Action Plan in Response to Reviewers' Recommendations of the Assessment of UPEI's Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures

September 8, 2023

Review Panel Recommendations for Continual Improvement	UPEI Response to Recommendation	Timeframe to Address Recommendation	Responsibility
1. **Provide more prominence to QA at UPEI on its website to promote awareness, information sharing, and accountability via an overview of the policy, the framework, and the process.**	Within its QAM progress report, UPEI identified development of a communications strategy to further enhance awareness of UPEI's quality assurance policy, processes, and program reviews. The development of this strategy is in progress. The draft includes an enhanced web presence that more clearly shares UPEI Senate quality assurance policy and processes, as well as information on reviews and accreditation. Review and implementation of the strategy is planned for Fall 2023.	October 2023	Office of the VPAR and APCC in consultation with UPEI Marketing and Communications
2. **Provide on the web page a continuously updated summary of QA reviews conducted over the past seven years and of reviews to be completed over the next seven years.**	As noted in UPEI's response to recommendation #1, the University is developing a communications strategy to increase awareness of QA reviews and to further support the priority for QA of academic programming within our learning community. As part of the strategy, a web presence is planned that will provide timely information on completed reviews and accreditation status of accredited programs. This enhanced information sharing will provide a greater level of information for the UPEI and its partners, and enhanced accountability on UPEI's QA of academic programs and its commitment to students through high quality programming.	October 2023	Office of the VPAR and APCC in consultation with Marketing and Communications
3. **Establish or restore the practice, as recommended in 2009, whereby the Vice President, Academic and Research and the relevant Dean meet with faculty and students to clarify expectations prior to launching the review process.**	UPEI finds the recommendation to enhance pre-review communications – specifically with students and faculty of the area being reviewed – to be helpful and pragmatic. As part of the draft communications strategy for quality assurance of academic program reviews, more emphasis will be placed on communicating upcoming quality assurance reviews. In their role as the lead on quality assurance for academic programming, the Vice-President Academic and Research will increase outreach to key stakeholders through email messaging	October 2023	VPAR in consultation with Deans

	to build awareness of upcoming quality assurance reviews for information sharing and to encourage participation and input. Deans will provide further personal outreach to faculty, staff, students and any key stakeholders related to the programming being reviewed to encourage participation. This pre-review outreach will be built into the review process and included in the critical path that guides each program's review process.		
4. **Along with Deans' more clearly articulated roles in Quality Assurance practice, work to ensure that the Program Leads attend APCC during the presentation of the relevant QA report; participate more fully in drawing up Action Plans; and receive specific commentary regarding expectations for the Annual Progress Reports emanating as responses to QA processes.**	UPEI's Senate quality assurance policy and guidelines include the need for academic program leads to attend APCC following their respective reviews to present their programming area's response to the reviewers' report and the resulting action plan (Policy Section 5 I, 1 Responsibility). This requirement is already built into the process and is outlined as a deliverable on the critical path for each review. The current process includes: • The Chair of APCC inviting program leads (in writing) to attend APCC to provide an overview of their respective quality assurance review, address the reviewers' report and recommendations, and provide the programming area's action plan. • During the APCC meeting, members of APCC have the opportunity to ask questions and provide input. • In addition, the need to provide timely annual updates (or progress reports) to APCC is clearly communicated to program leads during the meeting, as well as after the meeting through a letter thanking the program lead for their attendance and participation, and reminding them of the deadline for reporting progress. In reviewing this recommendation, UPEI's actions for continual improvement in this area include two approaches: 1. The VPAR will solicit input from UPEI's Deans Council and APCC on additional ways to improve this process in a collaborative and positive manner. One consideration	Deans Council (for discussion June 2023; for recommendation to APCC August 2023) APCC (August 2023)	Chair, APCC in consultation with Deans and Academic Program Leaders

