

Second Cycle of the MPHEC's Quality Assurance Monitoring Process:

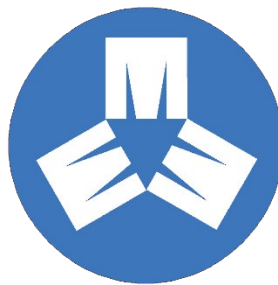
Assessment of the University of Prince Edward Island's Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures

Final Panel Report

Prepared by

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Section I: Introduction

A. Overall purpose of the 2nd Cycle of QA Monitoring

Universities are responsible for ensuring the ongoing quality of the programs and services they provide to students. This is largely accomplished through cyclical internal and external reviews managed independently by each university. The MPHEC's primary role is to confirm that such reviews are taking place and to validate the extent to which institutional quality assurance (QA) frameworks meet agreed-upon regional standards, while at the same time providing advice and assistance to institutions. The 2nd cycle of the Quality Assurance Monitoring (QAM) process is intended to serve that purpose, and builds on the MPHEC's "first cycle" of the QAM process, which was carried out between 2001 and 2009.

The QAM process aims to answer the following questions:

1. What progress have institutions made since the "first cycle"?
2. To what extent are institutions following their own QA framework?
3. To what extent are institutions' QA frameworks aligned with the MPHEC's 2016 Guidelines for Maritime Universities' Quality Assurance Frameworks?

B. Description of the Monitoring Process

At the request of the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC), the Review Panel was asked to carry out the QAM review of University of Prince Edward Island's (UPEI) quality assurance framework. The members of the Review Panel were:

1. **Dr. Neil Besner** – He is the former Provost and Vice-President, Academic, University of Winnipeg. He has assessed Canadian universities and colleges and their programs in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and Alberta; he was a member of Campus Alberta Quality Council from 2014-16, and since 2018 has been a member of the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance.
2. **Dr. Ron Bond** – A Professor of English, he is Provost Emeritus at the University of Calgary. He chaired the Campus Alberta Quality Council for six years, was a founding member of the Ontario Universities Quality Council, and chaired the Saskatchewan Higher Education Quality Assessment Board. He has conducted many quality assurance reviews for the Degree Quality Assessment Board in B.C. and for the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board in Ontario.

The QAM Process at UPEI included the following steps:

1. An institutional progress report prepared by UPEI (December 2022);
2. An analysis of all pertinent documentation by the Review Panel (February 2023);
3. A virtual site visit (March 13-14, 2023);
4. A draft report prepared by the Review Panel to UPEI to validate factual information and correct any errors (**April 11, 2023**);
5. Validation of draft report by UPEI (**April 25, 2023**)
6. A final report, incorporating UPEI's comments, to UPEI (**May 10, 2023**)
7. An action plan prepared by UPEI (**INSERT DATE**);

8. Recommendation by the joint Association of Atlantic Universities and MPHEC Quality Assurance Committee to approve the final report and action plan and subsequent approval by the MPHEC board (**INSERT DATE**);
9. The Review Panel report, with the action plan from UPEI appended, posted (in the language of the institution) on the MPHEC and UPEI's website (**INSERT DATE**); and,
10. A follow-up report to be submitted by UPEI to the MPHEC one year following submission to the MPHEC of the action plan. The follow-up report will outline how UPEI has addressed the actions it had identified in its action plan.

C. Preface: Panel's Description of Principal Features of UPEI in 2023

The University of Prince Edward Island (UPEI) is proud of its status as the only university in the province. It can trace its origins to Prince of Wales College and Saint Dunstan's University, both formed in the 19th century. Since 1969, when UPEI itself was established, it has grown considerably and now houses both arts and science faculties, and faculties providing professional education such as Sustainable Design Engineering, Business, Education and Veterinary Medicine. Its offerings include graduate programs at both the Master's and PhD levels. As part of its evolution and of its maturation as an institution committed not only to education but to research and scholarship, UPEI now has a School of Climate Change and Adaptation, administered by the Faculty of Science and situated in a new 45,000 square-foot building at St. Peter's Bay. On the main campus at Charlottetown there is a new 76,000 square-foot engineering building and a Health and Wellness Centre.

Soon to join the health-related units at UPEI is a Faculty of Medicine, which is to be developed with assistance from Memorial University and is scheduled to open in 2025. UPEI has seconded a person from Memorial to serve as Executive Director Medical Program Development and no fewer than 15 committees are now at work on this major project. The introduction of a medical school to UPEI will be transformative, since it will involve other programs there, such as psychology, nursing, paramedicine and veterinary medicine. In the first instance, accreditation will be handled by Memorial's current accreditation arrangements.

One measure of programmatic vitality is the number and range of new or renewed programs introduced. At UPEI 17 new or modified programs appear on the list since 2016, roughly half of them at the graduate level.

UPEI has recognized the importance of indigenous history and ways of knowing by creating a Faculty of Indigenous Education, Research and Applied Services and recruitment of faculty members for the unit has begun. Its Teaching and Learning Centre curates Indigenous Educational Resources. While there is more work to be done to implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, UPEI now requires all undergraduate students to take a mandatory course in indigenous studies. It also offers a Mi'kmaq language course. A gathering place that offers one form of support for indigenous students is the Mawi'omi Indigenous Student Centre.

The student body at UPEI is diverse, even though close to 50% of students come from the Island. A large proportion, almost 33%, are international students. We have comments to make in this Report on the opportunities and challenges associated with the demographic mix of the student population, which totals close to 5500 students.

The University is governed by a Board and a Senate, traditional fixtures, of course, in the bicameral system that is customary in Canada. It has adopted a Strategic Plan (2018-23), a newly minted Strategic Research Plan (2023-2028), a campus plan and a strategic framework for indigenous initiatives, and it has formulated an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy. From the QAM progress report we examined and from discussions we had in various interview sessions, we formed the impression that three focal points are increasingly important to UPEI as an institution: 1) experiential learning as a way of enhancing students' experience; 2) EDI; 3) expansion of research and scholarship.

Academic and administrative leadership positions at UPEI reflect its relatively small size and scale. Reporting to the President and Vice-Chancellor is a Vice-President (Administration and Finance) and a Vice-President (Academic and Research.) Also belonging to this fairly lean executive group is the Chief Information Officer. Deans of the faculties already mentioned are important to the academic functioning of their units and to the institution as a whole. They are especially pivotal in promoting quality assurance and continuous improvement, according to UPEI'S Quality Assurance Policy and Procedures, and in some cases, in response to professional accreditation requirements. Program leads and department chairs are also part of the quality assurance landscape, since program reviews are typically initiated by leaders at that level.

At the time of our virtual site visit in March 2023, we were intrigued by the unusually large number of UPEI's leaders who occupied "interim" positions. We discussed a concern about this feature of the institution at several sessions. As a result, we learned that there were various contextual circumstances for the situation of many we talked with and we asked for and received a new policy, approved by the Board, on the appointment of Deans and Associate Deans and reasons for appointing them in acting or interim capacities. We welcome this development, since continuity of leadership is more conducive to quality assurance than administrative "churn." That said, we regard it as significant that UPEI has progressed so well, despite the disruptions of COVID, the development of many new initiatives, and the maintenance of an atmosphere that seemed, in our opinion, to be remarkably collegial.

Section II: Assessment of UPEI's Policies and Procedures for Assessing Academic Programs and Units

A. Progress since the 1st Cycle: The First Cycle of QAM completed its assessment of UPEI in 2008-9. Since then UPEI has addressed the recommendations made in the "1st cycle" Report and has made significant changes to its QA policies and procedures. We gauge that progress by referring, in italics, to each recommendation made in 2009, together with the proposed ways of implementing the recommended changes at that time. We note that UPEI's submission to MPHEC in December 2022 contains comments on these items, and we record them in full here. Before moving on to Section II.B., we offer an overview of the Panel's reactions to some of the 2022 and 2009 comments.

2009 Recommendation 1: Expand the role of Deans by distributing responsibilities for quality assurance more broadly.

A possible way to achieve this includes:

- Having the Deans play a more active role, particularly in terms of follow-up to reviews.

2022 UPEI Comments:

UPEI Deans now play a central role in QA process. This includes:

- Confirming receipt of advance notice of upcoming review/s.

