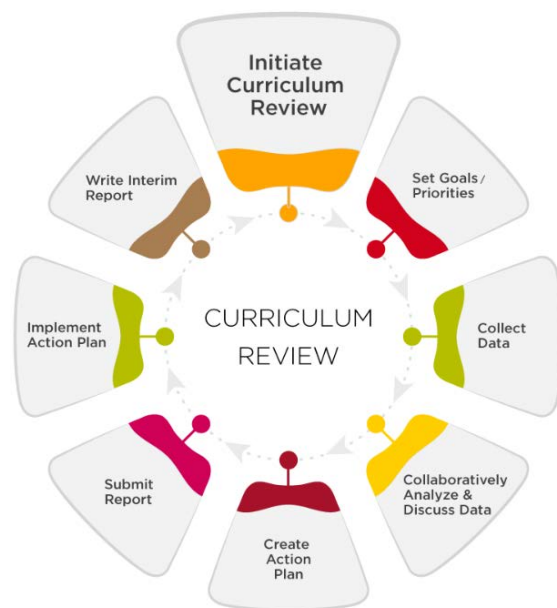


# Curriculum Review: Action plans and reports

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# Action Plan and Final Report

While analyzing your data, you will generate many ideas for improving the program under investigation. Those ideas can form the basis of the action plan which will be included in your final report.

## Action Plan

### What is an action plan?

*A concise summary of how the program will address findings emerging from the Curriculum Review process along with strategies and metrics to monitor and evaluate the impact of these actions on student learning and experience (University of Calgary, 2019, p. 4).*

The Action Plan will be included in the CR report as well as referenced in the interim report and subsequent curriculum review processes

### Context of the Action Plan

- The action plan is a key element in your review.
- It is included in the CR Report.
- It provides the framework for your planning and for your interim report.
- There is a description (p. 12) and an example (p. 13) in the QA Handbook (University of Calgary, 2019).
- The action plan items should include a plan to communicate progress to students, faculty and staff at regular intervals.

### Parts of an Action Plan

The following components can be used to formulate an effective action plan.

- Recommendation: The suggestion to be addressed.
- Action items: Specific details about how the recommendation will be implemented. There can be more than one action item per recommendation.
- Timeline: Length of time needed to implement the action items. One possible way to approach this would be to have short-term (one year or less), medium-term (2-3 years), long-term (4-5 years) and ongoing action items.
- Rationale: Offers a reason for providing the recommendation. The rationale section can also point to the data that support the recommendation.
- Responsibility: Outlines who is responsible for implementing each action item, usually stated by role rather than by name.
- Evaluation: Strategies for evaluating how a recommendation impacts student learning and experiences.

## How the Action Plan will be Used

Some of the uses of the action plan:

- Guide curriculum work for the next few years
- Inform students, staff and faculty of the enhancements taking place
- Outline who will take responsibility for the work
- Demonstrates quality assurance and continuous improvement

## Some Categories for Action Items

Many of your action items will be related to curriculum, at both the course and program level. However, they may not be restricted to curriculum. They may also relate to things such as:

- Administration
- Student advising
- Marketing
- Faculty and staff professional development
- Other categories

## How Many Recommendations and Action Items?

The Quality Assurance Handbook Curriculum Reviews (University of Calgary, 2015) does not specify how many recommendations or action items to include in your report. In general, the larger your recommendations, the fewer you will include in your report. If your curriculum review results in major program changes, you might want to concentrate on just one or two recommendations. For example, if you are adding a new minor to the degree, you are looking at a long timeline and many different action items. In this case, any other recommendations would likely be quick and easy to implement.

Regardless, we suggest including a couple of 'easy wins' in your action plan so that your team can experience some quick success.

Another suggestion is to include at least one action item that is shared between all instructors. This will allow your entire faculty or department to share in the responsibility of implementing the action plan. For example, all instructors could be responsible for the following action items:

- Each term, instructors will review their course outcomes for accuracy, currency and relevancy
- Collect real examples of the high-impact practice 'Collaborative Assignments and Projects' within the discipline to provide strategies and ideas so that instructors can use/ adapt them within their own courses
- Hold a brown bag lunch series highlighting a different pedagogical approach in each session, hosted by different instructors who have used that approach within their course

