2019/20 QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS AUDIT
KWANTLEN POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY

The Summary was prepared by the Degree Quality Assessment Board Secretariat using the Institutional Report, the Expert Panel Report, and the Response to the Expert Panel Report. Kwantlen Polytechnic University was one of four public post-secondary institutions to undertake the Quality Assurance Process Audit in 2019/20.

Introduction

The Terms of Reference for the Degree Quality Assessment Board establish that audits will be based on information provided by public post-secondary institutions to ensure that rigorous, ongoing program and institutional quality assessment processes have been implemented.
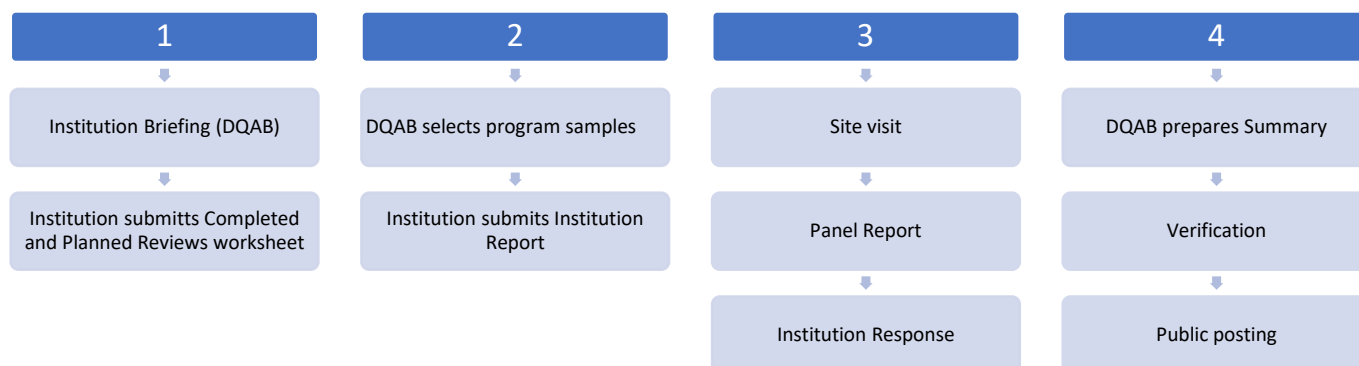
The main objectives of the quality assurance process audit (QAPA) are to ascertain that the institution:
   a) Continues to meet the program review policy requirements outlined in the DQAB's *Exempt Status Criteria and Guidelines* and the *Degree Program Review Criteria and Guidelines,* as applicable to the institution;
   b) Has and continues to meet appropriate program review processes and policies for all credential programs; and
   c) Applies its quality assurance process in relation to those requirements and responds to review findings appropriately.

The QAPA assessment is focused on answering questions in two categories:
   1. Overall process
      a. Does the process reflect the institution's mandate, mission, and values?
      b. Is the scope of the process appropriate?
      c. Are the guidelines differentiated and adaptable to respond to the needs and contexts of different units, e.g. faculties or departments or credential level?
      d. Does the process promote quality improvement?
   2. Review findings
      a. Were the responses to the sample program review findings adequate?
      b. Does the process inform future decision making?
      c. Are the review findings appropriately disseminated?

Figure 1: QAPA Process

1	2	3	4
Institution Briefing (DQAB)	DQAB selects program samples	Site visit	DQAB prepares Summary
Institution submitts Completed and Planned Reviews worksheet	Institution submits Institution Report	Panel Report	Verification
		Institution Response	Public posting

Kwantlen Polytechnic University – Institutional Context

Kwantlen Polytechnic University (KPU), Canada's only polytechnic university, serves a large and densely populated region in the Metro Vancouver region of British Columbia south of the Fraser River, with five campuses in Surrey, Cloverdale, Langley and Richmond.

KPU is guided by its VISION 2023 plan and its Academic Plan 2023. VISION 2023 is focused on people who learn and work at KPU. The vision for KPU is that by 2023, KPU is a learning ecosystem rooted in a culture of sustainability, creativity and quality that inspires its people and communities. The Academic Plan 2023 aligns closely with VISION 2023. The overarching goal of the Academic Plan 2023 is student success. It focuses on initiatives that eliminate barriers to success, on actions that support students during their academic and personal development journey, on activities that build confidence and important friendship and future career networks, and on ensuring the mental well-being of all its learners and KPU community members. Faculty continue to explore new ways to support student academic and vocational achievement through the development of teaching methodologies, teaching technologies, and making direct connections with the external environment of industry, NGOs, and community organizations.

