A GUIDE FOR

TEAMS CONDUCTING

EVALUATIONS OF PROPOSED UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Campus Alberta Quality Council (CAQC) is responsible for assessing all degree program applications from all post-secondary institutions wishing to offer degree programs in Alberta and making recommendations to the Minister of Innovation and Advanced Education with respect to program approval. It also is responsible for monitoring approved degree programs to ensure they continue to meet Council's conditions and standards of institutional and program quality.

All applications for new degree programs to be offered in Alberta are to the Minister of Innovation and Advanced Education. The two stage approval process is outlined in Appendix A of this Guide.

> *System Coordination Review* – The first stage of the program approval process is a system coordination review by the Ministry to determine the need and impact of such a program on the post-secondary system in Alberta. Once that review is completed and a recommendation made to the Minister, the Minister may then refer the proposal to CAQC.

> *CAQC Review* – CAQC's full review includes two phases, an *organizational evaluation* to determine the institution's readiness to implement and sustain the degree program and a *program evaluation* to look at the quality of the proposed program. Any institution proposing to offer a precedent-setting degree program, or one at a level that is new to it (e.g., first graduate program) will normally go through both stages of review. Not all applications are subjected to a full review. In certain cases, the institution may apply for a partially expedited review and move directly to the program evaluation stage. Council's review process culminates in a recommendation to the Minister.

Peer evaluation is an essential component of Council's evaluation. The principal elements of the academic program review process are common to most quality assurance agencies throughout the world. Council acknowledges the need for flexibility in order to encourage innovation and to accommodate different types of baccalaureate degrees that will relate to 21st century learning needs. It also recognizes that various modes of learning, including distance learning and the use of appropriate electronic technologies, are of increasing importance.

To assist in the assessment of an institution's application for a degree program, CAQC appoints an external evaluation team to provide independent opinion about the potential academic merits of the proposed program(s) and to advise the Council as to whether, in its opinion, the proposed program(s) should be recommended for approval by the Council.

The purpose of *A Guide for Teams Conducting Evaluations Of Proposed Undergraduate Programs* is to provide guidance to members of the program evaluation team in planning and conducting its activities.

2. THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION TEAM

Peer evaluators provide thoughtful assessment of the proposed program within the framework of Council's program assessment standards.

As Council wants to ensure that all degree programs it recommends to the Minister are of sufficient breadth and rigour to meet national and international standards, it asks its teams of peer evaluators to assess whether or not the level of learning to be achieved is consistent with that which is expected at the proposed degree level, and whether it is comparable in quality to similar programs (if any) offered in Alberta and elsewhere. The team's on-site appraisal and report are

expected to aid the Council's understanding of the relative strengths and weaknesses of the institution's proposal. In addition, the team's visit and report are intended to facilitate program refinement by the institution. Council provides the document *Framework for Program Evaluation* which is a tool to be used by teams when conducting program evaluations. (See Appendix C.) Included as appendix D is the Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework which reviewers are asked to use to ensure the proposed program(s) is at the baccalaureate level.

Recruitment and appointment of the evaluation team

Council appoints the members of the evaluation team and designates one of them as the chair. Although the final decision regarding the composition of the evaluation team rests with Council, the institution, as well as Council members and the CAQC Secretariat, may suggest persons they would like to have included on the team provided there are no conflicts of interest. The complete list of nominees is sent to the institution and Council members for comment prior to recruitment. Council reserves the right to add other potential reviewers if recruitment to a particular date proves to be difficult. Once the team is recruited and its membership ratified by Council, the institution is informed. It is important that potential members of the evaluation team declare any conflict of interest at the time of their nomination (see Code of Conduct in Appendix E).

Once Council has ratified the membership, members will be notified and will be asked to sign a Letter of Agreement (LOA). This Guide serves as an addendum to that LOA.

Size and composition

Normally, the team will consist of between two and five external (peer) subject area experts, depending on the nature of the program being reviewed. The Director of the CAQC Secretariat, or designate, may act as an advisory member of the team.

Roles

Chair
The chair bears overall responsibility for finalizing the site visit; will speak for the team; will assess the expertise and experience of team members and decide their assignments; will consult with team members to ensure they are comfortable with the assignments; will assume responsibility for the preparation and production of the final report to Council; and will present the team's findings (normally by telephone) at one of Council's meetings. With respect to the site visit schedule, the CAQC Secretariat Advisor will work with the institution to prepare a first draft of the site visit schedule and then will act as the liaison with the institution to make changes as instructed by the chair and team members.

Members
Team members will be responsible for specific functions, as determined by the chair. Receiving a specific assignment does not preclude the need for each member to review the entire documentation.

CAQC Secretariat Advisor
To facilitate the team's work, the CAQC Secretariat Advisor will coordinate the review and serve as an advisory member of the team during the site visit, will work with the institution to prepare a draft schedule for the site visit for consideration by the chair of the team, and will be the liaison with the institution with respect to logistics and information requests of the team prior to the site visit. During the site visit, this individual will liaise with the institutional contact should the team seek further information or clarification. This member will have access to all material relevant to the

external evaluation and will take part in the team's orientation and discussions, but will not be involved in writing the report. After the site visit, the Advisor will receive the team's report and forward it to the institution for response.