	is that APCC strengthens this process with a letter of expectation to Deans and program leads at the outset of a quality assurance review further clarifying review deliverables in support of student-focused continual improvements. 2. From a workflow perspective, the VPAR/Chair, APCC will also work to enhance the effectiveness of follow-up and reporting on APCC action items to ensure all QA stakeholders are informed of priorities and follow up needs in a timely manner. This recommendation will be addressed alongside recommendation 7.			
5. **Post Minutes of APCC meetings online for internal consumption and make them accessible to MPHEC and other review panels upon request.**	As a committee of the UPEI Senate, APCC has oversight for quality assurance of academic programming. Discussions within this committee result in motions to the UPEI Senate in relation to curriculum, program-related developments, quality assurance reviews of programming, and review follow up. As a result, the topics and related motions are shared publicly via UPEI Senate minutes under Committee Reports. The Chair of APCC will discuss the reviewers' recommendation with the APCC Steering Committee. The APCC Steering Committee will provide input to the UPEI Senate Steering Committee regarding committee minutes and information sharing for discussion and changes to the Committee's terms of reference if deemed appropriate.	APCC (August 2023) Senate Steering Committee (Sept 2023)	Chair, APCC Chair, Senate Steering Committee
6. **Ensure that more awareness is built around the need for QA as it relates to formative reviews of student-centered programs and outcomes.**	UPEI will undertake renewal of its institutional strategic plan in 2023. The University's priority for—and commitment to—the quality of student-focused programming and the overall quality of student experiences is central to achieving UPEI's vision and commitment to students. At an institutional level, input on how to build an enhanced level of awareness around QA reviews and their role in student-centered programs and outcomes will be part of strategic plan consultation with the Campus community.	Fall 2023 and ongoing	APCC in consultation with Marketing and Communications

	In relation to near-term efforts, the QA communications strategy that is in progress will further identify opportunities to promote QA as it relates to student-focused programming and outcomes that contribute to students' overall development and success.		
7. **Develop a template for "follow-up" to QA reviews, a document that sets out timelines and agents for items in the Action Plans submitted to APCC and Senate.**	A post-review template will be developed and shared with APCC for approval. The template will provide further consistency and structure around completion of elements identified within academic units' action plans. Program leads and Deans will be accountable in ensuring the template is populated, that follow-thru occurs in the timeframe indicated, and that post-review follow up is provided to APCC. This recommendation will be addressed alongside recommendation 4.	APCC (October 2023)	The Office of the VPAR will develop a template for APCC approval.
8. **Require APCC to monitor annually the progress of a unit for at least two years following the submission of a QA report.**	Although responsibilities and expectations regarding Action Plans are clearly outlined within the UPEI Senate Policy and related Guidelines for Academic Program Quality Assurance Reviews, UPEI notes there is room for improvement in the post-QA review monitoring process. The Chair, APCC will discuss this recommendation with APCC to determine practical ways to enhance monitoring methods of QA processes following submission of a QA report. This includes developing a shared calendar of follow-up reporting needs associated with academic units and APCC as per APCC's mandate (i.e.: QA review schedules; annual progress report deadlines; and reporting needs). The post-review template outlined in recommendation 7 will be integrated into the monitoring process to help increase effectiveness of reporting, outcomes, and accountability. In addition, opportunities to enhance workflow processes relating to APCC meeting follow up items with key stakeholders will be implemented.	APCC (October 2023)	APCC
9. **Continue to define more clearly the relationship between accreditation reviews and the University's**	Section 4 (Scope) of the UPEI Senate Policy outlines the need for Deans to meet with the VPAR to determine if there are factors within an accreditation review that may not fully address UPEI internal quality assurance review needs. This meeting is	Deans Council (for discussion June/July 2023) APCC (August 2023)	VPAR in consultation with Deans

quality assurance policies, processes and practices so that accreditation is regarded not as a substitute for but rather as a supplement to quality assurance.	meant to identify any gaps in assessment factors and provide the opportunity to an agreed upon approach to ensure all QA aspects are addressed. UPEI notes that the second cycle of the QAM review took place shortly after the adoption of the updated UPEI Senate Policy, and prior to a number of upcoming accreditation reviews. UPEI University is confident that this enhanced policy measure will be carried out effectively in upcoming accreditation reviews. In addition to the updated policy, UPEI is currently working on a campus initiative to identify information requirements and outcomes mapping methods for all UPEI accredited programs. This effort will aid in better informing ITSS solutions related to accreditation outcome mapping for programs across campus. In addition, it will also serve to identify where gaps may exist in accreditation needs and UPEI's own quality assurance processes and deliverables.		
10. **Re-consider the composition of APCC in light of the desirability of balancing academic and administrative perspectives.**	The UPEI Senate updated its terms of reference for APCC in February 2023. In addition to the scope and purpose of the Committee, the membership composition is identified within the updated terms. As APCC is a committee of UPEI Senate, this recommendation will be communicated to the UPEI Senate Steering Committee by the Chair, APCC. In communicating the recommendation, the Chair, APCC will provide an environmental scan of other university academic planning and curriculum committees for consideration of best practices. It is proposed that the composition of APCC is modified to add two elected faculty members (elected by, but not from, Senate).	Fall 2023	Chair, APCC UPEI Senate Steering Committee
11. **Regard the plan to undertake reviews of academic support units within academic planning initiatives as a tactic that needs to be accompanied by a plan to use its QA Framework for the purpose.**	UPEI acknowledges the inherent benefits within the reviewers' recommendation to develop a plan and process for reviews of academic support units and learning partners that is aligned with the institutional QA process. Throughout Fall 2023 and Winter 2024, UPEI will examine current review practices of academic support units to identify where opportunities exist to better align UPEI QA framework aspects.	Fall 2023 and ongoing	APCC