Table 1: Student enrollment (2018-2019)

Academic Level	FTE	Credential Type	FTE
Undergraduate & Pathway[1]	11,909.8	Enrolled in degree programs	3,221.5
Graduate	18.5	Enrolled in undeclared programs[2]	7,332.2
Other[3]	1,897.9	Enrolled in non-degree programs	3,272.5

KPU offers 140 diverse programs, from graduate and post-baccalaureate diplomas, bachelor's degrees, associate degrees, diplomas, certificates, and citations, as well as trades and horticultural apprenticeship training.

As a polytechnic university, KPU strives to provide an innovative curriculum attuned to the rapid changes in industry, government, and the external environment.

Table 2: Program offerings

Credential Type	# of Programs
Apprenticeship	16
Associate Degree	21
Baccalaureate Degree	37
Certificate	24

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[1] The KPU Pathway to Undergraduate Studies gives students access to a limited number of undergraduate courses while they do the upgrading necessary to meet KPU's English proficiency requirement for undergraduate studies.

[2] Includes students in undeclared programs and Pathway to Undergraduate Studies in Faculty of Arts, School of Business, and School of Science and Horticulture.

[3] Includes students in vocational, developmental, and Continuing and Professional Studies programs.

Citation	9
Developmental	5
Diploma	21
Graduate Diploma	2
Post-degree Diploma	5

Institution Self-Study

The KPU QAPA review was initiated with an Institution Briefing on May 9, 2019 at the Surrey campus. The Institution Briefing provides an overview of the QAPA process and the documentation institutions are requested to submit.

At its meeting on July 31, 2019, the Quality Assurance Audit Committee reviewed the Completed and Planned Review worksheet submitted by KPU and selected three program reviews for sampling. The program reviews selected were: Computer Aided Design & Drafting: Certificate, Diploma; Environmental Protection Technology (EPT): Diploma; and Journalism: Bachelor (Major, Minor, Honors).

Self-Evaluation Approach
A QAPA Steering Committee was created to govern the QAPA planning process at KPU. Members included:

- President
- Provost and Vice-President, Academic
- Vice-Chair, Senate
- Associate Vice President, Planning & Accountability
- Manager, Quality Assurance
- University Secretary and Confidential Assistant to the President

The process was managed by the Associate Vice President, Planning & Accountability, who, together with the President and Provost, determined membership in the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee identified the participants for the site visit, and the agenda, based on the QAPA specification. Logistics for the site visit were handled by the Office of Planning & Accountability, led by the Manager, Quality Assurance and the Office of the President, led by the University Secretary.

The development of the institution report was led by the Manager, Quality Assurance. The QAPA Steering Committee also provided input into the report.

Quality Assurance Policy and Practices

Board Governors policies, and Senate approval processes guide program review, new program approval, and curriculum change. KPU has several quality assurance mechanisms in place, including regular reviews of programs, performance evaluations of faculty, student feedback on each course, as well as various feedback surveys used for service improvement, accreditation and other quality assurance functions. The Office of Planning & Accountability

(OPA) is responsible for providing information to support continuous improvement, as well to guide institutional planning.

Through the program review process, KPU ensures that established policies and procedures are applied consistently across all programs and that recommendations arising from program reviews are addressed following the review to ensure program improvements are made. Through its program development process, KPU ensures that new programs fit within the mandate of KPU and support KPU's strategic and academic plans, and meet labour market needs.

The following initiatives also support quality assurance and practice:
- faculty scholarship and development;
- learning outcomes and student progress; and
- advisory committees.

Program Development

KPU's Policy AC10, *Establishment, Revision, Suspension and/or Discontinuance of Programs Policy* outlines its program development and approval process. New programs, and those that undergo substantial change, are required to have a feasibility assessment completed early in the program development process. Program development undergoes a similar process for each level of credential developed at KPU, but the complexity varies depending on credential types. Programs cannot be canceled, changed or added without going through the appropriate planning and governance processes, that includes consultation, and the use of relevant information to inform these decisions.

KPU's *Guide for Program Development and Program Change* outlines the steps and procedures for the development and approval of new and revised degree and non-degree credit programs. The guide provides template forms, information on which governance committees are involved in the review and approval process, and timelines for all developmental and approval processes.