- Providing input with the Chair, APCC/VPAR on Advisory Team members.
- Reaching out to prospective Advisory Team members to provide an overview to the review and determine their interest in participating.
- Delegating review duties and communicating review expectations and needs to Academic Leads and faculty participating in reviews.
- Reviewing the self-study prior to circulation to ensure key components are included.
- Reviewing the agenda for review site visits to ensure participation of stakeholders engaged in site visits.
- Reviewing the Advisory Team Report and Recommendations.
- Reviewing the programming area's response to the Advisory Team Report and recommendations, as well as the academic program's Action Plan.
- Attending APCC during presentation of the report response and presentation of Action Plan.
- Communicating expectations for annual progress reports on Action Plans

2009 Recommendation 2: Implement measures to enhance compliance and timeliness

Possible ways to achieve this include:

- Minimizing delays in the process.
- Working with units to identify what support can be provided to facilitate completion of the self study.
- Providing assistance and incentives to Departments generally and their Chairs in particular. For example, by:
 - adjusting the budgets of Departments where the results of a review support such adjustments;
 - providing additional administrative support to assist in collating the required information; and
 - bringing in someone from another department to assist the unit in completing its self study.
- Having administration respond, constructively but firmly, to any delays in compliance and take appropriate steps to implement the policy.
- Including two external reviewers on the review team, with at least one coming from outside Atlantic Canada.
- Requiring the review team to draft the report prior to leaving the campus.
- Preparing, and distributing to Deans and Chairs, a schedule of upcoming reviews over the next five years.

2022 UPEI Comments:

Over the past few years, UPEI has worked to bring all program reviews up-to-date; all programs are now aligned with their respective review cycles. Efforts to achieve this include:

- Highlighting the UPEI Senate QA policy and related guidelines within the academy.
- Enhanced communications around the purpose of QA and its value to the University and students.
- Enhanced communications around QA reviews, schedules, Advisory Team composition, and other review components.
- Enhanced coordination between APCC, Office of the VPAR, and Faculties around review expectations and responsibilities.
- Development and communication of critical paths with deadline dates for each review.
- Timely follow-up on critical path deadlines.

- Scheduling of key review aspects with broader audiences to aid in information sharing and follow through.
- Deferrals of reviews are no longer permitted without extenuating circumstances; any deferral must be approved by APCC as a committee and not by a single person.
- Implementation of a new, very effective process for gathering institutional data to support self-study development.
- Significant efforts to simplify the process and provide assistance and support to review coordinators.
- Annual reporting by the Chair, APCC to UPEI Senate on reviews completed, reviews that are overdue, and upcoming reviews.
- Most recently, creation of a web page on UPEI QA to provide awareness, information sharing, and accountability via an overview of the policy, framework, process and reviews conducted over the past seven years and reviews to be completed in the next seven years.

2009 Recommendation 3: Increase community involvement and awareness

Possible ways to achieve this include:

- Communicating information pertaining to the University's quality assurance policy and the results of, and follow-up to, reviews to the university community (students, faculty, etc.), government and the general public.
- Identifying and communicating significant changes brought about by a review (whether done by the University or an accrediting body).
- Using Deans to communicate quality assurance related information to the university community.
- Providing educational activities, such as workshops for faculty and department Chairs, on the University's quality assurance policy with particular emphasis on benefits of the policy.
- Inviting the Chair to the meetings of the ARPC where the findings of the Chair's Department review are being discussed.
- Having the Vice-President, Academic Development and the relevant Dean meet with faculty and students to clarify expectations prior to launching the review process.
- Posting minutes of ARPC meetings on-line.
- Increasing efforts to involve the community-at-large in the process by, for example, including on the review team a member who represents a relevant employer or professional association.

2022 UPEI Comments:

UPEI has worked in collaboration with faculty members, staff, Deans, APCC, and Senate to increase awareness, responsiveness, and understanding of the value of QA as it relates to our university mission and vision and the quality of education it provides to students. To improve community involvement and awareness, UPEI has:

- Enhanced understanding of the QA framework as a function governed by the UPEI Senate
- Succeeded in strengthening its culture of quality assurance and accountability to stakeholders through ongoing communications and timely completion of reviews.
- Worked to build awareness of the need for QA and the value of the QA process as it relates to student-centered programming and outcomes.
- Provided a mentoring/overview of the QA process for internal reviewers (to ask questions about policy, role, expectations, etc.)
- Developed a web page to increase information sharing.

2009 Recommendation 4: Strengthen the follow-up process

Possible ways to achieve this include:

- Carrying out the follow-up process consistently and as outlined in the University's policy.
- Making Deans responsible for monitoring follow-ups of their respective units.
- Having APCC monitor the progress of a unit for two years following the submission of the report.
- Defining timelines and responsibilities for follow-up within the policy.
- Providing a copy of the final report to library staff following a review.

2022 UPEI Comments:

- Deans provide enhanced leadership and oversight regarding quality assurance and its direct impact on quality, student-focused programming, as well as day-to-day operations.
- Chair, APCC now provides written reminders of the need for academic programming units to present to APCC on program reviews and Action Plans.
- Chair, APCC now provides written reminders of annual progress reporting on Action Plans to Deans.

Recommendation 5: Strengthen the quality assurance policy

Possible ways to achieve this include:

- Defining assessment criteria.
- Clarifying the process to review interdisciplinary programs.
- Defining the relationship between accreditation reviews and the University's quality assurance.

2022 UPEI Comments:

- Building on the QA policy/framework audit in 2016, UPEI updated its Senate QA policy to align with MPHEC's QA Framework.
- The UPEI QA policy underwent review by Deans, APCC, and Senate in 2021-22 and was formally approved by Senate in May 2022.
- Guidelines that support the UPEI QA policy were updated and approved by APCC in Aug 2022 to reflect the new QA policy and elements of the MPHEC QA Framework.

Panel's Observations on the 2009 Recommendations and the 2022 Comments:

As the foregoing comparisons reveal, UPEI has been diligent in addressing the recommendations and the means for implementing them set out in the First Cycle QAM Report. To highlight and reinforce some of the most pertinent comments, we itemize our own observations here.

1. All Deans are members of Senate and of its QA committee, now called the Academic Planning and Curriculum Committee. Some ambiguity about whether APCC is dominated by administrators rather than academics is thus engendered.
2. Although the 2009 Report calls for Deans to be more active and visible in developing and implementing follow-up processes and action plan, the Panel has reservations about how follow-up is handled currently at UPEI.
3. There is no question that the need for improved compliance and timeliness emphasized in 2009 has been acknowledged by UPEI and no question that the University has introduced several important measures to address the problem identified in 2009.

4. Although UPEI now describes quality assurance on its website, the overview provided there could be more prominent.
5. The steps taken to increase community knowledge of quality assurance as practiced at UPEI are significant, although the interviews conducted by the Panel suggested that more work needs to be done, especially with students and faculty, to enable them to appreciate the value and consequences of QA.
6. The Senate's 2022 Policy on QA and the Guidelines for the preparation of a self-study and for the consideration of the Advisory Teams are, on the whole, thoughtfully composed. We address later in this Report the need for greater clarification on the relationship between quality assurance and accreditation of professional programs and for ways of evaluating interdisciplinary programs.
7. Although not suggested in 2009, a shift in the title of the senior academic officer from VP Academic Development to VP Academic and Research sends an important signal about the culture and aspirations of UPEI.
8. The 2009 Report noted approvingly that since 2002, UPEI had systematically evaluated the quality of academic support units. The Senate's QA Policy and Procedures from 2022 make no provision for the review of academic support units, which are sometimes called "learning partners" and sometimes "non-academic support units" as if to differentiate them from academic units offering degrees.

Description of UPEI's 2022 Quality Assurance Policy and Guidelines

Following MPHEC's instructions, the Panel used an auditing system to enable it to ascertain the extent to which UPEI has been following its own policies and procedures. We chose the undergraduate programs in Nursing, Business, and History and three graduate programs in Science as those whose quality assurance reviews we would plumb. Before commenting on each of these four, we describe here the main elements of the new policy adopted in 2022.

The main document in the Quality Assurance Framework at UPEI is "The UPEI Senate Policy for Quality Assurance of Academic Programs", approved in 2022 and up for review again in 2028. This Policy statement outlines the *purpose*, *principles* and *scope* of internal QA reviews, provides *definitions* of key terms, assigns *responsibilities* to the VPAR, the Academic Planning and Curriculum Committee, Program Leads and external Advisory Teams, gives readers an overview of the *process* and several ways in which the *schedule* of reviews could be conducted.

Also part of the Quality Assurance Framework at UPEI are "Guidelines for Academic Units" and "Guidelines for Advisory Teams", both comprehensive documents prepared by the Academic Planning and Curriculum Committee.

The Self-Study Guidelines reinforce a theme that permeates UPEI's discussions of QA: unit reviews rest on formative not summative approaches, should encourage introspection and should be student-centric. Among the points raised in the description of the typical self-study are these:

- The self-study is to be both descriptive and analytical.
- It should articulate learning outcomes and should include both current students and stakeholders such as employers.
- Within a defined span of 10-20 pages, the self-study should address the ways in which the unit is fulfilling its missions for teaching, research and scholarship, service, balance among teaching, research and service, relationship to the broader external context, infrastructure and support.

Material to be relegated to appendices includes program profiles, summaries of progress since the last program review, a statement of equity, diversity and inclusion within the unit, and the need for results from student surveys, course outlines, and faculty CVs. The 7-page document summarized here concludes with references to the Advisory Team and its Report to be followed by an Action Plan which ought to respond to the Advisory Team's recommendation and to be student-focused.