Conduct

Evaluation team members must respect the confidential nature of the information submitted by the institution and restrict the use of this information to their work in relation to Council. All material must be shredded or returned to the CAQC Secretariat when the activity for which it was required is completed. As well, team members are reminded that any records in the custody or under the control of Council are subject to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. This includes the report of the external evaluation team to Council, as well as the institution's response to the report. During the recruitment process, Council relies on the personal and professional integrity of individuals to declare if there is any potential conflict of interest. At the orientation meeting with the CAQC Chair or designate, all team members will be asked to sign a copy of the Code of Conduct, which is found in Appendix E.

3.   THE VISIT

Expectations of Council

Without intending to restrict the scope of the team's review, Council expects to have drawn to its attention what, in the opinion of the team, are the strengths and weaknesses of the institution's proposed program(s) based on an assessment of the objectives, curriculum and instructional procedures. As noted earlier, the team is expected to use the framework tool found in Appendix C of this Guide and the program assessment standards noted in Appendix B. As well, Council would like to be informed of any opportunities the team perceives for improving the proposed program(s) as well as any suggestions the team has for overcoming perceived weaknesses or shortcomings.

Overall, Council expects constructive criticism where that is warranted, and a fair presentation of the positive side of the institution's proposal. It is important to stress that the team's report is to be made to Council and not to the institution.

Date and length of the external evaluation team visit

The external evaluation team visit to the institution normally will take place when classes are in progress, at a time convenient to the institution and the team, and normally will take one and one half or two days. If not already determined at the time of appointment of the team, the date(s) for the visit will be determined by the Secretariat in consultation with the team chair and members and the institution vice-president academic or designate. A meeting of the team including an orientation meeting with Council's Chair will precede the time on campus. The meeting normally takes place at the hotel the evening before the start of the site visit.

Preparation for the visit

Normally, team members will receive a set of materials from the CAQC Secretariat, including the following:

- the institution's program proposal(s) and other supporting material (such as the *Faculty/Staff* Handbook),
- information about the outcome of the institution's Organizational Evaluation (if completed) and Comprehensive Evaluation (if completed),
- the institution's current calendar or a link to it on their website,
- a chronology of the application and any applicable correspondence between the Council and the institution,
- information about Campus Alberta and its six-sector model, and
- applicable excerpts from the *CAQC Handbook*.

Team members are encouraged to study the material and familiarize themselves with Council's assessment standards and the *Framework for Program Evaluation* in advance of the orientation meeting. Some teams agree to make contact with each other via e-mail or telephone prior to the first face-to-face meeting. When reviewing these documents, team members are encouraged to ask themselves questions such as those listed below.

- Is there anything that requires further clarification?
- What additional information is desirable?
- What are the key questions that need to be addressed during the visit and in which interview session?
- Who are the principal people to be interviewed?
- How can the team best be deployed in conducting the evaluation?

The Secretariat Advisor should be informed of the need for any additional or clarifying information well in advance of the team's initial meeting.

By being prepared, team members will be better able to take systematic notes during the visit, develop insights based on their site visit observations, and participate with focus in the team deliberations. A scorebook is provided as a tool to assist reviewers.

Establishing the site visit schedule

As noted earlier, prior to the visit, the CAQC Secretariat Advisor will work with the institution's vice-president academic or designate to establish a first draft of the site visit schedule for review by the chair and team members. They may identify other groups or specific individuals with whom they wish to meet. Specific areas for discussion or the assessment standards to be addressed will be identified for each interview session. These are intended only as a guide as often the responses to questions lead to other topics or issues.

During the visit, the team will wish to interview faculty, administrators, students and alumni. Depending on the type of review, they may also wish to meet with support/collaborating staff and examine facilities (library, computer labs, etc.) and other resources, and analyze relevant institutional policies and practices, review student work or observe classes in session. The team's expectations need to be made clear prior to the site visit. Typically the team will operate as a single group, but, at the discretion of the team, they may split into subgroups to hold concurrent sessions with more interviewees within the time on campus.

The institution may be responsible for the selection of students, alumni and faculty to be interviewed in line with parameters established by the team. In other cases, the team may ask that some or all of the faculty or students self-select or be selected by their representative organizations. Some teams may wish to have open sessions designated on the schedule when faculty or other interested people can make an appointment (or drop-in) for brief interviews (e.g., 10 minutes) with the team. Such open sessions allow for specific input to be provided by individuals outside the groups and categories identified by the institution and team. If a team wishes to have an open session, the opportunity should be advertised by the institution in advance of the visit and a schedule established. Normally, the team asks that administration not attend interview sessions with students/alumni and faculty.

If a tour of the facility is arranged and there are time restrictions, the team may wish to suggest that the tour be limited by naming specific areas they wish to see.