The program development process involves consultation with a range of stakeholders, including faculty members, program advisory committees and experts in the field, deans, faculty councils, Provost and VP Academic, and various departments across the university, including Finance, Office of Planning & Accountability, the library and the Office of the Registrar. The approval process includes the Polytechnic University Executive (PUE), Senate Standing Committee on Academic Planning & Priorities (SSCAPP), Senate Standing Committee on University Budget (SSCUB), Senate Standing Committee on Curriculum (SSCC), Senate, Board Governance Committee, and the Board of Governors.

The development process for new degree/non-degree programs consists of four stages:

Stage 1: Concept and Approval to Develop
The first stage begins with proponent(s) consulting informally with relevant members of the University community to test their assumptions and validate the idea for a new program, including alignment with KPU's polytechnic mandate, VISION, and academic plan. After the initial consultation stage, the Dean seeks the Provost's approval to proceed with a feasibility assessment of the program. The feasibility assessment, which is conducted by the Office of

Planning & Accountability, includes assessing the labour market demand for the proposed program, the degree of similarity with existing programs in BC, and anticipated student demand. Following the completion of the feasibility assessment, the proponent(s) draft a concept paper through internal and external consultations and seek internal governance approval, which includes approval by the Polytechnic University Executive (PUE) and the Senate. Once the concept paper has been approved by the Board, it is submitted to the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training for approval.

Stage 2: Full Program Proposal (FPP) Development
The second stage involves widespread internal (all relevant KPU departments and educational support units to refine the curricular requirements) and external (including industry representatives, program advisory committees, and academic experts from peer institutions) - consultations to develop the FPP. Each course goes through a rigorous review by the SSCC, both when initially developed, and whenever faculty wish to make changes to the course, which often occurs in response to program review findings. The full program proposal must also be approved by PUE, the Senate and the Board.

Stage 3: Ministerial Approval of FPP
Once the FPP is approved by the Board, it is submitted to PSIPS for peer review. As KPU has exempt status at the Baccalaureate level, FPPs for degrees will be submitted directly to the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Training for approval following the peer review period.

Stage 4: Implementation
If the Minister grants consent of the degree FPP, the Provost, in consultation with the Dean and University Registrar, determine the implementation date of the new degree.

Program Review

Program review at KPU is a faculty-led, collaborative, systematic and evidence-based examination of a program's quality. Program review allows for a detailed analysis of a program's strengths and areas for improvement that result in enhancements to the program. Students, faculty and alumni are all given an opportunity to provide their perspectives during the review. KPU's Senate Standing Committee on Program Review (SSCPR), which includes faculty, dean, staff and student representation, oversees the program review process.

KPU's *Program Review Policy* was revised in 2019 to clarify the policy language, and reflect the improvements made to the procedures. The most significant change was to strengthen the follow-up process through the submission of annual reports to ensure there is an effective process for monitoring implementation of the Quality Assurance plan that ensures program improvement. The previous policy had been in effect since 2009.

According to the policy, degree programs are reviewed at least once every five years and nondegree programs are reviewed at least once every seven years. New programs do not undergo a review until they have had students for at least a few years, and usually not until the program has some graduates. This is to ensure there are students and graduates who can provide feedback on the program. Thirty-four programs are scheduled for review between 2018/19 and 2025/26 Academic Years. Related programs are reviewed together, which means when there are both degree and non-degree programs for the same discipline, they are

reviewed together every five years. The schedule for program reviews is updated on a yearly basis to ensure reviews are conducted according to the timelines in the policy.

While program faculty lead the review, other KPU members have a role. These include OPA, the Dean, Provost and the Senate Standing Committee on Program Review (SSCPR).

OPA's Quality Assurance team, led by the Manager, Quality Assurance, provides support to programs throughout the review process. This includes providing an orientation session about the steps, describing the roles of faculty, the Dean and the Provost, and the support that the Quality Assurance teams provides. In consultation with faculty, a work plan and timeline is developed. The Quality Assurance team provides the data needed for the review, including administrative data such as enrolments, grades, and graduations, and outcomes data collected by BC Stats. The Quality Assurance team also designs and administers surveys for each program review, surveying students, graduates, faculty, and where possible, members of the discipline/sector outside of KPU.