## Examples of Action Plan Items

### Example 1: Chart Format

Recommendations – Program Level				
Recommendation	Action Item	Timeline for Implementn.	Lead Responsibility	Evaluation
Increase emphasis on Ethics (PLO #7), especially at the Developing and Advanced levels	Incorporate learning on Ethics (PLO #7) into the following required courses at a minimum level of developing: 301, 305, 309	1 year	Program Coordinator, Instructors	Examine course outlines, Student learning
	Determine which 300-level and 400-level courses to include a component of Ethics (PLO #7) at an advanced level	2 years	Undergraduate Curriculum Committee	Examine course outlines, Student learning

Recommendations – Administration				
Recommendation	Action Item	Timeline for Implementn.	Lead Responsibility	Evaluation
Develop a process for ongoing student feedback on the program	Implement an exit survey for graduating students	1 year	Department Head, Evaluation subcommittee	Has it been implemented or not?
	Implement an exit survey for students who leave the program	1 year	Department Head, Evaluation subcommittee	Has it been implemented or not?

1. What do you like about this format? How is it effective?

2. What information is missing?

## Example 2: Rationale Included

<b>Item:</b> Offer 201 as a block week course in both fall and winter in addition to regular term offerings.
<b>Timeline:</b> Short term
<b>Responsibility:</b> Department Head
<b>Rationale:</b> Several students noted in survey responses that they had difficulty registering for 201 because sections fill quickly. OIA data confirmed high enrollment. Instructors added that typically students from various faculties are registered in the course.

<b>Item:</b> Maintain a listing of undergraduate research opportunities on the faculty website.
<b>Timeline:</b> Short term and ongoing
<b>Responsibility:</b> Associate Dean of Teaching and Learning
<b>Rationale:</b> Students stated that they would like more research opportunities for career development and to enhance their skills prior to entering graduate studies. Additionally, undergraduate research is a focus area for the University of Calgary.

1. What do you like about this format? How is it effective?
  
2. What information is missing?

### Example 3: References to Data

1. Create a flyer on program requirements to have available in the department office.

Target Date: August 2019	<b>Data Sources: NSSE results, student survey (Q8)</b>
Responsibility: Communications Team	
Comments: This will provide basic information to students on program structure, required courses, etc.	
Alignment with Strategic Plan: Aligns with the goal of providing better student advising.	

2. Schedule a faculty development series on student assessment.

Target Date: October 2019	<b>Data Sources: NSSE results, student survey (Q10), faculty survey (Q7)</b>
Responsibility: Associate Dean of Teaching and Learning	
Comments: Students are not always sure how they received their grades. NSSE results show that formative feedback is an area for improvement in the faculty. Also, we have several new faculty members who may benefit from presentations and discussions about student assessment.	
Alignment with Strategic Plan: Aligns with the goal of improving assessment practices.	

1. What do you like about this format? How is it effective?
  
2. What information is missing?



# Curriculum Review Report

**Please note:** “Curriculum Review reports and action plans should be discussed and approved at the appropriate Council (Department, Program, Faculty) for the Unit to ensure all academic staff who teach within the program have an opportunity to provide feedback and input on the final report and plan” (University of Calgary, 2019, p. 3).

The Review Coordinator will submit the Curriculum Review Report (Executive Summary and Action Plan without appendices) to

- The Teaching and Learning Committee (TLC) for discussion and feedback; and
- The Curriculum Review Coordinator for posting on the Curriculum Review website.

## Overview of Report Structure

<b>Executive summary</b>	<b>an overview of the report including the focus of the review, data collected, findings, and major recommendations.</b>
<b>Context</b>	a brief description of the program’s history, relation to field of study, particular strengths, accreditation requirements, etc.
<b>Overview</b>	description of both the program and the CR process (including the program-level learning outcomes, program structure, etc.)
<b>Guiding questions</b>	the critical concerns that guided the CR process. At least one guiding question must address a University of Calgary institutional priority related to teaching and learning.
<b>Data collection, analysis and findings</b>	description of both the process and the findings from the data sources used (including OIA data, curriculum mapping, and student feedback)
<b>Consultation and engagement process</b>	description of how academic staff, students and other groups were consulted and engaged throughout the curriculum review process
<b>Action plan</b>	a concise summary of how the program will address findings emerging from the CR process along with strategies and metrics to monitor and evaluate the impact of these actions on student learning and experience.
<b>Communication plan</b>	strategies that will be used to share findings and progress with students, faculty and staff
<b>Appendices (optional)</b>	data collection items, raw data, preliminary analysis, etc.