Conduct of the visit

(a) *Team orientation and meeting with CAQC Chair*

Prior to the on-campus visit, the CAQC chair, or designate, and Secretariat Advisor, will meet with the team to provide an orientation to the work of the CAQC, to the program evaluation process, and to the *Framework for Program Evaluation.* As well, the CAQC Chair will alert members to any matters of particular concern to Council and answer questions the team might have. Any uncertainties the team members have about Council's policies, procedures or standards should be discussed and, if possible, removed. The CAQC Chair will indicate when the team's report to CAQC is due, which is typically within three weeks of the site visit. This meeting normally takes place the evening before the on-campus visit.

(b) *Initial meeting of the team*

Following the orientation meeting the team will continue meeting. This meeting is critical as it provides team members with an opportunity to share preliminary impressions, review the team's schedule, identify issues to be raised during each interview session, review individual assignments and discuss the format and preparation of their report. All members should come to the meeting fully prepared for the visit by having a list of questions emanating from the documentation and a list of the proposed program's strengths and weaknesses. (The *Scorebook* in Council's "red binder" can be a useful preparation tool.) Members can then determine the most appropriate questions to ask in each interview session.

(c) *Site visit interviews*

As noted earlier, the team will likely wish to interview faculty, administrators, support/collaborating staff, and students and alumni; examine facilities and resources; and analyze relevant institutional policies and practices. The team's chair might begin each interview session by framing the objectives of the interview and posing an open-ended question. This could then be followed by more specific, probing questions and final statements confirming impressions. The questions should evoke analysis and dialogue. Team members should avoid preceding a question with a wordy preamble, stringing a number of questions together, making too many references to how things are done at the member's home campus, or presenting a monologue.

The team should create an atmosphere of genuine dialogue by acting as colleagues and peers rather than as inspectors or interrogators.

Members are encouraged to take careful notes of each interview session as they will be invaluable when writing the report.

(d) *Team conferences*

Throughout the day, time should be scheduled when the team can meet *in camera* to share findings and identify questions that may require a deeper investigation. These sessions also provide time for the team to remind itself of the focus of subsequent interviews.

Normally, the team will informally debrief over dinner on the first evening of the site visit.

At or near the end of the visit, the team should have a "wrap-up" conference in camera to reach consensus about the probable substance of the external evaluation report in preparation for the exit meeting.

(e) *Exit meeting with senior officials*

Before leaving the campus, the team will meet with senior officials (often the president and VPA, or their designates) to provide an opportunity for response to outstanding questions that may have arisen during the visit. As well, the exit meeting provides an opportunity for the team to advise the institution of the principal elements of the report without referring to the team's actual recommendation. It is highly desirable that the report not contain any major surprises of which the institution was not informed by the team before it leaves campus.

At the end of the meeting, the Secretariat Advisor will outline Council's expectations with respect to the next steps in the review process.

(f) *Final team conference*

After the exit meeting, the team should meet one last time before leaving the institution. This meeting will provide an opportunity for the team to begin preparing the report by
- considering any additional information pertinent to its task,
- making decisions on the form and substance of the report,
- reaching consensus concerning the significant strengths and weaknesses which will be communicated to Council, and
- confirming individual responsibilities and timelines for discharging them.

Normally the team will have access to a computer and projector to begin drafting portions of the report before the team leaves the campus. The Secretariat will provide an electronic outline of the report which is designed to clearly show that the report is addressing Council's standards and criteria.

(g) *Contact with the institution*

It is inappropriate for the chair or any member of the evaluation team to visit the campus prior to the site visit unless the institution and Secretariat have first been advised.

During or after the program evaluation process, team members should not independently give any member of the institution feedback or advice regarding the evaluation. If an individual or individuals from the institution attempt(s) to contact a team member for advice or feedback regarding the evaluation, they should be referred to Council's Chair or Secretariat. As well,

team members should not make contact with individuals at the institution to discuss the outcome of the evaluation. The CAQC Secretariat will handle any such discussions.

4.   REPORT OF THE EVALUATION TEAM

Nature of the report

As previously noted, the team's report is to Council, not the institution. The team will determine the format of its report, although it is recommended that the report follow the template provided by the Secretariat, while taking into consideration the expectations of Council noted earlier. Typically the report provides a brief summary of the institution, the material reviewed, and when the site visit took place. This could be followed by a section providing an assessment of the program based on each of Council's 14 categories found in the *Framework for Program Evaluation* (Appendix C). Within each section, affirmations, commendations and areas for improvement might be presented. The site visit schedule should always be attached as an addendum to the report: it can be affixed by the Secretariat once the report is submitted electronically.

The title page will contain the following statement:

> *Reports of CAQC's evaluation teams are prepared exclusively for the purpose of evaluating the quality of proposed post secondary degree programs in Alberta and with consent of the respective institutions. All evaluation reports are based upon CAQC's policies, procedures and standards which are available to all participants of the review process. Reports of Council's evaluation teams are only one form of information considered during the program approval process in Alberta, and Council may not accept or endorse all recommendations or comments contained in these reports.*

Recommendation – The report must contain a specific and clear recommendation with respect to the applicant institution's proposed program(s) in order to help Council determine if it should recommend to the Minister that the program(s) be approved. The recommendation must be supported by substantive comments and documentation of the team's findings. If there are any caveats or conditions on the recommendation, they should be clearly stated as such along with their rationale.