The other set of Guidelines promulgated with the QA Policy pertains to Advisory Teams:

- The composition and appointment procedures for Team members.
- The components of a review to be undertaken by the Team.
- Nine elements to be considered by the external Team, including program structure, facilities and resources, and student success indicators.

These guidelines also prescribe the contents of the Advisory Team's Report and conclude with the proposition that the Team's recommendations should be a critical reference point for a multi-year Action Plan, which will enjoy widespread circulation.

UPEI's Policy and Guidelines afford the institution a firm foundation for the execution of program reviews.

We discuss next what we discovered about the implementation of those reviews. Does UPEI "practise what it preaches?" A strong caveat is in order as we usher in our comments on the reviews of the four audited programs: all of them were conducted BEFORE the 2022 Policy and Guidelines were approved by Senate. It is only fair to discuss the sample reviews, therefore, under the aegis of the precursor document, which is a 4-page policy statement entitled "Quality Management for Academic Units," and a companion piece called "Quality Management Guidelines for Academic Units." Although the "Quality Management" statement came to us undated, officials from UPEI subsequently informed us that it likely harks back to 2000.

The Panel's Audit of the Undergraduate Programs in Business

The review of UPEI's programs in the Faculty of Business was initiated with a self-study that was submitted in December, 2020. The Faculty is non-departmentalized and it offers an array of programs, anchored by the BBA, but extending to the BBA's accelerated 2+3 version, done in conjunction with Holland and other colleges. It also offers a Bachelor of Business Studies, a 2+2 option for college students, and a Bachelor of Business in Tourism and Hospitality. There is an opportunity for business students to pursue an Honours option or to do a cooperative education degree and for students from other faculties to declare a Minor. Certificate and diploma credentials are part of the mix, and graduate programs include an Executive MBA and an MBA in Global Leadership. The review proper focussed solely on undergraduate programs, but it is important to situate those programs within the programmatic context outlined here.

A somewhat unusual feature of the undergraduate programs in business are the offerings in Egypt. The "branch campus" in Cairo currently enrolls 370 students in BBA and MBA degrees. The Panel confirmed that it is up to UPEI to ensure that the quality of the degrees offered in Egypt (which include some degrees offered by faculties other than Business) is comparable to those offered in Prince Edward Island.

The self-study proceeds from introductory comments about the vision, mission and the six objectives of business education to brief synopses of each of its undergraduate offerings, to discussion of the Fulfillment of Mission under the headings of "teaching", with an emphasis on experiential learning and its

use of ENACTUS, a large experiential learning platform, to a graphed depiction of survey results from the Student Opinions of Teaching Survey (SOTS), as mandated by the Collective Agreement. Other sections of the report on teaching refer to the faculty complement of 16 full-time faculty members, which is supplemented by sessional instructors who teach roughly 33% of the courses offered. A significant fraction of the workload of full-time faculty members is taught on an overload basis. Subsequent parts of the self-study are grouped under the headings Fulfillment of Mission: Research Activity, where two research centres receive attention; Fulfillment of Mission: Service, which is about committee work and leadership roles for faculty members; Fulfillment of Mission: Balance among Teaching, Research and Service. Other sections, again alluding to Fulfillment of Mission, allude to “Relationship to Broader External Context,” and “Infrastructure and Support,” where some negative commentary appears. The final section refers to Planned Strategic Directions, where several important initiatives stand out, among them the creation of a Centre for Business Research and a plan to apply for accreditation from the AACSB (the American Association of Colleges and Schools of Business), which interestingly enough harks back to a goal also mentioned in the 2011 Quality Review.

The format and contents of this self-study follow the contours of UPEI’s Policy on “Quality Management for Academic Units”, where there are 5 fulfilment of mission categories. The self-study for Business is impressive for its scope, its details and candour and it served as the basis, as the Policy requires, for the external review conducted in 2021 by the Advisory Team.

The Advisory Team, composed of a former Associate Dean of Business from a regional university, a Chair of Marketing and International Business and Strategy from an Ontario university, and an “internal external” from History at UPEI, visited the campus, virtually, in early February, 2021. Its Report focussed, sometimes in a fairly cursory way, on the main components of the self-study and provided by way of advice to the Business Faculty 18 recommendations.

In April 2021, the Interim Dean filed his Faculty’s responses to the recommendations in this Report. These responses almost uniformly thank the Advisory Team for its valuable contribution before going on to comment thoughtfully on the implications and challenges of following through with them, especially if support from the senior administration is entailed. Strange, to the current Panel, is the lack of any feedback on the Advisory Team’s silence vis-à-vis AACSB accreditation. The responses were approved by the APCC apparently with little or no discussion.

The final document in the set of documents reviewed by our Panel is the “2022 Update” which was filed with the VPAR’s office after the new QA Framework had been approved. This is a frank and very informative account of the impact of the self-study, the Advisory Team’s recommendations, and the responses to that material. While it would be possible to create a thoughtful and purposeful Action Plan from this account of what the Faculty of Business and UPEI would do next, we did not see such a Plan, even though the new Policy Framework at UPEI touts it frequently as the culminating step in the process: “In light of the self-study and the Report and recommendations from the Advisory Team, the Academic Program unit will develop a multi-year plan to outline strategic directions and to address identified shortcomings and recommendations. This Action Plan will be shared with APCC through presentation and discussion.”

The Panel's Audit of Nursing Programs

These professionally accredited programs are required by their national governing body, the Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing (CASN) and its provincial accreditation body, the College of Registered Nurses of Prince Edward Island (CRNPEI), to undergo a series of rigorous and carefully articulated audits, including annual updates and reports on several components of first-year undergraduate programs. Of necessity, all of the Nursing Programs at UPEI must adhere to the standards specifically set out by their national and provincial bodies; this series of UPEI audits, comprehensively documented in the dossier that the panel reviewed, constitutes an impressive record of the Programs' having successfully met their governing bodies' quality assurance standards. Towards the end of this Report, the panel will comment further on the vital relation between these accreditation processes for professional schools and programs such as Nursing on one hand, and on the other, the internal policies, guidelines, and practices that UPEI follows for its academic programs, such as the History Department.

The related units that comprise the Nursing Programs are

- Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) Education Program
- Accelerated BScN Education Program
- Advanced Standing BScN Education Program
- LPN to BScN (1st year entry) Education Program
- LPN to BScN (2nd year entry) Education Program

The 58-page 2019 document "Undergraduate Programs Annual Report for College of Registered Nurses of PEI 2018 to 2019" clearly and amply documents all of the elements that are either analogous to or would normally be included in a self-study of an academic program at UPEI:

- "Mission, Vision, and Values"
- Undergraduate Program requirements
- Changes to the Undergraduate Program
- Clinical Learning Experiences
- NCLEX-RN and HESI Exams
- Number of students enrolled in programs and number graduated
- Faculty, their qualifications and expertise, and number of faculty enrolled in graduate programs
- Administrative assistants, coordinators, and Clinical Nursing instructors
- Presented papers, published articles, and/or research projects

In its October 30, 2020 letter to the Interim Dean of Nursing, the CASN Accreditation Bureau advises that it has by that date fully accepted the results of the Nursing Program's 2018 accreditation process. In its initial response to the 2018 Report, the Bureau requested that the Program address seven required elements for accreditation which in the first instance the Accreditation Bureau determined had been "partially met." An example of such an element in the CAB letter is the first one: *"1. University of Prince Edward Island, Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BScN) Education Program Professional Growth – Key Element 7 – Partially Met. CAB recommends the school submit a report providing evidence that interprofessional education has been integrated into the curriculum and is formally assessed. This report should be submitted by May 15, 2020. "*

The Nursing Program followed up in the Spring of 2020 with an interim report that addressed all of the "partially met" objectives; the Accreditation Bureau "carefully reviewed" this report and accepted it fully.

In this and all the other extensive documentation of the exchanges between the Nursing Program and its governing professional bodies, the Panel finds incontrovertible evidence of the Nursing Program's scrupulous adherence to the protocols it follows and reports on.

The Panel's Audit of the History Program

The History Department describes itself in its cogent 2017 self-study as one of the "foundational" programs in the Faculty of Arts, and one of five to offer an Honours Program. Its dossier is admirably succinct, eloquently plainspoken, and honest in its assessment both of the considerable challenges faced by the Department, and the opportunities arising from them. On the evidence of this dossier, its professorate – only one of these eight is a full professor, despite the extensive and many-minded commitment to teaching and the formidable productivity and service records of the group – remains a positive, collegial and tight-knit group committed to fulfilling UPEI's tripartite strategic ambitions in teaching, research, and service.

Strikingly evident in this dossier – as, indeed, in virtually all of the documentation submitted to the panel by UPEI – is the prominence of student experience as the focus at the very center of the entire academic endeavour. This consistent recognition that the continuing improvement of the student experience lives at the center of quality assurance is everywhere evident in this dossier as elsewhere. That is admirable and heartening.