Although there is no formal service review process at KPU, OPA collects feedback from students and employees to identify how well various services and supports are meeting their needs, and understand where improvements are required. Through various surveys to students, KPU collects feedback on the library, learning centres, admissions, course registration, their experience in the classroom, physical space, and other aspects of their experience at KPU.

KPU also collects feedback from faculty to understand the needs they have related to teaching and learning, as well as research, and assess how well current supports meet their needs. In addition, there are surveys to address other issues, such as identifying the technology needs of faculty, students and employees, and understanding their health and well-being needs. The feedback collected through these surveys are used by the appropriate units to improve and expand their services as part of KPU's continuous improvement processes.

The phases of KPU's program review are:

Phase 1: Self-Study
The Self-Study phase requires an analysis of the program's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges. The Self-Study defines the scope of the review, and determines the focus for the external review and subsequent strategic planning. The Self-Study report must address a set of standards that have been established by the SSCPR and must be approved by the SSCPR before the review proceeds to the next phase. A program review guide provides information on the standards and the types of information, and their sources, for addressing each standard. These guidelines are reviewed by OPA, in consultation with the Provost and members of the SSCPR, every few years and updated as required to ensure the standards are in line with institutional priorities. Program review guidelines are approved by the SSCPR. A report template was recently created for the Self-Study to standardize all reporting, ensuring all standards are clearly addressed.

An integral part of the Self-Study Report is an assessment of the quality of the program's curricular design. An in-depth curriculum review provides the program review team with opportunities to link their curriculum to the realities of the world beyond the program and produce graduates who are equipped to thrive in a competitive employment market. The

curriculum review requires the program review teams to develop generic (essential skills) and program-specific competency statements, measurable learning outcomes, and credential-level specifications, and a career pathways map as part of the self-study process.

Phase 2: External Review
During this stage, the self-study will be reviewed by an external review team, composed of two discipline/sector representatives (at least one of whom is an educator from a similar academic program at a different institution) and a KPU faculty member from a different program. The External Review Committee provides an objective view on the quality of the program, the program's self-study report, and validity of the self-study document following a day-long site visit with the program's faculty, administrators, alumni and students. The External Review Team reviews, analyzes, and writes recommendations based on the program's self-study report and their site visit. The External Review team are provided with guidelines about the external review, as well as the Self-Study report. More recently, a report template is provided to simplify the reporting process and make sure the external review fully addresses all program review standards.

Phase 3: Quality Assurance Plan
The Quality Assurance Plan is a five-year strategy for how the program will ensure continued program improvement with a plan for how it will address the recommendations from the Self-Study and External Reviewers' Reports. It is written by the program review team and includes a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the program, the program's planned quality assurance goals, and the strategies and steps for addressing those goals over the next five years.

Programs are strongly encouraged to consult their Deans and/or Associate Deans very early in the process to establish consensus on program direction and available resources. The Quality Assurance Plan must be endorsed by the Dean and Provost before being submitted to the SSCPR for their review and approval. The chair of our curriculum committee (who is also the vice-chair of the Senate) is present at all SSCPR committee meetings so that action on the Quality Assurance Plan can begin immediately.

The Quality Assurance Plan was introduced in the Fall of 2017, replacing the Action Plan, and the Institutional Response. The former Action Plan was written by faculty, describing how they planned to address the recommendations. The Institutional Response was written by the Dean, with input from the Provost, on how the institution would support the Action Plan. The Quality Assurance Plan combined these separate steps into one, to ensure there was collaboration among faculty members, the Dean and the Provost in developing the plan on how recommendations from the program review process would be addressed. The process of developing the plan ensures there is institutional support for the plan. A guide and report template was created for the Quality Assurance Plan to standardize all reporting.

Phase 4: The Annual Follow-Up
The program review cycle is completed once the SSCPR has approved the Quality Assurance Plan. The next review will start 5 or 7 years later, for degree and non-degree program, respectively. In the interim, the program works on implementing the Quality Assurance Plan, making annual follow-up reports to the SSCPR.

Follow-up reporting is based on the Quality Assurance Plan approved by the SSCPR. It provides programs a framework for reporting the implementation and progress to date on the Goals, Strategies and Steps listed in the Quality Assurance Plan. Prior to September 2019, programs were required to provide one follow-up, a year after the approval of the Quality Assurance Plan by the SSCPR. Starting September 2019, programs are required to provide annual follow-up reports on their progress until the program can demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the SSCPR, substantial completion of the Quality Assurance Plan.