Examples:
- ➢ *Positive recommendation* – The Program Evaluation Team recommends that the proposed program be approved.

- ➢ *Positive recommendation with conditions* – The Program Evaluation team recommends that the proposed program(s) be approved provided the following conditions are met:
   - o a fourth appropriately qualified full-time continuing faculty be hired prior to implementation (*or perhaps prior to offering the fourth year of the program*).
   - o the admission requirement is changed to require students to present……
   - o the nomenclature of the degree be changed from *proposed title* to *recommended title* because*…(rationale should be provided*).

- ➢ *Negative* recommendation – The Program Evaluation Team recommends that the proposed program(s) not be approved based on the following reasons:
   - o the program does not meet the degree level standards in the following areas…….

<u>Affirmations</u> – A subset of the recommendation might be affirmations. These are areas the team believes require improvement which have already been identified by the institution as needing attention or which the institution is already committed to doing. Some affirmations may be conditions to the recommendation.

> *Example*:
> ➢ The team affirms the institution's commitment to hiring a fourth appropriately qualified full-time continuing faculty member prior to implementation of the program.

<u>Commendations</u> – Council is also very interested to learn the strengths of the proposed program(s). Reports will typically highlight these commendations along with other favourable comments throughout the text.

<u>Suggestions for improvement</u> – Where reviewers have identified areas that need improvement, they should clearly be stated as suggestions rather than requirements/conditions. Where possible or appropriate, reviewers are encouraged to offer possible approaches to addressing the areas of improvement rather than requiring specific actions that must be followed.

Before electronically submitting the report to the Secretariat, it should be checked to ensure that:
- It speaks directly to Council's program assessment standards.
- It has a clear recommendation along with the rationale (stated in terms of Council's program assessment standards) and evidence that the findings support the recommendation.
- It has provided sufficient attention to the positive aspects of the proposal (commendations) as well as any areas of concern.
- It carefully distinguishes between the team's suggestions for improvement and any conditions on which a positive recommendation is based.
- It does not raise any issues that were not addressed during the site visit. However, if a new issue is presented in the report, the issue should be clearly identified as not having been discussed during the site visit.

Preparation of the report

The members of the team will determine their relative roles and responsibilities in preparing the report. Typically, the chair writes the introductory and concluding sections of the report and edits the contributions of other members. The Secretariat Advisor will not be involved in the writing of the report but does participate in the site visit and should be listed as a member of the team, but should <u>not</u> be cited as one of the authors of the report. As well, when listing names of team members in the report, any institutional affiliation of members should not be included.

The chair will send a draft of the report to each team member for comment prior to its submission to Council, normally within three weeks. The team chair is required to send an electronic version of the report to the Secretariat when it is finalized at which time the Secretariat will append the final site visit schedule.

Distribution of the report

Upon receipt of the report, the CAQC Secretariat will forward a copy to the applicant institution with a request that comments on the report be made in writing to Council, normally within two weeks. A copy of the institution's response will be forwarded to the evaluation team when it is received.

Consideration of the report and response to it

The chair of the external evaluation team will be asked to speak to the report at a meeting of Council (normally via telephone). Similarly, representative(s) of the institution may be asked to be on standby should Council need them to answer questions following the meeting with the chair.

Subsequently, Council will consider the outcomes of the overall evaluation process and formulate its recommendation(s) to the Minister. The institution and the members of the external evaluation team will be informed of Council's recommendation(s).

5.   ARRANGEMENTS

Communication

As soon as the team has been recruited and the team's membership ratified by Council, the members will receive communication from the CAQC Secretariat Director informing them of the preliminary arrangements, and the names of the other members of the team and Secretariat Advisor. This e-mail also asks for important information (home address, name of consulting company if preferred, etc.) that is needed for the Letter of Agreement, which outlines the expectations of Council and the Ministry. Throughout the planning of the site visit, the Secretariat Advisor will be in contact with team members regarding travel and accommodation and scheduling of the site visit. Team members can also expect to hear from the team chair regarding any preferences and suggestions that the chair may have concerning the work of the team.

Materials provided to members of the external evaluation team

Each member of the team will be provided with the materials noted earlier in this document. Of particular importance for program evaluations is the institution's program proposal which has been prepared in accordance with Council's guidelines.

The site visit

As noted earlier, before the evaluation visit occurs, a detailed schedule for the visit will be arranged by the Secretariat in consultation with the team and institution. The schedule will include plans for team members to interview students/alumni, faculty, administrators and governance board members, as well as to observe facilities, examine records (excluding individual records of students) and assess resources. It is important that the expectations for each activity are identified for the institution prior to the visit.

For the meeting with the CAQC Chair prior to the campus visit, the Secretariat normally will reserve a meeting room in the hotel.

The institution will have arranged a suitable meeting room at the institution for the exclusive use of the external evaluation team where they can review materials, meet in camera and interview institutional representatives. If additional information is being provided via the internet, computers should be also available, along with the telephone number of a technology support person. The room is to be locked when team members are elsewhere. Members should inform the Secretariat Advisor if they plan to use their laptop during the interviews so that the institution can arrange for extension cords and, if needed, access to the Internet.