The History Department self-study does not underestimate or hide from the hydra-headed challenges faced by all humanities departments in Canada and beyond, chief among them steep and steady declines in enrolment over the last decade and more. The panel does not have the space to summarize the (well-known) causes of this challenge here; but we do note that this History Department has resolutely tackled this issue by adopting several measures, among them:

- Elaborating a wider range of history courses to extend the traditional reach of the department from its former focus on Atlantic Studies, including, for example, new courses on emergent areas such as the History of Medicine, the History of Childhood, the History of International Immigration, and the History of European / Islamic Relations.
- Widening and diversifying the Department's approaches to pedagogy and to student engagement to include online and other digital platforms and further widening the range of experiential learning options available to its students.
- Increasing the interdisciplinary possibilities for History students to take courses in other Departments such as English or Anthropology.
- Streamlining or reducing the number of required courses in order to make the curriculum more accessible and engaging to prospective majors or honours students.
- Providing a faculty advisor /mentor for every major or honours student.

The dossier includes all of the mandated components as outlined in the UPEI quality assurance guidelines, principal among them the Department's self study; the external reviewers' report; and the Departmental response to the report. The self-study lays out the Department's vision as culminating in their mission to "foster historical literacy." In so doing, the self-study parses the Department's work in alignment with UPEI's Strategic Plan, outlining the ways in which that plan's three pillars – Teaching, Research, and Service – form in their turn the structure of the Department's orientation. It is significant and relevant, the panel believes, that the self-study should devote pride of place and the greatest length to its opening discussion of teaching. In both the research and service components – and it must be said that the Department is

widely productive and active on both fronts – the Department outlines its remarkable contributions both within and beyond the institution.

It is worth quoting the succinct opening of the 2017 External Review, conducted by two external and one internal reviewer,

“UPEI’s History Department is a group of accomplished teachers and highly respected scholars who pay considerable attention to the education and professional preparation of their students. It is clear that they imbue their students with critical thinking skills, lucid writing, and impart to the students in an explicit way the significance and value of the skills and training that they are acquiring in the discipline of history.”

Salient among the comments recorded in the External Review are the following observations related to the Department’s tripartite mission:

- The Department has *“a clear set of objectives for its students ... which concisely capture the perspective and capacities developed by humanities education.”*
- The Department is *“clearly student-centred, and this is reflected in a number of important ways.”*
- *“The faculty’s commitment to pursuing their projects is evident in ongoing research activity and publication, and in securing internal funding.... a culture of research permeates the Department of History, despite the challenges of securing external funding. The reviewers recognize the challenges of being in a relatively small department with extensive teaching commitments. The challenges faced by the Department of History in securing grants through SSHRC or other funding sources are shared by many other smaller institutions.”*
- The Department *“has an enviable record of service, with many members providing external service at the decanal level, and as the directors of other academic programs. Members have occupied key positions as president of the Canadian Society for the History of Medicine, members of CHA council, and a variety of other regional initiatives. The breadth and depth of the contributions of various faculty members is extraordinary.”*

The External Reviewers’ Report concludes with five recommendations:

1. Curriculum: continue to work on the Department’s breadth requirement.
2. Collaborate more actively with recruitment officers in a number of areas.
3. Continue to diversify possibilities for student experience, particularly in experiential learning.
4. Support for Faculty access to funding learning/integrating e-resources into the curriculum on an *“ongoing, stable basis.”*
5. Advising: *“devising a few clearly demarcated ‘pathways’ through the major might be helpful in guiding students.”*

Typical in the tone and substance of the History Department’s response to the External Reviewers’ Report are their opening comments: *“... we wish to thank our colleagues for their careful, constructive, and succinct assessment of our program. They listened more than they spoke, and they asked more than they told.... It is trite but true to say that we are humbled by the reviewers’ good opinion of our program. But my colleagues have worked hard to earn it.”* The Department received the recommendations positively and committed to work on the areas identified. The panel cannot help but note, however, the observation the Department makes about the Arts as a whole, even if the comment is mitigated by the commitment to meet the challenge: *“Part of the challenge for Arts disciplines in general is the societal perception that an education in the Humanities is a self-indulgent luxury rather than a preparation for challenging and*

rewarding careers in many different fields. This must be addressed by multiple players in multiple ways, but the Department can be proactive in this area.”

Because of the palpable strengths of the review of the History, it is disappointing to note that the APCC motion, passed at its meeting of January, 2019, is etiolated: “External reviewers Report with recommendations and departmental response to the external reviewers recommendations presented to APCC for information.” Because UPEI declined our request that it share APCC meeting minutes with us, we cannot say whether at another meeting a fuller form of engagement occurred.¹

The Panel’s Audit of Graduate Programs in Science

The Panel selected graduate programs in science as a cluster we wanted to audit, because of the need to consider quality assurance at the graduate level (an MPHEC stipulation) and because this selection would enable us to balance consideration of an undergraduate program in Arts (History) and in two programs offering undergraduate degrees that prepared graduates for professional careers (Nursing and Business).

Graduate programs in three areas were in the cluster we examined: Environmental Science (ESC); Human Biology (HB), and Molecular and Macromolecular Sciences (MMS). These programs at the Master’s level are complemented by doctoral program in ESC and MMS. In 2020, there were 32 students in the Master’s programs, 10 in the ESC PhD and 8 in the MMS PhD.

The review process used by UPEI in evaluating these programs conformed to the usual format, with sections devoted, as we have seen in other dossiers, to the program’s fulfilment of mission in the domains of teaching, research and creative activity, service, balance among these three domains, relationship to the broader external context, infrastructure and support. Appendices addressed profiles of each constellation of programs, calendar descriptions of them, Student Opinion Surveys, CVs for members of the Graduate Faculty and some profiles of successful graduate students.

A few highlights extracted from this voluminous material are these:

- UPEI has identified solid learning outcomes for students in the MSc programs and, separately, for students in the ESC PhD and for the MMS PhD.
- Programs are typically delivered in hybrid form. Some MMS students do experiential learning in a field course that takes them to a research center in the Bahamas.
- Researchers from the Faculty of Sustainable Design Engineering, the School of Climate Change, and occasionally Veterinary Medicine contribute to these programs.
- The availability of courses is a concern raised by some graduate students in the student surveys. In some cases, a student will be allowed to take a course at another university.
- Research activity and productivity, as attested by procurement of research funding from NSERC and other sources, is noteworthy.
- The current UPEI collective agreement allows for teaching remission for supervisors who accumulate credits toward such releases.

¹ APCC’s consideration of the reviews in Business, Nursing, and Graduate programs in Science was similarly slight: the motions in turn were to “accept the Reviewers Report and the Faculty’s response to the Report”, 2021; “the Dean of Nursing provided periodic updates to APCC”, 2018 and “to accept the Reviewers Report and the Department’s response to the Report”, 2021.

- The Faculty of Science has set a minima for the financial support of graduate students: \$14,000 p.a. at the master’s level and \$16,000 p.a. for PhD students
- New and positive developments include a new MSc program in Mathematical and Computational Science, and the formation of a new faculty combining the School of Climate Change and Adaptation and Environmental Studies.
- EDI, an institutional priority, is lacking in the composition of the Graduate Studies Committee in Science as the self-study acknowledges.

In addition to the “internal external” member from Veterinary Medicine, the Advisory Committee for this review consisted of three members of the professoriate at other places, rather than the normal two. This was a sensible tactic designed to provide suitable expertise across the range of programs being evaluated. In our judgement, the recruitment process resulted in outstanding commentators, including a Dean of Graduate Studies from a major research university and a Tier 1 Canada Research Chair.

This Team met virtually with people from UPEI for three days during the summer of 2021. The Report it produced for UPEI and the Interim VPAR eschewed the format found in the self-study in favour of a different structure, but its findings give rise to 16 crisply written recommendations.

The response to the Advisory Team’s report and its recommendations comes in an undated letter addressed to the Interim VPAR by the Dean of Science, the Graduate Studies Coordinator in Science, and UPEI’s Interim Dean of Graduate Studies and Associate Vice President Research. This letter is cast to address each recommendation with a “Reply” or an “Action.” A “reply” might say “The Faculty of Science is aware of this need,” whereas an action item might allude to an initiative already underway.

The most recent communication in this string is a letter to the newly appointed VPAR from the Dean of Science, the Graduate Studies Coordinator and the newly appointed Dean of Graduate Studies and Associate Vice President (Research) for UPEI. The letter records each recommendation, the reply or action item it elicited as a response (quoted verbatim), and presents not only the update but also timelines for the completion of the items in the update. This practice should become habitual at UPEI, as we say later in our Report.

Interviews: The attached agenda for the virtual site visit shows the extent to which our Panel discussed with representatives of UPEI the documentation received and the questions arising from it. We provide here brief notes about the interview sessions we conducted, with thanks to participants in all of these sessions for the information and insights conveyed to us. We have not attributed any of these comments.