	APCC will provide recommendations to the UPEI Senate Steering Committee with a focus on improving overall quality of supports and services that impact student programming and overall student experiences.		
12. Fortify the 2022 Senate QA Policy and Procedures by including detailed provisions for reviewing Academic Support units that provide both direct and indirect forms.	As noted for recommendation 11, UPEI recognizes the benefit in further enhancing the consistency and expectations of review processes of academic support units so that they align more closely with the structure, reporting, and accountability of academic program reviews. Although UPEI currently has review processes in place for academic support units and academic learning partners, throughout Fall 2023 and Winter 2024, UPEI will examine current review practices of academic support units to identify where opportunities exist to better align UPEI QA framework aspects. Based on this review, APCC will make a recommendation to the UPEI Senate Steering Committee in respect to any changes to the existing scope of the Senate QA policy.	Fall 2023	APCC with additional input of AVP Students and Registrar and the University Librarian
13. Ensure that the quality of the degrees offered in Egypt (including some degrees offered by faculties other than Business) is comparable to those offered in Prince Edward Island.	UPEI programming delivered in partnership with Universities of Canada Egypt is based on the same curriculum and learning outcomes as programming delivered to students at UPEI in Prince Edward Island. Programs requiring accreditation in Canada are also accredited in Egypt. For example, the Bachelor of Science in Sustainable Design Engineering has been accredited by the Canada Engineering Accreditation Board for the Egypt campus. Further, UCE-UPEI students are subject to UPEI's academic policies, regulations, processes, and progression requirements. UPEI has a Provost for the UCE campus who reports to the UPEI President and works onsite in Egypt. Additionally, the Deans in each of the three Faculties offering programs at UCE have Associate Deans in Egypt that report to them. The VPAR is working with the Provost and Deans of the program Faculties, to gather information on QA processes at the Cairo Campus. In addition to the curricular components which are directly	Fall 2023	VPAR APCC

	overseen by UPEI Charlottetown, there is specific interest in understanding the full range of supports and services available to ensure students' learning needs and expectations are addressed. This includes how aspects such as reconciliation and EDI are considered within the curriculum and program delivery (including staffing and student body).		
14. Make habitual the practice of clear communication of a QA process—as exemplified in a recent letter that records each recommendation, the reply or action item it elicited as a response (quoted verbatim) and articulates timelines for completion of the items in the updates.	This recommendation aligns with recommendations 7 and 8 regarding post-review follow-up on action items and progress, as well as enhanced communications around the overall QA process. As noted, UPEI will review follow-up measures including opportunities to improve communications with Deans and Program Leads around post-review deliverables by providing increasingly clear expectations around reporting requirements. This will include encouraging Deans and Program Leads to share review reports and recommendations, and the unit's resulting action plan and deadlines with their entire Faculty. UPEI is committed to building on its strong QA process by enhancing communications in a manner that further builds a culture of QA across the institution.	Fall 2023	APCC Deans
15. Communications with Senate about QA should be elaborated as a two-way thoroughfare along which more meaningful discussion of academic issues would become the norm.	UPEI acknowledges the reviewers' recommendation on this item and understands the value that goes hand-in-hand with robust discussion on academic issues. This recommendation will be reviewed alongside recommendation 10 regarding the composition of APCC. This collective approach is intended to encourage a focused and productive discussion on continual QA improvements as they relate to APCC as a committee of Senate.	Fall 2023	Chair, APCC UPEI Senate Steering Committee
16. Post-review communication between Deans and the senior executive team should become clearer, more frequent, and more attentive to feedback.	The context of this recommendation was not fully understood by UPEI. On one level, UPEI believes continual improvement efforts related to previous recommendations for enhanced review reporting, action plan follow up, and communications between program areas and APCC and Senate should, for the most part, help address the recommendation. In addition, opportunities to improve post-review communications by more broadly sharing review outcomes and action plans with faculties and stakeholders may also benefit UPEI's QA efforts. If	Fall 2023 and onward	VPAR Deans