Parking arrangements and campus maps will be provided, as will meals and snacks. If any team member has dietary restrictions, he/she should let the Secretariat Advisor know so the information can be provided in advance to the institution.

Accommodations and expenses

Each team member is responsible for making his/her own travel arrangements in time for the orientation meeting. Unless there is compelling reason to do otherwise, the Secretariat will arrange for all out-of-town members to stay in the same hotel. If guest rooms are to be provided on campus, the institution will make reservations for the team and inform the Secretariat. Each team member should ensure the Secretariat is aware of travel arrangements, including arrival and departure times, and all members are expected to attend the orientation meeting with the CAQC Chair.

Team members' honoraria and reasonable travel expenses (i.e., economy air fare), including transportation, meals and lodging, will be paid by CAQC. (Costs of the review are then billed to the applicant institution.) The Secretariat Advisor will inform the team if the institution has arranged with the hotel to direct bill it for members' accommodation costs. When the report has been received by CAQC, members will need to send an invoice to the Secretariat Director. The invoice should:
- state the contract number and address of the contractor,
- include a separate item for the honoraria being claimed as per contract,
- include a separate item for the total expenses being claimed as per contract (as all GST/HST must be removed, the honoraria has been adjusted to provide compensation), and
- include any relevant receipts for allowable expenses (i.e., accommodation, transportation and meals).
  - It is important that you keep your taxi receipts, boarding passes, restaurant bills, etc., in order to make the claim.
  - Please note that there cannot be any reimbursement for alcoholic beverages. Consequently, the government requires that, in the case of meals, receipts that itemize the food items purchased be submitted rather than the credit card statement.

In the case of the team chair, an interim invoice may be submitted when the report is forwarded to CAQC. The chair's final invoice can then be submitted after speaking to the report at a CAQC meeting.

Hospitality

Although not encouraged or expected, institutions may wish to make arrangements for hospitality. If such is the case, it should only happen after consultation with the team chair and the CAQC Secretariat.

Feedback

After the report and the institution's response to it have been considered by Council and the outcome determined, the Secretariat will ask each evaluator to respond to a questionnaire designed to assist Council in improving the evaluation process and, specifically, to identify any 'best practices' that can be used as an 'exemplar' to be shared with other applicants. The institution is also asked to complete a similar questionnaire.
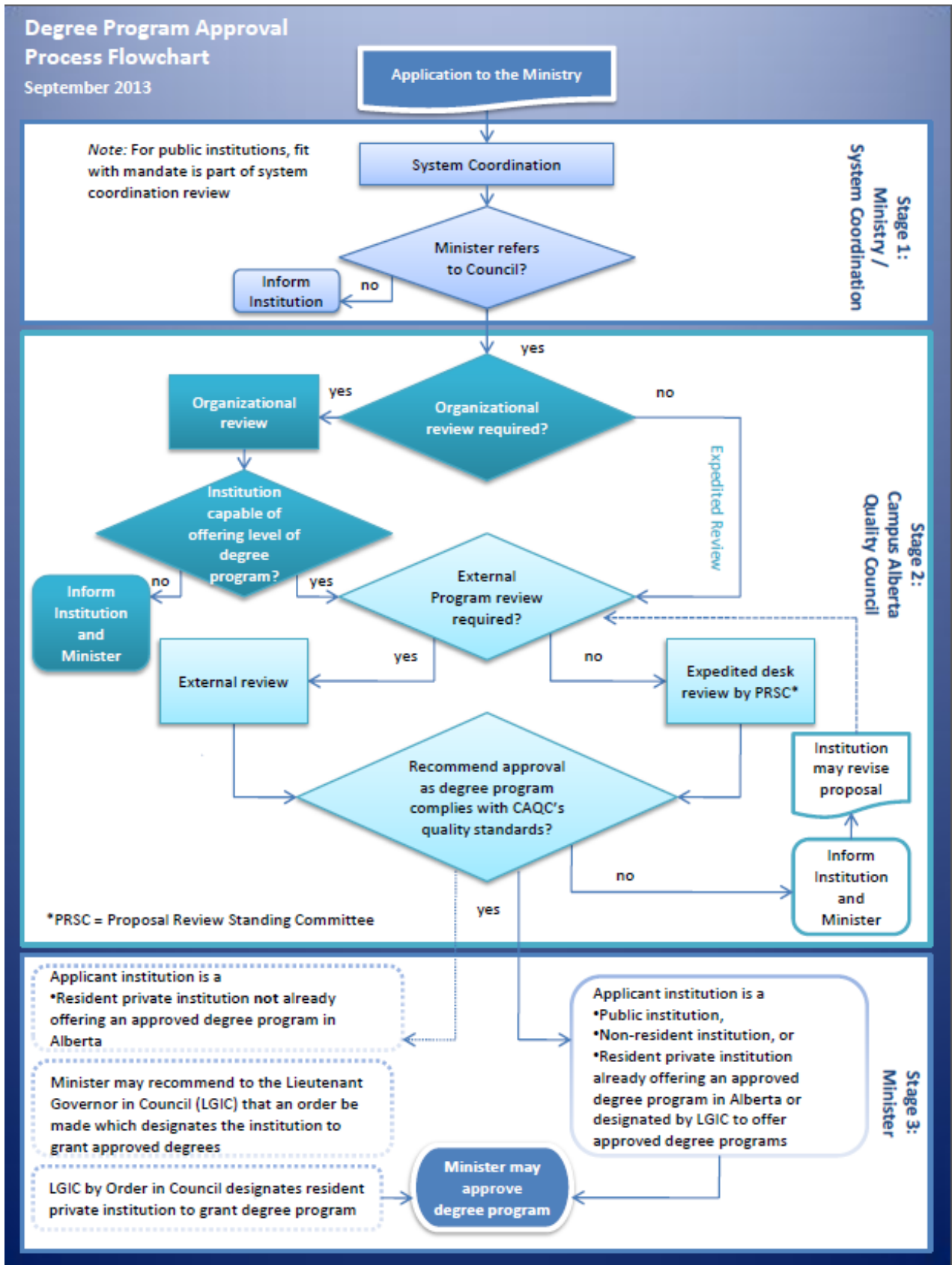
Additional information