Senior Administration

Early in its two-day virtual site visit, the Panel met with members of the senior administrative team at UPEI: first, in the opening session with the President, and second, in a session with several members of senior administration including the Vice President Academic and Research, the Special Advisor to the President, and the Director of Strategic Planning for the institution. In a later session we met with another key member of senior administration, the Chief Information Officer.

In the first two sessions, the President and the senior members of the UPEI team provided the panel with an overview of several key elements at UPEI:

- The composition of its student body, at 48% from P.E.I., 32% international, and 20% domestic from the rest of Canada.

- The bicameral governance structure at UPEI comprised of Senate and the Board, with the President having oversight of a unique trio of officials: the two traditional Vice Presidents, of Research and Academics and Finance, are joined by the institution's Chief Information Officer. The panel had not seen this particular configuration before, and so we were interested to learn of its functions.
- The status of and relationship among three plans: UPEI's overarching Strategic Plan; the Campus Plan; and the Academic Plan.

We were also briefed on some institutional objectives and their challenges, chief among them continuing to develop the culture of Quality Assurance despite the plethora of senior positions currently occupied by interim leaders, beginning with the President and extending to several decanal positions. Our dominant and positive impression from these opening sessions is that UPEI's interim leaders are moving forward ably and are not hampered by their temporary status.

Senate

In an afternoon session on the second day, we met with several members of Senate which is a body of 42 Senators, approximately half of whom are administrators and half of whom are faculty and student representatives. The Senate is chaired by the President, who was joined by three Senators from three different departments that the panel had not met in previous sessions. In this lively session the Panel gained a vivid overview of Senate's practices and functions: as is the case with most if not all bicameral governance structures, UPEI's Board deals with risk management issues while Senate receives reports from QA reviews and deals with all matters related to academic programming. Senators perceived communication to sometimes be one-way (top down) at Senate, and advised that more meaningful discussions of academic issues would be welcome. APCC's role as a Senate committee was clarified, emphasizing its central function in the Quality Assurance process at UPEI. Clearly, the Senators at this session were committed to and engaged in their roles as Senators, even if at times they perceived their contributions to be mitigated by the lack of consistently clear two-way communication up and down the academic causeway from Departments through to senior leadership.

APCC (Academic Planning and Curriculum Committee)

It became clear to the Panel in our meeting with this key committee that APCC is the vital engine of Senate and the clearing house for all Quality Assurance processes. The committee is chaired by the Vice President, Academic and Research, and heavily populated by administrators: of its 14 members, only two are not Deans, Interim Deans, or senior administrators such as University Librarian. It might be the case that this skewed population contributes to the sense of some Senators that communication is not as two-way as it might be for a more engaged and functioning Senate. It became evident to us that the work of this committee sits at the heart of Senate and thus is the most important forum for Quality Assurance at UPEI. It was also clear in the APCC's comments that to a person, they were aware of the committee's central importance. All of this augurs well both for Senate, for APCC itself, and for the continuing evolution of QA at UPEI, although the Panel will offer some recommendations below about the membership of APCC.

Deans

Deans of the various faculties at UPEI are quintessentially important to the institution's quality assurance processes. In the 2009 review, as we have stated earlier, the panel of the day said that the deans should

“play a more active role, particularly in terms of follow-up to reviews.” In our case, the agenda afforded us the opportunity to meet with the deans who had presided over the reviews of the audited programs (Arts, Business, Nursing and Science) and, in their own session, with deans who were from other faculties (Education, Indigenous Knowledge, Education, Research and Applied Studies, Sustainable Design Engineering, and Veterinary Medicine), all of the latter serving in interim roles. Since all deans belong to APCC, seven of them were also present at the session with the committee.

We single out here just a few impressions and a few topics that arose during these discussions. We were left in no doubt that the decanal group took seriously their responsibilities for quality assurance at UPEI and regarded it as a major component of their jobs. Still there were markedly different attitudes between deans of faculties that undergo external scrutiny from professional associations and deans whose quality assurance involves adherence to the QA framework at UPEI solely. Deans from units where accreditation of one sort or another occurs were accustomed to the need to respect an outcomes-based curriculum, were inured to curricular mapping and were used to considering and assessing the competencies and, as they are called in Engineering, the “attributes” of graduates. Although they acknowledged that accreditation processes substituted at the undergraduate level for the “normal” UPEI processes, they emphasized the intensity, the highly calibrated character and the rigour of the external processes they described. We also heard that resources for the implementation of QA were limited and taxed their colleagues to perform the “huge” tasks involved. The Deans also spoke about their meeting as a kind of “deans’ council” between the regular meetings of APCC and the major role that APCC has in discussing and recommending to Senate curricular changes, large and small. A cursory and somewhat random look at minutes of Senate reinforced that assertion for the Panel.

The reliance of deans on input and data from the VPAR’s office and other units was a theme in these meetings, and most applauded the help they received when preparing Self Studies. They also applauded, more generally, the detailed guidelines found in the QA framework on the normal contents of the self-study and on the formation and expectations of the external Advisory Teams they helped to establish. They said that UPEI’s processes were “shared and collaborative” and that communication about the processes in which they were involved was happily more pro-active than it had been. Deans were less sanguine about post-review communications from the senior executive team and suggested that greater attention to feedback and “closing of the loop” would be appreciated.

Academic Support Units

In a session reserved for five members of academic support units, the Panel learned much about how those units contribute to the quality of academic programs. The discussions with “learning partners,” as they are called, enabled us to interact with the Chief Information Officer, the University Librarian, the Director of Student Affairs and Services, and the Assistant Vice-President Students and Registrar. The commitment of these individuals to the welfare of UPEI and its students was clearly evident and several of them were keen to point out that they were alumni or alumnae of the university. We add that a chart in the Progress Report identified several other support units (e.g. Athletics and Recreation, the Health and Wellness Centre), representatives from which we did meet. We note that the Progress Report alerted us, however, to a 2014 independent review for Athletics and Recreation and a review in 2023, under the auspices Accreditations Canada, of the Health and Wellness Centre.

Before saying more about this session we conducted, we believe it useful to recollect what the First Cycle review had to offer about the appraisal of these units in its report: “UPEI has been reviewing its support units (including Student Services, Library, the Center for Life-Long Learning, Registrar, Computer Services and Athletics) since 2002 (emphasis added). During the site visit, the Monitoring Committee met with the Heads of these units and was struck by their overwhelming support for the review process; it seems the process for the assessment of academic support units has been successful.” Unfortunately, as the QAM submission disclosed, the regular review of support units has been discontinued over the last decade. Discussion with the heads of these units has convinced the senior administration to explore an alternative: “At this time, UPEI feels that building in some QA focused aspects within annual planning and evaluation may be the most effective and efficient approach to evaluating QA of nonacademic units. These annual planning and evaluation processes will engage reviewers with expertise in the respective areas, as well as the inclusion of key stakeholders and input from other campus unit/service users. This will add value to current planning and evaluation processes.”

Although this alternative approach was not broached by participants in the session with them, the general position taken by the Academic Support Units as contributors to quality assurance is to focus on the students’ experience holistically and to engage with faculty by asking the question “how can we help you?” All of our interviewees said it was vital to listen to the voices of students. To enable that, IT has kiosks on campus and Student Services get biweekly updates from staff that encourage accounts of what they are hearing from students. The Library embeds librarians within the Faculties to take its services closer to students at UPEI.

A topic that came up in animated discussion is the extent to which common data sets should be provided for each review. It would appear that the current practice is to respond to requests for data: it is a demand-driven model, which has both benefits and drawbacks.

A final comment is that UPEI distinguishes between “learning partners” that directly support the academic enterprise and those such as facilities management or the research services office that support it indirectly.

Students

UPEI arranged for the Panel to meet *in camera* with a handful of students during our virtual site visit, including a couple of members of the Students’ Union. These students came from several different faculties and had been at the university for varying lengths of time. Some were graduate students. On the whole, they had little to say about their direct experience with QA processes and labelled their vague familiarity with those processes as “shallow.”

They agreed that the Student Opinion of Teaching Surveys (SOTS) were a potentially useful instrument for evaluating the learning experience. They were divided about the value of filling out those surveys: one striking statement was that they believe that instructors paid attention to the survey results, but UPEI as an institution did not. On the other hand, another student said that she felt that results of the surveys had precipitated some meaningful changes. The Students’ Union has taken the view that SOTS results should weigh more heavily in performance evaluations of faculty members. Students seemed unaware of the references to the SOTS in the Collective Agreement.

