
SUMMARY OF QUALITY ASSESSMENT STANDARDS

Academic Program Review utilizes the following six quality assessment standards as guidance for the review. The criteria are derived from the detailed degree level standards for undergraduate and graduate programs, articulated by the **Council of Ministers of Education, Canada**.

1 Program Administration

A quality program incorporates effective systems and procedures in the areas of recruitment and admissions, program management, and in the allocation of awards and scholarships to students.

Program leadership anticipates the ongoing evolution of their discipline, which is reflected in evolving program delivery and program planning activities. There is an anticipation and analysis of how future trends may impact the recruitment and selection of students, the content and quality of program delivery, the understanding of how students learn in the discipline and the student experience. Administrative structures (committees, etc.) facilitate ongoing quality enhancement of teaching and learning and frequent review of program and course learning outcomes.

The strategic vision of the program is aligned with the broader integrated planning environment at the university.

2 Program Structure

A quality program has clearly stated program and course learning outcomes that are appropriate to the level of degree offered, the academic context of the discipline, and/or the expectations of the profession. Program and course learning outcomes, and their connection to the USask Learning Charter¹ and College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies policies², should be clearly articulated. Course learning outcomes should also be clearly articulated and connected to program learning outcomes. The sequence and timing of courses and their respective course learning outcomes should provide repeated opportunity for students to build capacity in achieving program learning outcomes.

The program curriculum achieves course and program learning outcomes at the level of degree offered. It is current, and addresses all aspects of the discipline including opportunities for specialization to cultivate further conceptual depth or breadth. Student learning success is assessed through written, oral, and observational evidence of knowledge and skills in all aspects of the discipline. Students have access to relevant experiential learning opportunities, which may include research, field-based instruction, community-engaged learning, study abroad, clinical placement, practicum, internship and coop placement. Indigenous knowledges and experiences, grounded in Indigenous worldviews,

¹ University of Saskatchewan Learning Charter <http://teaching.usask.ca/about/policies/learning-charter.php#OurLearningVision>

² CGPS Degree-Level Learning Outcomes <https://cgps.usask.ca/policy-and-procedure/governance-membership/degree-level-learning-outcomes.php>

are incorporated into the program³. Interdisciplinary collaborations provide opportunities for the acquisition, synthesis, application and integration of knowledge, cultivating the intellectual development of students. Efforts to internationalize programming through teaching tools (such as diverse student demographics) or research can also be very beneficial.

Quality assessment practices, both formative and summative, utilized during course learning experiences have been shown to improve student learning success. Course-based assessments support both teaching and learning and are used in determining the success of students in achieving course and program learning outcomes.

Quality assessment practices include:

- explicit connections to course and/or program learning outcomes
- clearly communicated criteria
- authentic assessments from/of a variety of student learning experiences and contexts
- the inclusion of written, oral and observational assessments
- the utilization of a diversity of assessors (self, peer, instructor, and others)
- regular reporting of individual and aggregate achievement of program learning outcomes to students and to other critical stakeholders

3 Program Enrolment and Student Funding

A quality program has the profile and reputation to attract and retain a viable number of high caliber students, who will have local, national and/or international backgrounds. The students entering the program have the capacity and preparation necessary to meet the challenges of the program and to successfully complete their degree. Students are supported in applying for scholarships, awards and research grants.

4 Learning Environment

Students have access to appropriate learning and information resources (such as library, databases, computers, classroom equipment, and laboratory facilities) and to an appropriate range of support services. Course instruction uses state of the art modalities and processes that enhance the student learning experience. The learning environment supports the program's stated learning outcomes.

A quality student experience at the graduate level is built on strong interactions with faculty. Students are regularly advised, informed and guided by meetings with their graduate supervisor. The learning environment provides a range of opportunities for students to participate in intellectually and professionally challenging activities.

³ Indigenization within the Curriculum <https://teaching.usask.ca/curriculum/indigenization.php#EldersMessage>

5 Faculty Profile

A quality program has a distinguished faculty with a national and international reputation for scholarly work. Faculty members are credited with a suitable number and quality of discipline-specific publications, awards, research grants and conference invitations, all indicative of the breadth and level of their engagement in scholarly work. Faculty members have the knowledge and skills required to teach in their discipline. All instructors exemplify learning, teach effectively, assess fairly, and solicit feedback.

Professional programs have appropriately qualified faculty involved heavily in teaching and learning activities. Graduate programs are supported by highly engaged faculty with a commitment to supervision and mentorship.

6 Student Progression and Success

Undergraduate students acquire a basic knowledge and critical understanding of the range of fields within a discipline. They demonstrate the ability to gather, review, evaluate, interpret and critically analyze information relevant to the discipline and to compare the merits of alternative hypotheses. Undergraduate students have the capacity to engage in independent or supervised research, and are able to apply learning from one or more areas outside the discipline.

Graduate students acquire a systematic knowledge of the discipline and are being suitably prepared for professional practice and for research and inquiry. Masters students engage in independent research or practice in a supervised context and demonstrate critical thinking and analytical skills. Doctoral students show a high degree of intellectual autonomy, an ability to conceptualize, design and complete projects, and generate knowledge through original research or creative activity. Graduate students participate in seminars and conferences; they present their research findings through posters and published papers; and have opportunities to develop professional skills through experiences as teaching assistants and research assistants. Graduate students are credited with a suitable number and quality of achievement awards and conference invitations.

A quality program demonstrates that its students, at each phase of the program, are progressing towards achieving program and course learning outcomes. Graduates successfully achieve the defined program learning outcomes, complete their degree requirements in a timely manner, and can access a variety of career paths post-graduation. Students perceive their program to be supporting their learning and achievement of program learning outcomes.