Requests for additional information and/or questions of clarification may be directed at any time to the Director of the CAQC Secretariat:

Guy Germain
Director, Campus Alberta Quality Council Secretariat
8th Floor, Commerce Place
10155 – 102 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 4L5
Telephone: (780) 427-8921
E-mail: guy.germain@gov.ab.ca
Web: caqc.alberta.ca

APPENDIX A

Approval Process for new Degree Programs

Degree Program Approval Process Flowchart
September 2013

Application to the Ministry

Note: For public institutions, fit with mandate is part of system coordination review

System Coordination

Minister refers to Council? — no → Inform Institution

Stage 1: Ministry / System Coordination

yes

Organizational review required? — yes → Organizational review — no → Expedited Review

Institution capable of offering level of degree program? — no → Inform Institution and Minister — yes

External Program review required? — yes → External review — no → Expedited desk review by PRSC*

Stage 2: Campus Alberta Quality Council

Institution may revise proposal

Recommend approval as degree program complies with CAQC's quality standards? — no → Inform Institution and Minister — yes

*PRSC = Proposal Review Standing Committee

Applicant institution is a
• Resident private institution **not** already offering an approved degree program in Alberta

Minister may recommend to the Lieutenant Governor in Council (LGIC) that an order be made which designates the institution to grant approved degrees

LGIC by Order in Council designates resident private institution to grant degree program

Minister may approve degree program

Applicant institution is a
• Public institution,
• Non-resident institution, or
• Resident private institution already offering an approved degree program in Alberta or designated by LGIC to offer approved degree programs

Stage 3: Minister

Expedited Review Process Description

Types of Reviews

Reviews by Council may proceed in one of three ways:
   a. <u>Full Review</u> – for applicants proposing to offer a first degree or a first degree at a new level. Council will conduct both an organizational review and a program review using external evaluators for both organizational and program reviews.
   b. <u>Partially Expedited Review</u> – when Council determines that it can omit the organizational review but will conduct a program review using external evaluators. In certain cases, Council reserves the right to include elements of an organizational review within the program review.
   c. <u>Fully Expedited Review</u> – when Council determines that neither an organizational review nor program review using Council-appointed external evaluators is needed. The Proposal Review Standing Committee (PRSC) will do a desk review.

Eligibility for an Expedited Review

An applicant institution may formally request a partially or fully expedited review of a proposed program and must make its case based on Council's criteria for such a review. The Proposal Review Standing Committee (PRSC) normally acts on Council's behalf to review requests for expedited reviews, and to conduct desk reviews of proposals accorded fully expedited reviews.

The purpose of an expedited review is to reduce the length of time it takes for Council to carry out its assessment, recognizing that the extent of review and the amount of information required for approval should in each case reflect the type of proposal and the experience of the applicant institution with new degree program development, implementation, and monitoring.

If the case presented is not accepted, the application will be subject to a full review or partially expedited review, where the Council will appoint external evaluators. Applicants considering seeking partially or fully expedited reviews are encouraged to consult the CAQC Secretariat prior to making the request.

A. Partially Expedited Review

A request for a partially expedited review will be considered if one of the following criteria is met:
   1. An applicable organizational review has been conducted and the results have been found satisfactory by Council, or
   2. Council has moved the institution to an audit status as Council's main mechanism to monitor the institution's on-going quality of approved degree programs.