When prompted for the most positive aspects of their experiences, the students referred to the small size of the institution, which facilitated the building of relationships and a strong sense of community. Another

was the use of Open Educational Resources rather than expensive textbooks. They also liked the faculty mentors and supervisors with whom they had engaged. They paid tribute as well to the emphasis on experiential education and the excellent job-boards that helped them find work. On other side of the ledger, some said the international students and even students from other parts of Canada tended to be isolated since Islanders are a tightly knit clique who often keep to themselves. They also believed that there could be more done to bring undergraduate and graduate students together from time to time. One said that UPEI suffered somewhat from a “community college mentality.”

Although our sample size was small, the students we met struck us as an engaged group who were glad they were registered in programs at UPEI and were genuinely interested in the welfare of the university and the students who would succeed them.

Faculty

A small selection of faculty members from the units we audited offered the Panel their views on quality assurance at UPEI. They affirmed some of the perceptions of the students and others interviewed: the small size of the institution and of most of the units in it created a collegial and cohesive sense of community at UPEI; support for the articulation of learning outcomes was far from universal with some “old-guard” faculty members being conscientious objectors. In most cases, the distribution of the QA workload was done through a unit-level strategic planning committee that morphed when necessary into an ad hoc QA committee. Even when that did not happen, the workload imposed by QA on a relatively small unit meant that all hands had to be on deck.

Most of the participating faculty members lauded their Chairs for consulting with them, circulating drafts of the relevant documents and encouraging discussion of the self-study, the selection of members of the Advisory Committee, and the like. For those teaching graduate students, the supervisory load could be onerous but regular reporting on the progress of their students was perhaps an undervalued aspect of ensuring student success and the quality of the programs offered. The fact that interim appointments were widespread at UPEI, which is partly a function of COVID, did not help the QA cause. On the other hand, the university had come through its COVID period relatively well, and many faculty members were now much more comfortable with online and hybrid education than they were before.

One faculty member remarked that the implementation of QA action items required leaders with “teeth”, others said that continuous improvement required strong leadership even when a unit was not actively undergoing a regular review mandated by UPEI’s policy framework.

B. Alignment with the MPHEC’s 2016 Guidelines for Maritime Universities’ Quality Assurance Frameworks

As is customary in QAM reviews, an appended Table exhibits the alignment of UPEI’s *Policies and Procedures for Assessing Academic Programs and Units* with the MPHEC’s 2016 *Guidelines*. This Table reveals that on the whole the comments on the degree of alignment evident to officials from UPEI resemble the perceptions formed by the Panel. Even though we are pleased to affirm the degree of alignment apparent to us, we have compiled a list of recommendations as a result of the review we have conducted. These recommendations, taken individually and collectively, hold the potential to improve the QA processes at UPEI and their alignment with the published MPHEC guidelines.

Section III: Recommendations for Improvement

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.
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.
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.
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.
5. Post Minutes of APCC meetings online for internal consumption and make them accessible to MPHEC and other review panels upon request.
6. Ensure that more awareness is built of the need for QA as it relates to formative reviews of student-centered programs and outcomes.
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.
8. Require APCC to monitor annually the progress of a unit for at least two years following the submission of a QA report.
9. Continue to define more clearly the relationship between accreditation reviews and the University's quality assurance policies, processes and practices so that accreditation is regarded not as a substitute for but rather as a supplement to quality assurance.
10. Re-consider the composition of APCC in light of the desirability of balancing academic and administrative perspectives.
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.
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.
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.

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.
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.
16. Post-review communication between Deans and the senior executive team should become clearer, more frequent, and more attentive to feedback.
17. As a norm, data sets relevant to program reviews should be automatically provided to each unit undergoing QA review.
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.
19. Facilitate ways to create better communication between undergraduate and graduate student communities.
20. Articulate systematic quality improvement and assurance as a priority in the planning documents of UPEI.

Appendices:

- A. Action plan submitted by UPEI (to be inserted)
- B. Table outlining alignment of Current UPEI's Policies and Practices with the MPHEC's 2016 Guidelines
- C. Site Visit Agenda
- D. Assessment report from the "1st cycle"
- E. Second Cycle of the Monitoring of Maritime Universities' Quality Assurance Frameworks: Overview of the Process

| MPHEC 2016 Guidelines | Guideline met by institution? | | Institutional Comments | Panel Comments |
|--|-------------------------------|----------|--|--|
| | Policy | Practice | | |
| | (Yes/no/somewhat) | | | |
| 1. PURPOSE OF THE GUIDELINES | | | | |
| These guidelines aim to assist institutions in establishing or improving their quality assurance frameworks (and related policies and processes) and to support the Commission when assessing the frameworks in place. | Yes | Yes | As outlined in UPEI Policy for Quality Assurance of Academic Programs (and related Guidelines for Academic Unit; Guidelines for Advisory Teams) | Yes, in general these MPHEC guidelines are met At UPEI |
| 2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES | | | | |
| A successful university quality assurance framework ²³ is guided by: | | | | |
| 2.1 The pursuit of continuous improvement; | Yes | Yes | Outlined in the University mission, planning, policy and guidelines | Yes |
| 2.2 A focus on learning; | Yes | Yes | Outlined in the University mission, planning, policy and guidelines | Yes; the QA processes are clearly student-centered |
| 2.3 The necessity of encompassing all functions and units of an institution; | Yes | Somewhat | All credit bearing academic programs are covered by the policy; non-academic support units are not covered under the Senate policy | In process: Please see Recommendations #10 re: Support units |
| 2.4 Accountability and transparency; and | Yes | Somewhat | Outlined in policy; in practice updates on internal quality assurance of academic programs is communicated from APCC to Senate by the VPAR. A web presence has recently been implemented | This principle is being implemented |
| 2.5 The documentation and implementation of policies, guidelines and procedures. | Yes | Yes | Outlined in policy, guidelines, and QA resources | Yes |

² . This document refers to an institutional quality assurance framework, which may encompass multiple policies and procedures covering an institution's work in this area (e.g., faculty specific policies that reflect various realities, or separate policies for academic units and other types of units).

| MPHEC 2016 Guidelines | Guideline met by institution? | | Institutional Comments | Panel Comments |
|---|-------------------------------|----------|---|---|
| | Policy | Practice | | |
| | (Yes/no/somewhat) | | | |
| 3. SCOPE OF A UNIVERSITY'S QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK | | | | |
| A university's quality assurance framework: | | | | |
| 3.1 Reflects its mission and values; | Yes | Yes | UPEI is committed to providing outstanding programs and experiential learning that develop students to their full potential in the classroom and the community; outlined in policy and institutional planning | These values are clearly articulated by UPEI |
| 3.2 Accounts for the full range of its offerings and activities; | Yes | Yes | Outlined in the Senate QA policy for academic programs only; non-academic support units are not guided by the Senate QA policy. | Please see recommendation #11 re: support units |
| 3.3 Links to the institution's strategic and other plans; | Yes | Yes | Outlined in policy; UPEI's current strategic plan addresses the priority of quality assurance, student-centred focus and student success | Connections between plans are clear |
| 3.4 Includes provisions to cover all of the functions and units of the institution (research, administration, community service, etc.) and applies to the full spectrum of a student's university experience; and | Somewhat | Somewhat | Policy/framework address quality assurance review of academic/credit bearing programming; non-academic support units are not covered in the policy. | Please see recommendations 1, 6, and 11 |
| 3.5 Is forwarded to the MPHEC. | Yes | Yes | Policy recognizes MPHEC QA framework and its alignment; program QA information is shared with MPHEC as appropriate. | Yes |
| 4. OBJECTIVES OF THE UNIVERSITY'S QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK | | | | |
| The objectives of a university quality assurance framework are, at a minimum, to assure the quality of programs and to ensure that stated student outcomes can be realized. | Yes | Yes | Outlined in policy and guidelines; reinforced in institutional documents and planning | Yes |
| The purpose of each institution-led assessment is to answer the following two questions: | | | | |

| MPHEC 2016 Guidelines | Guideline met by institution? | | Institutional Comments | Panel Comments |
|---|-------------------------------|----------|--|----------------|
| | Policy | Practice | | |
| | (Yes/no/somewhat) | | | |
| first, "How well is the unit or the program achieving what it set out to accomplish?" and | Yes | Yes | Outlined in policy and guidelines; ongoing efforts are being made in respect to follow-up processes and recommendations acted upon where appropriate | Yes |
| second, "Is it doing what it should be doing?" | Yes | Yes | Outlined in policy and guidelines | Yes |
| In answering the above questions, the university examines: | | | | |
| 4.1 Inputs; and | Yes | Yes | Outlined in policy and guidelines; UPEI has enhanced inputs efforts in relation to data and participation to inform reviews | Yes |
| 4.2 Outputs. | Yes | Yes | Outlined in policy and guidelines; ongoing efforts are being made in respect to follow-up processes | Yes |

1. This document refers to an institutional quality assurance framework, which may encompass multiple policies and procedures covering an institution's work in this area (e.g., faculty specific policies that reflect various realities, or separate policies for academic units and other types of units).