QAPA Review

The QAPA panel conducting the assessment were Dr. Richard McCutcheon, panel chair, and panel members Dr. Eric Davis and Dr. Laurie Rancourt. The site visit occurred on December 18-19, 2019. A member of the DQAB Secretariat, Ms. Dao Luu, also attended the site visit. The QAPA panel submitted its report on January 10, 2020. KPU provided a response on March 18, 2020.

The panel noted "the thoroughness of KPU's QAPA submission is impressive and highly commendable" and that "the Office of Planning & Accountability (OPA) has done a commendable job in developing a clear process for departments and programs to follow. Templates that have been developed, or are currently in a stage of development, address appropriate areas of study; and the new action plan templates are potentially, if used consistently, helpful to keep improvements on track." The panel report provided commendations, affirmations and recommendations.

Commendations are areas where the institution has shown exemplary practice. Areas of exemplary practice:
- The thoroughness of KPU's QAPA submission is impressive and highly commendable. Each of the three programs was clearly engaged by the process and produced voluminous material to support their action plans.
- The panel is equally impressed by the degree to which the governance process – specifically the Senate and its Standing Committees – are working to support the development and implementation of Quality Assurance (QA) processes as well as the development of a self governing culture at KPU. Evidence of regular meetings between the Senate Standing Committee on Academic Planning and Priorities (SSCAPP) and the Senate Standing Committee on University Budget (SSCUB) suggests that SSCAPP is involved at all levels. In addition to this, KPU cites the importance of quality assurance in their program reviews and other documentation. Program reviews are also cited in difficult conversations and senators regularly ask (regarding proposals) "what part of your Program Review told you this was important?" The panel applauds KPU for its work and its focus on the development of a culture of Quality Assurance.
- Also to be commended is KPU's focus on the student experience as a measure of academic quality. During the initiation of the site visit, Dr. Alan Davis defined educational quality as student success and the act of "…meeting students' needs, regardless of what type they are."
- There are several areas and activities worth highlighting. Based on evidence provided, it is to be recognized and applauded that the recent modifications to the QA process have resulted in a more collaborative process for joint development of recommendations which

includes participation of the Dean, the Provost, and educational units jointly in the process. This further streamlines the QA process by eliminating the need for an institutional response to program plans. In addition, there are now annual follow-ups which allow for better tracking. We also compliment KPU on their recent improvements to their QA processes as well as the templates that have been developed, or are in a development stage, to address appropriate areas of study. The new action plan templates are potentially, if used consistently, helpful to keep improvements on track.

- KPU must also be saluted for their culture of continuous improvement as evidenced in the self-study as well as the responses from interview participants during the site visit. It is important to note that all participants in the interview process were passionate about their QA work and the self-study submissions also demonstrated a cross institutional commitment to that process.

- Lastly, we wish to recognize the OPA and faculty review teams' success in meeting the needs of a good QA process as well as ensuring an effective review process, well-illustrated by the EPT program review. Direct evidence was provided demonstrating OPA working with their faculty team to blend the institutional level program review process with that which is required by their external accreditation body. The goal was to ensure that both processes were met while, at the same time, recognizing any overlap and eliminating any duplication of effort. During the site interviews, representatives of both the OPA and the faculty review team confirmed their endeavors had been successful.

Affirmations are areas where the institution has identified weaknesses and intends to correct it. The panel noted KPU has identified some opportunities for improvement and has articulated how they intend to achieve them. However, the panel further noted that there are also areas for improvement identified by KPU for which they have yet to clearly state how they plan to achieve their intended goal(s). Areas the institution identified for improvement:

- The University recognizes that it lacks leadership on the Indigenization file. It is [the panel's] understanding that the University intends to hire an Indigenous individual to be the institutional lead for the Indigenization process. We think this will greatly assist KPU in aligning the Indigenization goals of *Vision 2023* with the Quality Assurance processes. We also applaud their re-establishment of an Indigenous Advisory Committee and their goal of developing an action plan on Indigenization.

- Another area that KPU must consider revolves around PD fund spending. As it currently stands, there is no requirement for faculty to report on their spending of PD funds. We recognize that this can likely only be addressed in bargaining. We would like to bring to KPU's attention that faculty can be seconded for PD opportunities through the Teaching and Learning Centre and that there is an annual fall symposium for sharing best practices put on by the British Columbia Teaching and Learning Council.