# Curriculum Review Report Details

Taken from the Quality Assurance Curriculum Review Handbook (2019)

1. **Title page:** Include the faculty logo, title of the document and date. Include an image on the title page if desired.
2. **Table of contents**
3. **CR Report Authors:** Include the names of people who were instrumental in conducting the review and preparing the CR report.
4. **Executive summary:** A high-level overview of the review, including highlights of the process, findings, and action plan. A suggested maximum for the executive summary is 2-3 pages.
  - One paragraph describing the program.
  - Context for the review: How many years since the last one? Coordinated with an accreditation process, unit review, or strategic priorities process? How long did it take and who was involved?
  - A few sentences on the process of the review: When did it start and how long did it take? Did you write your program-level learning outcomes, were they revised from a previous set, or provided from an accrediting body? What data were collected? How were all faculty involved? How were students involved in the process? Include the details that are salient to your review process.
  - Highlight a few of the major findings. Include both positive results and aspects of the curriculum that the group will work on.
  - Highlight approximately three major action plan items that you will work on in the next five years.
  - Take the opportunity to brag about a couple of things. What went particularly well about your review? What would you like to emphasize about your program to readers?
5. **Timeline:** A list of the review steps, when they occurred, and who was involved.
6. **Context:** A one-page summary to set the context in which the program is offered: history, how it is situated in the field of study, particular strengths, accreditation requirements, etc.
  - Can be taken from a Unit Review or other documents – in many cases it is already written and may need minimal or no revisions.
7. **Overview:** Consists of three sections
  - Program-level learning outcomes: What are the overarching areas of knowledge, skills and abilities that a graduate of this program is intended to acquire? List them in the overview. Some programs may also choose to include graduate attributes where relevant.
  - Program structure: Provide information on the program organization. For example, how is the program organized in terms of required and elective courses? Majors, minors, concentrations, embedded Certificates? Horizontal and vertical integration? Course structures (labs, tutorials, projects, etc.)? Experiential learning? Integrating teaching and research? Internationalization? Special features of the learning experience? Links to other programs? In what ways do courses service other academic programs?

- Highlight points of alignment with priorities of the University of Calgary’s Academic Plan
8. **Guiding questions:** The critical questions or inquiry that guided the curriculum review
    - List them in this section.
    - At least one guiding question must address a University of Calgary institutional priority related to teaching and learning.
  9. **Curriculum mapping:** The data from the CM process
    - Recommendation: Include aggregate data in the body of the report. If the group would like to include course maps, they can go in an appendix.
    - The group may also want to include a description of the methods used to collect the data for reference, as well as suggestions to conduct the mapping process next time
  10. **Analysis of the curriculum mapping data:** You may want to address the following questions when analyzing curriculum mapping data:
    - What are your general observations? What are the trends and patterns? What are the strengths that have emerged? Which learning outcomes are emphasized, and which are emphasized less? Where are the gaps and redundancies?
    - What do the trends and patterns mean within the context of the program? Is there evidence of alignment across learning outcomes, teaching and learning activities, and assessment methods?
    - How do the data inform your action plan? What strengths do you want to maintain or leverage? What gaps and redundancies do you want to address?
  11. **Student-provided data:** Results from student surveys, interviews or focus groups. Include a summary of the trends that emerged.
  12. **Integration of evidence from other sources:** The Office of Institutional Analysis (OIA) will create a standard report for Curriculum Reviews. The standard report will include information relevant to curriculum reviews such as enrolment numbers, attrition, retention, DFW statistics, completion rates and times, and relevant survey results. NSSE results will be included if available (note that the NSSE is an undergraduate survey instrument only). Programs are encouraged to incorporate current research on teaching, learning and curriculum to inform the CR process.
 

Programs may choose to collect information from other sources

    - List your data sources and give a brief analysis of the data from each
  13. **Findings:** The Review Team will identify findings based on an analysis of data from the curriculum mapping process and other sources. The findings will form the basis of an action plan.
    - Use your guiding questions to structure this section of the report
    - Use different data sources as appropriate as you address each one
    - Include recommendations for your action plan
  14. **Consultation and engagement process:** A description of how academic staff, students and other groups were consulted and engaged throughout the curriculum review process

15. **Action Plan:** A concise summary of how, over the period between curriculum reviews, the faculty in a program will address findings emerging from the Curriculum Review process. The Action Plan will be referenced in the Interim Report and subsequent curriculum review processes.