| 5. STANDARD ² FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMS/UNITS | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|--|-----------------------------|
| 5.1 Central Components | | | | |
| To assess academic programs/units ³ , an institutional quality assurance framework would, at a minimum: | | | | |
| 5.1.1 Identify the coordinating or administrative unit responsible for the overall management of the quality assurance process. This unit is located at a higher echelon (e.g. vice-president) of the institution's administrative structure, and is accountable to the institution's decision-making bodies. | Yes | Yes | The VPAR oversees the QA process. The VPAR also holds the role of Chair, APCC. In this capacity, the VPAR/Chair, APCC is accountable to the administrative executive of UPEI, as well as Senate. | This is clearly articulated |
| 5.1.2 Assign and distribute responsibility for the various components of the quality assurance framework (deans, department heads, program managers, committees, etc.). | Yes | Yes | The VPAR oversees the QA process. The VPAR also holds the role of Chair, APCC. The VPAR assigns components of the QA framework and duties to the academic leadership. | These roles are clear |
| 5.1.3 Define the assessment criteria (see section 5.2 below). | Yes | Yes | Outlined in the policy and guidelines. | Yes |
| 5.1.4 Require a self study, | Yes | Yes | Outlined in the policy and guidelines. | Yes |

| MPHEC 2016 Guidelines | Guideline met by institution? | | Institutional Comments | Panel Comments |
|--|-------------------------------|----------|--|---|
| | Policy | Practice | | |
| | (Yes/no/somewhat) | | | |
| involving faculty and students participating in the program or unit. | Yes | Yes | Outlined in the policy and guidelines. | Yes |
| The self-study is student-centred | Yes | Yes | Outlined in the policy and guidelines. | Yes; this criterion is explicit |
| as it would aim, in most cases, to assess the student experience and, in the case of academic programs, to assess the quality of learning and teaching. | Yes | Yes | Outlined in the policy and guidelines. | Yes |
| The self-study is structured according to the defined assessment criteria, and is both descriptive and analytical. | Yes | Yes | Outlined in the policy and guidelines. | Yes |
| When and where appropriate, the results of accreditation processes may be included, and/or substituted for this component, or a portion thereof. ⁴ | Yes | Yes | Outlined in the policy and guidelines. | Yes. But please see Recommendation # 9 |
| 5.1.5 Require an external review component, | | | | |
| the external review includes: a sufficiently comprehensive site visit and written report, | Yes | Yes | Outlined in the policy and guidelines. | (Site visits conducted virtually during the pandemic) |
| the external review is carried out by at least two experts external to the institution, with at least one coming from outside Atlantic Canada. | Yes | Yes | Outlined in the policy and guidelines; informed by MPHEC Guidelines for Selection of External Assessors. | Yes |
| The external reviewers' team should also include a senior faculty member from the institution to assist the external reviewers in the process and provide clarifications on the institution's context. | Yes | Yes | Outlined in the policy and guidelines. | Yes |
| As appropriate, the results of accreditation may be included, and/or substituted for this component, or a portion thereof. ⁴ | Yes | Yes | Outlined in the policy and guidelines. | Yes. But see Recommendation # 9 |
| 5.1.6 Ensure the participation of students | | | | |
| through: membership on committees dealing with program review and quality assurance; | Yes | Yes | Outlined in the policy and guidelines; as stakeholders as there is no formal committee | Yes |
| participation in surveys designed to collect data on a number of student and graduate outcomes; | Yes | Yes | Outlined in the policy and guidelines. | Yes |

| MPHEC 2016 Guidelines | Guideline met by institution? | | Institutional Comments | Panel Comments |
|---|-------------------------------|----------|---|--|
| | Policy | Practice | | |
| | (Yes/no/somewhat) | | | |
| and mandatory student course evaluations. | Somewhat | Somewhat | Student course evaluations and how these are shared are covered by the UPEI Collective Agreement. | Yes |
| 5.1.7 Incorporate the participation of faculty not directly involved in the reviewed program (or discipline or unit). | Somewhat | Somewhat | Participation of an internal advisory team member is required; reviews typically involve members of the faculty/academic programming being reviewed unless the program is interdisciplinary, has cross-listing aspects; librarians participate in every review. | Somewhat, as detailed in UPEI response |
| 5.1.8 Enable the participation of the wider network of stakeholders, such as employers, graduates, professional associations, the local community, etc. | Yes | Yes | Although this is within policy and guidelines, UPEI feels this can be improved and has identified a way of encouraging participation of stakeholders. | Yes |
| 5.1.9 Define the follow-up mechanisms, which include the procedures, areas of responsibility and expected timelines, along with provisions for follow-up monitoring of progress (usually involving the Senate). | Yes | Yes | Outlined in the policy and guidelines. | Yes, although follow-up procedures can still be improved |
| 5.1.10 Establish the assessment cycle and related schedule which normally does not exceed seven years (with no programs exceeding, in practice, 10 years between reviews). ⁵ | Yes | Yes | Outlined in the policy and guidelines; 7 year review cycle. | Yes |
| 5.1.11 Assess newly established programs or units after the first cohort has graduated. | Yes | Yes | Outlined in the policy and guidelines; consistent with MPHEC process | Yes |
| 5.1.12 Document the standard timeline for individual reviews, from the preparation of the self-study through to Senate approval of recommendations, normally 12 to 18 months. | Yes | Yes | Outlined in the policy and guidelines. | Yes |

| MPHEC 2016 Guidelines | Guideline met by institution? | | Institutional Comments | Panel Comments |
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| | Policy | Practice | | |
| | (Yes/no/somewhat) | | | |
| 5.1.13 Include a communication strategy to inform the university community (students, faculty, staff, etc.) and the general public about a university's quality assurance framework as well as significant changes brought about by quality assurance activities. The communication strategy should include activities to inform faculty, staff and heads of units about the framework, its objectives, assessment criteria, and follow-up processes. | Yes | Somewhat | APCC currently informs Senate of progress on quality assurance reviews of academic programs. Under Section 5 (Responsibilities) of the updated Senate policy, it is indicated that completion of reviews are to be communicated with stakeholders through University communications. Development of an overall communication strategy is being discussed to align with the process. This includes how to best share information on upcoming reviews, how to participate in reviews, outcomes of completed reviews, and follow-up aspects. The OVPAR and APCC will lead development of the strategy. | Somewhat. Please see Recommendations 1-5 and 14-16. |
| 5.1.14 Define the provisions to assess the framework periodically, normally at the end of each assessment cycle, and table the resulting report with decision-making bodies within the institution (e.g., Senate, Board of Governors). | Yes | Yes | | Somewhat. Please see Recommendations cited directly above. |
| 2. The Commission uses the term Standard as 'A document established by consensus and approved by a recognized body that provides for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines or characteristics for activities or their results, aimed at the achievement of the optimum degree of order in a given context'. ISO/IEC Guide 2:1996, | | | | |
| 5.2 Assessment Criteria | | | | |
| Each university establishes assessment criteria for reviewing the quality of its programs/units. The assessment criteria are comprehensive in their range and in their use across programs and units; they have a strong focus on students and reflect the institutional mission and values. They are published and include at a minimum the following: | | | | |
| 5.2.1 The continuing appropriateness of the program's structure, method of delivery and curriculum for the program's learning outcomes and the degree level expectations; | Yes | Yes | Outlined in policy and guidelines | Yes |

| MPHEC 2016 Guidelines | Guideline met by institution? | | Institutional Comments | Panel Comments |
|---|-------------------------------|----------|-----------------------------------|--|
| | Policy | Practice | | |
| | (Yes/no/somewhat) | | | |
| 5.2.2 The achievement by students and graduates of the learning outcomes in light of the program's stated goals, the degree level expectations, and, where relevant, the standards of any relevant regulatory, accrediting or professional body; | Yes | Yes | Outlined in policy and guidelines | Yes, but please see commentary in the Panel's Report re: Learning Outcomes |
| 5.2.3 The continuing appropriateness and effectiveness of the methods used for the evaluation of student progress and achievement in light of the degree level expectations; | Yes | Yes | Outlined in policy and guidelines | Yes |
| 5.2.4 The capacity of the faculty and staff to deliver the program and the quality of education necessary for the students to achieve the stated learning outcomes, and to meet the needs of the existing and anticipated student enrolments; | Yes | Yes | Outlined in policy and guidelines | Yes |
| 5.2.5 The continuing performance of the faculty, including the quality of teaching and supervision, and their continuing progress and achievement in research, scholarship or creative activity, and professional activity in light of the program under review; | Yes | Yes | Outlined in policy and guidelines | Yes. See appendices in unit dossiers |
| 5.2.6 The appropriateness of the support provided to the learning environment, including but not limited to library and learning resources (e.g., human, physical and financial resources; academic advising; student services; graduate studies office; registrar services; technological services; centres for teaching and learning, etc.), unless such supports are assessed through other means; | Yes | Yes | Outlined in policy and guidelines | Yes. But please see Recommendation # 11 |
| 5.2.7 The effectiveness and appropriateness of the use made of the existing human, physical, technological and financial resources; | Yes | Yes | Outlined in policy and guidelines | Yes |