B. Fully Expedited Review

A request for a fully expedited review will be considered on its own merits, and only if an institution meets one of the criteria for a partially expedited review. Council's willingness to conduct a fully expedited review in the same discipline at one level (e.g., a concentration in a 3 year BA) does not constitute a precedent for a fully expedited review at another (e.g., a major in a 4 year BA). An institution will not normally be eligible for a fully expedited review if the degree is considered precedent setting either for that institution or for the system. Examples of precedent-setting proposals are those that involve the institution offering a degree at a higher level than it offers or involving a subject area that the institution does not offer at the proposed

level. In the process of considering a fully expedited review request, PRSC commences a desk review of the proposal. If that desk review identifies issues that PRSC cannot resolve without a site visit by a review team, a full review or a partially expedited review with a review team will be commissioned by Council. In addition to meeting the criterion for a partially expedited review, the following are the criteria to be met:

1. The proposal is for
   - a new major/specialization/concentration (e.g., History) in an already approved degree program (e.g., BA,) that has been offered across a range of disciplines within that degree in the institution, thus demonstrating that the institution has a successful track record in implementing similar new programs within that degree, or
   - a new degree program that builds on an existing major/specialization currently offered under another program and is at the same level (e.g., Bachelor of International Studies where a BA with a major in International Relations exists), or
   - a new degree program that is at the same level and/or in a related discipline to degrees already being offered by the institution, but is not considered precedent setting either for that institution or for the system (e.g., an institution is proposing a doctorate in chemistry and already offers several other science doctorates).
2. An appropriate number of continuing, qualified academic staff are in place in the department/discipline.
3. The proposal clearly identifies an appropriate set of program learning outcomes for students, and describes the policies and procedures that are in place or under development for assessing them and for applying this assessment for the purposes of curriculum review and program improvement.
4. Degree nomenclature of the proposed program accurately and clearly conveys to stakeholders (e.g., students, prospective employers, academic institutions) the content of the proposed program.
5. Program scale is well within the capacity and the resources of the institution to implement and sustain the program.
6. Evidence of risk assessment both with respect to risks to existing programs and to the program under review (e.g., unexpected enrolment issues, inability to procure staff) is presented and no financial concerns are apparent.
7. Internal vetting and quality assurance practices, including those for post implementation review, are well established and clearly documented. The use of independent academic experts by the institution to review the full proposal (Parts A and B) prior to submission to Council benefits program development and provides the judgment of experts whose specialized knowledge may not be found among the members of PRSC. For these reasons, an external review is expected. The full external assessment report(s) and the institution's response must accompany the proposal and request, and should describe the materials made available to reviewers and the basis for its decision as to whether or not a site visit was carried out. If an institution chooses not to engage external reviewer(s), it must justify its decision. In engaging external experts, institutions should be guided by Council's guideline on Independent Academic Experts.

APPENDIX B

CAQC's Organizational and Program Assessment Standards

Quality Assessment Standards – *Organizational*

In making its recommendation to the Minister, the *Post-secondary Learning Act* requires the Campus Alberta Quality Council to consider the ability of institutions to deliver and sustain high quality degree programs. To meet this goal, all degree programs recommended by the council must offer an education of sufficient breadth and rigour to meet national and international standards of programs at recognized post-secondary institutions.

Organizational Assessment Standards

1. **Mandate and mission –** The organization has a clearly articulated and published mandate (public institutions) or mission (private institutions) and academic goals statement, approved by the governing board and appropriate for a degree-granting institution, and has academic policies and standards that support the organization's mission and educational objectives to ensure degree quality and relevance. The mission includes a commitment to the dissemination of knowledge through teaching and, where applicable, the creation of knowledge and service to the community or related professions.

2. **Governance and administrative capacity –** The organization has the legal characteristics and the leadership, through a governance structure and administrative capacity, necessary to organize and manage a reputable, effective and high quality degree-granting institution.

3. **Academic freedom and integrity –** The organization maintains an atmosphere in which academic freedom exists. Where adherence to a statement of faith and/or code of conduct might constitute a constraint upon academic freedom, the conditions of membership in that institution's community must be clear prior to admission or employment. Students and academic staff display a high degree of intellectual independence. Academic activity is supported by policies, procedures and practices that encourage academic honesty and integrity.

4. **Academic policies –** The organization has published admission, continuation and graduation policies consistent with the objectives of its programs and has the capacity to ensure that academic records of students are secure.

5. **Organizational policies, strategic planning and periodic review –** The organization has appropriate policies and processes in place to assess the effectiveness, continuous growth and improvement of its educational programs and services, including a strategic planning process (both for short and long range plans) that enables the organization to respond in a focused, effective and innovative way to the challenges of its environment and constituents. Policies and procedures are in place which address internal curriculum development and periodic program review to ensure the ongoing quality of its programs and learning outcomes. Such assessments normally include the advice of external experts.

6. **Financial planning and resources –** The organization has the financial management procedures, resources and appropriate planning to provide a stable learning environment and to ensure that students can complete the degree program.

7. **Ethical conduct –** The organization values and upholds integrity and ethical conduct as demonstrated by the relevant policies and practices by which it conducts its business. It has fair and ethical policies in place governing admissions and recruitment of students, and a systematic method for evaluating and awarding academic credit.

8. **Faculty and staff –** The organization has the human resources, including appropriately qualified faculty and instructional staff, necessary to achieve its mission and academic goals. The organization has policies and procedures with respect to appointment, evaluation, employment conditions including employment equity, promotion, termination and professional development for faculty and staff.

Revised to add "including employment equity", March 2008

9. **Information services and systems –** The organization has the information services and learning resources to support the academic programs for students and faculty, as well as an established method of setting priorities with respect to their acquisition. The institution is committed to maintaining and supplementing them as needed. As well, the organization has the systems in place to gather and analyze data, which are used for planning and decision-making purposes. It establishes specific performance indicators and benchmarks by which programs and academic units are assessed.