- The action plan items can include the following:
  - Recommendation: The suggestion to be addressed
  - Action items: Specific details about how the recommendation will be implemented. There can be more than one action item per recommendation.
  - Timeline: Length of time needed for implementation
  - Rationale: Offers a reason for providing the recommendation. The rationale section can also point to the data that support the recommendation.
  - Responsibility: Outlines who is responsible for implementing each action item, usually stated by role rather than by name.
  - Evaluation: Strategies for evaluating how a recommendation impacts student learning and experience.
- Action plan items can refer to curriculum at the program and course level, administration, student advising, marketing, faculty development, developing evaluation metrics and other areas that impact student learning in the program

See Appendix V for an example of an Action Plan item.

16. **Communication Plan:** Identification of the strategies that will be used to convey to students, faculty and staff the findings of the review and progress made at regular intervals.

17. **Optional – Appendices:** Appendices can include any reference material or sections that are not included in the body of the report. While some groups want to include all data (aggregate or not) in the appendices, others opt for a more streamlined report. Possibilities include:

- Survey questions (student, alumni, and/or other groups)
- Interview and/or focus group questions
- Curriculum mapping templates or survey questions
- Aggregate survey, interview, and focus group data
- Aggregate curriculum mapping data, and data for individual courses if required for accreditation purposes
- Selected NSSE data from faculty/ department reports
- Agendas from meetings and/or curriculum retreats
- List of course outcomes for all courses
- Highlights from a literature review on a relevant teaching and learning topic

# Approval and Reporting Process

\*The standard recommended process is outlined below. Your faculty might have a slightly different process. For example, if you are required to submit proposed changes to the Curriculum and Academic Review Committee (CARC), you may need to add steps to the process. Check with your Associate Dean of Teaching and Learning for guidance.

## **Prior to submission**

The CR Report will be reviewed for approval by the following

- Department Head or Program Director/Dean or Designate/equivalent academic administrator
- Department Council (or equivalent)
- Review Team (see definition on page 10)
- For course-based Master's programs, Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies

The signed approval form will be submitted to the Provost's Office along with the Report.

## **Submission process**

Once approved, the Curriculum Review Report will be submitted through the Review Coordinator who will maintain a permanent record of all Curriculum Review Reports submitted.

## **After submission**

The Review Coordinator will arrange a meeting with the VPTL and Review Lead to discuss the Curriculum Review process and the program's action plan.

## **Further dissemination of the Curriculum Review Results**

The Review Coordinator will submit the Curriculum Review Report (without appendices) to

- The Teaching and Learning Committee (TLC) for discussion and feedback; and
- The Curriculum Review Coordinator for posting on the Curriculum Review website (Executive Summary and Action Plan).

# Interim Reports

Interim reports are completed half way through the cycle. Most groups are on a 5-year cycle, which means they will complete their report two and a half years after submitting their final report.

The interim report serves a variety of purposes, including the following:

- The curriculum review team evaluates the extent to which they are on track to meeting their goals, and what steps to take to ensure they are met.
- The curriculum review team decides which action items need to be revised or deleted as circumstances have changed regarding the program.
- The curriculum review team has the option of adding new action items if their action plan has been completed or is nearly complete.
- The curriculum review team conveys progress made to date to the Provost's Office.

Action plan items from the Curriculum Review Report must be referenced in the Interim Report as well as in subsequent reviews undertaken by the program. Results and ongoing progress of the action plan will be communicated to students and other stakeholders as per the Communication Plan outlined in the CR report.

## Report structure

The interim report will be a 1-2 document describing progress made on the action plan, briefly discuss any challenges in fulfilling specific action plan items and strategies for monitoring and evaluating the impact on student learning and experiences.

The following questions can guide the structure of the report:

1. What has gone particularly well in implementing the action plan?
2. Which action plan items need to be modified?
3. What strategies are being used to evaluate the impact on student learning and experience?
4. What are your next steps in implementing the action plan?

This report is submitted through the Review Coordinator to the VPTL and will be discussed at the Teaching and Learning Committee (TLC) of the General Faculties Council, chaired by the VPTL. (University of Calgary, 2019, p. 9)

## References

University of Calgary. (2019). *Quality assurance curriculum review handbook*. Retrieved from <https://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/sites/default/files/teams/1/Curriculum%20Review%20Handbook%20Final%20-%20GFC%20Approved%20Jan%202019.pdf>