| MPHEC 2016 Guidelines | Guideline met by institution? | | Institutional Comments | Panel Comments |
|---|-------------------------------|----------|---|--|
| | Policy | Practice | | |
| | (Yes/no/somewhat) | | | |
| 5.2.8 The continuing appropriateness of the academic policies (including admission, promotion and graduation requirements; requests for transfer credit and advanced standing; and appeals) and of the governing and decision making structures of the academic unit; and | Yes | Yes | Outlined in policy and guidelines | Yes |
| 5.2.9 The definition of indicators that provide evidence of quality, including enrolments, graduation rates, time-to completion rates, student satisfaction level and, as appropriate, relevant measures of graduate outcomes (e.g., graduate employment rates, employment in field of study, employer satisfaction level, further study, etc.). | Somewhat | Somewhat | Employment rates, employment in field of study, employer satisfaction and further study are not as actively measured by UPEI as current student success indicators in all programming areas. UPEI relies on MPHEC data to understand indicators trends at a high level. | Yes; see appendices in dossiers, where much of this data is provided |
| 6. STANDARD FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF OTHER UNITS | | | | |
| A university's quality assurance framework ought to assess all functions and units of the institution. This includes the university's units whose missions are not driven by teaching, and in particular academic support units. The diversity of these units makes the development of general guidelines universally applicable across units and across universities challenging. It is up to the institution to determine whether each unit is assessed more effectively on its own or in conjunction with academic units (see 5.2.6, above). | | | UPEI currently does not have a policy for quality assurance review of non-academic support units, nor are these units covered under the current Senate policy on quality assurance of academic programming. However, UPEI does employ a number of planning, evaluation, and reporting mechanisms that focus on the aspects outlined in 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, and 6.4. These range from risk management assessments and operational effectiveness, to annual reporting and ongoing stakeholder input. | Please see Recommendation #11 |
| <i>The Commission will gather information from, and generate discussion with, universities on best practices in the assessment of other units . In the interim, universities are still expected to review these units and, at this stage, the Commission proposes the following four assessment criteria:</i> | | | | |

| MPHEC 2016 Guidelines | Guideline met by institution? | | Institutional Comments | Panel Comments |
|---|-------------------------------|----------|------------------------|---|
| | Policy | Practice | | |
| | (Yes/no/somewhat) | | | |
| 6.1 The continuing appropriateness and effectiveness of the service or support provided to the academic programs, students and faculty; | No | Yes | See above. | Please see Recommendation # 11 |
| 6.2 The capacity of the unit or program to deliver the service or support which its mandate defines; | No | Yes | See above. | (As directly above) |
| 6.3 The appropriateness and efficiency of the use made of the existing human, physical, technological and financial resources; and | No | Yes | See above. | This is an ongoing challenge that should be continuously monitored. |

| 2nd Cycle of the Quality Assurance Monitoring Process | |
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| Site visit to UPEI | |
| March 13 and 14, 2023 | |
| DAY 1 Monday, March 13, 2023 | |
| Time slot | Participants |
| 11:00 am to 11:15 am | External Reviewer Panel Set Up Dr. Ronald Bond Dr. Neil Besner Nicole Boudreau and Catherine Stewart, MPHEC |
| 11:15 am to 11:45 am | Dr. Greg Keefe , Interim President and Vice-Chancellor |
| 11:55am to 12:55pm | Dr. Greg Naterer , Vice-President Academic and Research Dr. Katherine Gottschall-Pass , Special Advisor to the President Ms. Charlotte McCardle , Director, Strategic Planning |
| 1:00 pm to 1:30 pm | Panel Lunch Break |
| 1:30 pm to 2:30 pm | Academic Planning and Curriculum Committee (APCC) <i>APCC Membership</i> Dr. Greg Naterer, Vice-President Academic & Research; Chair APCC Dr. Nola Etkin, Dean, Faculty of Science; APCC Steering Committee Mr. Darcy McCardle, Associate Registrar; APCC Steering Committee Leah Gauthier, UPEI Graduate Student Association Iyobosa Igbineweka, UPEI Student Union, Vice-President Academic and External Dr. Sharon Myers, Dean (Interim), Faculty of Arts Dr. Tarek Mady, Dean, Faculty of Business Dr. Deborah MacLellan, Dean (Interim), Faculty of Education Dr. Marva Sweeney-Nixon, Associate Vice-President, Research & Dean, Graduate Studies Dr. Gary Evans, Dean (Interim), Faculty of Indigenous Knowledge, Education, Research and Applied Studies Dr. Christina Murray, Dean, Faculty of Nursing Dr. Wayne Peters, Dean (Interim), Faculty of Sustainable Design Engineering Dr. John VanLeeuwen, Dean (Interim), Faculty of Veterinary Medicine Mr. Donald Moses, University Librarian |
| 2:40 pm to 3:40 pm | Academic Support Units that contribute to the quality of academic programs: Ms. Donna Sutton , Assistant Vice-President Students & Registrar Ms. Anne Bartlett , Director of Student Affairs & Services Mr. Donald Moses , University Librarian Mr. Dana Sanderson , Chief Information Officer |
| 3:40 pm to 4:00 pm | Panel break |
| 4:00 pm to 5:00 pm | All Deans <u>other than</u> those overseeing dossier programs: Dr. Deborah MacLellan , Dean (Interim) Faculty of Education Dr. Gary Evans , Dean (Interim) Faculty of Indigenous Knowledge, Education, Research, and Applied Studies Dr. Wayne Peters , Dean (Interim), Faculty of Sustainable Design Engineering Dr. John VanLeeuwen , Dean (Interim), Faculty of Veterinary Medicine |

| DAY 2 Tuesday, March 14, 2023 | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 11:00 am to 11:15 am | Panel – Set Up (same as Day 1) |
| 11:15 am to 12:15pm | <p>Chair and Dean of the following recently reviewed programs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Bachelor of Arts, History</u> Dr. Sharon Meyers, Dean (Interim), Faculty of Arts Dr. James Moran, Chair, Department of History 2. <u>Bachelor of Business Administration</u> Dr. Tarek Mady, Dean, Faculty of Business 3. <u>Bachelor of Science in Nursing</u> Dr. Christina Murray, Dean, Faculty of Nursing Dr. Jo-Ann MacDonald, Interim Dean (following previous review), Faculty of Nursing 4. <u>Faculty of Science, Graduate Programs</u> Dr. Nola Etkin, Dean, Faculty of Science Dr. Joel Ross, Graduate Studies Coordinator, Faculty of Science (Current Coordinator) Dr. Barry Linkletter, Previous Graduate Studies Coordinator, Faculty of Science (Coordinator during last review) Dr. Sweeney-Nixon, Associate Vice-President Research & Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies |
| 12:25pm to 1:25 pm | <p>Faculty of recently reviewed programs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Bachelor of Arts, History</u> Dr. Ian Dowbiggin, Professor, Department of History 2. <u>Bachelor of Business Administration</u> Dr. Melissa James, Associate Professor and Director of Undergraduate Programming, Faculty of Business 3. <u>Bachelor of Science in Nursing</u> Dr. Patrice Drake, Associate Professor and Interim Associate Dean, Faculty of Nursing 4. <u>Faculty of Science Graduate Programs</u> Dr. Xander Wang, Associate Professor, UPEI School of Climate Change; Member of the Faculty of Science Graduate Studies Committee |
| 1:30 pm to 2:00 pm | Panel Lunch Break |
| 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm | <p>Students:</p> <p>Adam MacKenzie, President, UPEI Student Union</p> <p>Donald Duru, Bachelor of Science Sustainable Design Engineering, Faculty of Sustainable Design Engineering</p> <p>Devon Lane, PhD Student, Environmental Science, Faculty of Science</p> <p>Jill Anne McDowall, Doctor of Psychology, Faculty of Arts</p> <p>Leena Daboo, Bachelor of Business Administration, Faculty of Business</p> |
| 3:10 pm to 4:10pm | <p>Senate Representatives</p> <p>Dr. Greg Keefe, Interim President and Vice-Chancellor & Chair, UPEI Senate</p> <p>Dr. Cathy Ryan, Professor, Department of Psychology</p> <p>Dr. Andrew Zinck, Associate Professor, Department of Music</p> <p>Dr. Rachelle Gauthier, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Education</p> |

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| 4:10 pm to 5:00 pm | Panel only – Debrief Panel Break |
| 5:00 pm to 5:30 pm | Closing Session Dr. Greg Keefe (optional), Interim President and Vice-Chancellor Dr. Greg Naterer , Vice-President Academic and Research Dr. Katherine Gottschall-Pass , Special Advisor to the President Ms. Charlotte McCardle , Director, Strategic Planning |
| TOTAL TIME over two days | 12.5 hours |