	the recommendation to share QA reviews and resulting action plans with an entire faculty is adopted, UPEI should ensure that the QA Advisory Team (external and internal reviewers) are aware of this dissemination process and broader circulation. If the recommendation refers to responses to requests for additional resources that are often made during reviews, the University feels its institutional budget process addresses this aspect. Further, as outlined in the Senate QA policy and guidelines, internal quality assurance reviews are to focus on the quality of programming and the overall student experience rather than as a vehicle to request resources.		
17. **As a norm, data sets relevant to program reviews should be automatically provided to each unit undergoing QA review.**	When exploring this recommendation, it was assumed that two factors may have contributed to what reviewers heard from participants in relation to QA participants receiving data sets, versus the current practice. The provision of data sets (also called program profiles or institutional information) is firmly in place at UPEI. Examples of program profiles were provided in the University's QAM progress report. As outlined within institutional QA policy and related guidelines, UPEI provides standardized institutional information in the form of program profiles for each quality assurance review. The UPEI Senate Policy outlines how statistical information is coordinated and provided to areas undergoing QA reviews for the development of self-studies. These institutional program profiles are coordinated on behalf of program areas by the Office of the Vice-President Academic and Research and provided early in the QA process. The profiles are robust, consistent in scope and provide meaningful data pertaining directly to their respective programs, budgets, and students. Every program receives institutional data on their programs: enrolments; # of students graduated; course offerings; # of courses/sections offered; average class sizes in courses/sections offered; retention and graduation rates; related budgets; and student/recent graduate surveys for the programs they are reviewing.	Implemented	Office of the VPAR

	UPEI assumes that one factor that may have led to participants' response to the question is simply a difference in terminology. However, UPEI also recognizes that the University has made significant improvements in the coordination, collection, packaging, and distribution of program profiles/institutional information for reviews over the past few years. Therefore, it is likely that if respondents participated in a QA review a few years ago, the information provided to them may have been significantly different than the comprehensive profile package that UPEI now provides for self-study development.		
18. **Because of the admirably tight-knit Islander community, an unintended drawback is the potential isolation experienced both by international students and students from other parts of Canada; concerted attempts should be made to remedy this issue.**	UPEI appreciates the reviewers' note of this important issue. Student engagement, inclusion, and overall wellbeing are ongoing priorities at UPEI. Initiatives to support our students in all areas of their educational journey—especially with new knowledge gained due to the pandemic—are at the forefront of all University planning efforts. These efforts are supported by UPEI's value of inclusion, the University's EDI strategy, student surveys and outreach, and working closely with the UPEI Student Union and Graduate Student Association to ensure timely feedback on student needs. This recommendation will be shared with academic and student support services. The Associate Vice President Students will play a leadership role in bringing learning community partners together to identify further opportunities for improvements in this area.	Fall 2023 and onward	AVP Students in partnership with Deans and Academic Support Units
19. **Facilitate ways to create better communication between undergraduate and graduate student communities.**	UPEI has recently appointed an Associate Vice-President of Research and Dean of Graduate Studies to its leadership team. This position will be asked to engage with academic leaders (including the Associate Vice-President Students and Deans) to work together on identifying initiatives to encourage a greater level of communication between the undergraduate and graduate student communities that add value to students' education journeys. Key to this consultation will be Deans identifying opportunities within their respective faculties to build cross-level engagement in areas ranging from peer mentoring to undergraduate participation in service and research initiatives, some learning situations (such as cross-	Fall 2023 and onward	AVP Research and Dean of Graduate Studies in consultation with AVP Students and Deans

	level listings for 4000-level and graduate-level courses), enhanced promotion of annual undergraduate and graduate poster sessions, as well as broader University experience initiatives.		
20. Articulate systematic quality improvement and assurance as a priority in the planning documents of UPEI.	As noted in the response to recommendation 6, UPEI is committed to ongoing efforts to develop an institutional culture of quality assurance that is student focused. This includes continually improving QA processes based on feedback and best practices and incorporating the priority of QA within institutional planning to inform long-term strategies as well as day-to-day operations. Implementation of a communication strategy to build an increasing level of awareness of student-focused QA, how it is integrated throughout the institution, and the benefits of QA will contribute to this effort. In addition, recent initiatives by the UPEI academic community to update QA policies, guidelines, and carry out QA reviews in a collaborative and timely manner continues to further articulate the value of QA and build a culture of continual improvement at UPEI. Departmental reviews will be shared with their respective Faculties more broadly to increase awareness and build a culture of QA/continual improvement. APCC is required to report annually to Senate on its activities and initiatives. Based on this recommendation, APCC will disseminate this annual report more widely to the Campus learning community and provide a progress report and goals regarding QA at an institutional level.	Fall 2023 and onward	UPEI Executive Office of the VPAR

Acknowledgement