- KPU plans to create a Program Development Office. This will enable them to make the process for developing programs more public and transparent; it will also increase efficiency because faculty will be able to see what programs are in development and receive support for program development they are undertaking.

- KPU has noted inconsistencies in the continuous improvement approach that was implemented in the development of the program action plan as well as in the frequency and method of follow-up on the progress of their action plans; as such, KPU has implemented recent changes to the QA and program review processes to address these issues. We have noted the updated program review policies and templates which are dated 2019 in the KPU self-study documents.

- The revision of the self-study requirements is another area of improvement that KPU has identified. It is KPU's position that admission requirements for the limited-intake programs be included in the self-study requirements. Additionally, the identification of any potential student barriers has also been noted by KPU as a potential enhancement to the program review process.

Recommendations are areas needing improvement. Areas for the panel identified for improvement:
- It is the panel's recommendation that KPU implement a standardized program mapping process and template in order to clearly demonstrate the link between program outcomes/goals and course learning outcomes. Once implemented, this standardized program mapping tool should be reviewed and updated as required during the program review process and any other time changes are made at the course or course learning outcome level. KPU may also consider including the program map as a standard appendix in the program self-study document.
- The panel further suggests that KPU develop Career Pathways Maps that are *truly* maps: explicit, visual images of how the learning outcomes of specific courses and programs lead to a multiplicity of careers. Creating a template that requires programs to make these links might be a useful way of proceeding. We agree with the institution's belief that an automated system would be extremely helpful here; currently they do the program mapping manually wherever it is done.
- We were particularly aware of inconsistencies in the use of tools like templates for assessing progress. There is significant evidence that follow-through with excellent recommendations is occurring within faculty teams, but also evidence that those activities are not being consistently or sufficiently tracked. We suggest that having timeline goal are helpful reminders of expectations to move recommendations forward with alacrity.
- The panel recognizes that KPU has made recent improvements to its QA processes and templates in order to address the issues raised. We are of the opinion that having firm deliverables and timelines would be helpful reminders of expectations in order to move recommendations forward. We also note that in many jurisdictions it is not unusual after a site visit to have a follow-up report on progress. In this case, the panel highly encourages the institution prepare an interim report to DQAB in two years' time in order to demonstrate that the new tools and approaches recently developed or under development have been used consistently and that the expected results have been achieved.
- Further to this, we ask that two specific pieces of information be provided in the recommended two-year progress report:
    - First, we request there be an update on the progress made by the Environmental Protection Technology program (EPT) and CADD programs on their respective Quality Assurance Plans.
    - Second, two additional program self-studies for programs that have undergone the new processes from start to finish and demonstrate consistency and address follow-up issues.
- Regarding future program reviews, the panel stresses the importance of ensuring that the following three elements are consistently addressed as part of *every* KPU program review going forward:
    - A standardized program mapping process and template, demonstrating the link between program outcomes/goals and course learning outcomes.

- o Program Advisory Committee (PAC) effectiveness including membership, support provided to the PAC (i.e., education), and compilation and follow-up on PAC recommendations and input that was provided between reviews.
- While the panel was impressed with the inclusion of thorough student satisfaction survey results, it is our position that a more significant student voice could be achieved by each program review team ensuring that the student voice is identified and explicitly acknowledged where it has impacted on the results of the review. It would be particularly helpful to external parties if the institutional QA documents were more explicit about student involvement in the QA processes. We also feel that it would be a good idea to involve students in designing the best way to address this issue.
- The University has identified as challenges that PAC meetings are not linked to the Program Review cycle and that there is no handbook for PAC members. We also note in this regard that KPU has not looked at PAC effectiveness as fully as it might. To our knowledge, there is currently no action plan for addressing these issues. Hence, it is the recommendation of this panel that KPU:
  - o Incorporate PAC meetings into all future program reviews ensuring the PAC has a voice with regard to QA processes.
  - o Devise a handbook for PAC members in order to provide clarity and consistency with regard to their role in the QA process in future program reviews.
  - o Create a systematic framework to evaluate the PACs in terms of their role and overall effectiveness in the QA program review processes.
- On a program specific note, the CADD Program has decided which Program Review recommendations they can handle on their own. This should be codified so it is visible to others. A timeline would be helpful, for both the program and for external eyes.

KPU acknowledged the recommendations in its response to the panel's report and addressed each of the recommendations.