, and can be extended to three days if required.

Day One

Time Frame:	Session:	Potential Discussion Topics:
Morning	Chair of Academic Quality Assurance Committee	• Commitment to quality assurance. • Quality assurance process.
	Dean of the Faculty	• Institutional commitment to, and support of, the program or unit. • How the program or unit fits with the Strategic Plan, Academic Plan, and other plans and priorities.
	Program or unit senior administration (e.g., Department/Area Chair)	• Program or unit objectives, structure, content, teaching approach, delivery methods. • Administrative structures and processes. • (If applicable--) Past quality assurance reviews and the follow-up from those.
	Facilities tour	• Key resources that support the program or unit.
	Librarian (optional)	• Library resources that support the program or unit.
Afternoon	Faculty members	• Teaching methods and pedagogy, student assessment practices, and scholarly expectations of students. • Faculty resources, scholarly activity expectations, governance, and faculty evaluation. • Academic responsibilities and workload.
	Students and alumni	• Student and alumni perspectives on the program or unit. • Student and alumni perspectives on academic life, academic student services and advising, and other supports for the program or unit. • Engaged and active learning in the program or unit.

Day Two

Time Frame:	Session:	Potential Discussion Topics:
Morning	Support staff	• Processes and resources that support the program or unit. • Policies and procedures. • Technological, physical, and other resources.
	Self Study Committee	• Debrief. Opportunity to ask questions.
Afternoon	Working session (External Reviewers)	• External reviewers compile missing data, ask questions, and begin drafting their report.
	Debrief (External Reviewers and Self Study Committee)	• Final opportunity for questions to be addressed and to provide the Self Study Committee with the general findings of the External Review Team and the direction of the Team's report.

Appendix Three: Checklists for Selected Review Participants

Dean of the Faculty or School	☐ Contact Chair or Coordinator of the program or unit and request that they initiate the review.
	☐ Review and approve the list of External Reviewers.
	☐ Forward the list of approved External Reviewers to the Academic Quality Assurance Committee.
	☐ Complete Dean' Response and send a digital copy to the Chair of the Academic Quality Assurance Committee.
	☐ Do a presentation on the review results to the Academic Quality Assurance Committee.
	☐ Submit a progress report one year and three years after the review completion.

Program or Unit Chair	☐ Select Review Coordinator.
	☐ Select members of the Self Study Committee.

Review Coordinator	☐ Recommend to the Dean the External Reviewers.
	☐ Submit request to Institutional Analysis and other units for self study data.
	☐ Send digital copy of Self Study Report to the Chair of the Academic Quality Assurance Committee.
	☐ Send digital copy of Program Response to the Chair of the Academic Quality Assurance Committee.

Self Study Committee	☐ Sketch out program review key deadlines and tasks.
	☐ Conduct information gathering for self study.
	☐ Develop Self Study Report.
	☐ Help External Review Team establish the agenda for the site visit.
	☐ Select a Site Visit Facilitator for the site visit.
	☐ Develop Program Response.

Chair of Academic Quality Assurance Committee	☐ Review the Self Study Report. Return it to the Self Study Committee if incomplete.
	☐ Establish a schedule for completion of the External Review Report, Program Response, and Dean's Response.
	☐ At least four weeks before the site visit, send to the External Reviewers: Self Study Report; Academic Quality Assurance Policy and Process; and timeline for completion of External Review Report.
	☐ Review the External Review Report. Request missing components if necessary.
	☐ Forward the External Review Report to the Self Study Committee.
	☐ Review the Program Response. Request missing components if necessary.
	☐ Send review documents (Self Study Report, External Review Report, Program Response) to the Dean and request completion of the Dean's Response.
	☐ Send to the Vice President (Academic): Self Study Report; External Review Report; Program Response; Dean's Response; and Review Commentary.
	☐ Send the Closing Memorandum to the President.
	☐ Send the review outcomes letter to the External Reviewers.

Academic Quality Assurance Committee	☐ Review and approve the review results and implementation strategy.
	☐ Develop a brief written commentary on the review (which is sent to the VPA).
	☐ Develop a Closing Memorandum and send it to the President.
	☐ Develop and send a letter to the External Reviewers regarding review outcomes.

Appendix Four: Checklist for Initiating Unscheduled Reviews

The following is a list of items that could potentially trigger an unscheduled academic quality assurance review:

☐ Low and/or declining enrolment over the past five years.

☐ Rapid rise in enrolment over the past five years.

☐ Substantive changes to the curriculum of a program.

☐ Consistent inability to offer disciplinary courses that are regularized in the Calendar.

☐ Persistent grade inflation (a rise over time in academic grades for work of comparable quality).

☐ Significant personnel turnover.

Appendix Five: Statement of Non-Conflict for External Reviewers

Note: Signed by the Program Review Coordinator, or the Dean and the Program Review Coordinator (if the list of potential External Reviewers has been added to by the Dean)

The attached list of individuals have been selected as potential External Reviewers for the academic quality assurance review of

_____.

To the best of the knowledge of the undersigned, these potential External Reviewers do not have the following past connections (within five years) or current connections with the University of Lethbridge:

- Mentor, research collaborator, co-author, department member, or external examiner.

- Employed by the University of Lethbridge.

- Received a degree from the program or unit under review.

- A close family relationship with a member of the program or unit under review.

- Master's or Doctoral supervisor of anyone in the program or unit under review.

- Served on the supervisory committee of anyone receiving a graduate degree in the program or unit under review.

Signed:

_____   _____
(Print name)   (Print name)

_____   _____
(Date)   (Date)