10. **Student services and student protection –** The organization values and upholds integrity and ethical conduct in its relations with students through the availability of full, accurate and truthful material regarding its mission and goals; history; governance and academic structure; program and subject descriptions; faculty and administrator credentials; entrance requirements including credit transfer and prior learning assessment policies; clear and informative student enrollment agreements verifying student awareness of relevant policies; support services; payment requirements and refund policies; financial assistance; and transcript protection.

11. **Dispute resolution –** The organization has policies for dealing with disputes between the organization and its students, the organization and its faculty, and between faculty and students where complaints, grievances, and/or disputes of students, faculty, staff and administration are dealt with in accordance with the principles of natural justice.

12. **Scholarly and research support –** The organization has policies and procedures in place to support and facilitate engagement by academic staff in scholarship and, where appropriate, research or creative activity.

13. **Physical plant –** The organization has the facilities, including laboratories, classrooms, technology and specialized equipment, as well as the existence of plans and methods for managing health and safety issues, appropriate to support degree programming in the program(s) it offers or proposes to offer.

14. **Graduate program policies –** Organizations proposing graduate programs have policies, structures and mechanisms in place appropriate to graduate studies and research.

Quality Assessment Standards – *Program*

Unless otherwise indicated, where a separate standard is listed for a particular degree level/category (i.e. 'For Applied Degrees'), that standard completely replaces the main standard.

1. **Faculty and staff** – The program is supported by an appropriate number of suitably qualified academic faculty and instructional staff to develop and deliver the degree program. Faculty shall have an appropriate level of scholarly output and/or research or creative activity for the baccalaureate or graduate program involved.

   For Applied Degrees - The program is supported by an appropriate number of suitably qualified academic faculty and instructional staff to develop and deliver the degree program. Faculty shall maintain continuing academic and professional competence and accreditation in their discipline or field appropriate to the specific applied degree program.

2. **Academic policies** – The program has academic policies such as those dealing with admissions, promotion and graduation requirements, mature students, credit transfer and prior learning assessment, appeals, and academic dishonesty consistent with the level of the degree program. It has established policies and procedures that outline the process by which transfer of academic credit is awarded.

   For Applied Degrees – By definition, applied degrees must have a work-related experience component. Therefore, in addition to the above, the institution must have policies and procedures which define the roles of the institution, employer and student in the directed field studies component of the program and resources in place to effect these policies. Work placements and learning outcomes must be directly related to the practical and work experience program outcomes.

3. **Resource capacity** – The program is supported by the physical resources, both start-up and development, needed to assure the quality of the degree program. These include, where applicable, equipment, library and learning resources (physical and electronic), laboratories, computing facilities, shops, specialized equipment, etc., and work placements where this is a component of the program. There is an institutional commitment to maintaining and supplementing resources and equipment as needed to meet standards applicable to the field.

4. **Credential recognition** – The credential is or can be recognized and accepted by other post-secondary institutions, employers, and professional and licensing bodies, where applicable. There is an appropriate fit between the nomenclature of the credential and the content of the degree. The name of a degree should convey long-term meaning, and the content of the degree program should be consistent with the name.

   For Applied Degrees – The credential is or can be recognized and accepted by other post-secondary institutions, employers, and professional and licensing bodies, where applicable. There is an appropriate fit between the nomenclature of the credential and the content of the degree. The name of a degree should convey long-term meaning, and the content of the degree program should be consistent with the name. Institutions are responsible for advising students of the nature of the applied degree with respect to its recognition for further study.

5. **Program delivery** – Learning methodologies are the methods of delivery that will be used to achieve the desired learning outcomes at an acceptable level of quality. The institution must demonstrate that it has the expertise and resources to support the proposed method of delivery and ensure its effectiveness

6. **Program content** – The program offers education of sufficient breadth and rigour to meet relevant national and international standards, and the content of the program, in both subject matter and outcome standards, is appropriate to the level of the degree program and the field of study. Its curriculum must be current and reflect the state of knowledge in the field, or fields in the case of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary programs. The institution must have a process to maintain the currency of the program and the quality of its learning outcomes.

7. **Program structure** – The structure of the degree is such that there is an appropriate balance between core requirements and specialized courses, for example, between Arts and Science courses and discipline specific courses, and between the proposed program and existing programs.

8. **Program evaluation** – The program is subject to a formal, approved policy and procedure requiring a periodic review and improvement process. The policy and procedure includes assessment of the program against published standards (including the institution's own learning outcome standards for the program), and assessment of individual student work in the terminal stage of the program against program outcomes. Such assessments normally include the advice of external experts.

9. **Regulation and accreditation** – Learning outcomes and other requirements for graduation in programs leading to professions are designed to prepare students to meet the requirements of the relevant regulatory, accrediting, quality assurance or professional body.

APPENDIX C

Framework for Program Evaluation

This framework is designed to be used by the Campus Alberta Quality Council's program evaluation teams when conducting evaluations of degree programs being proposed by institutions. In addition, evaluators will use the Program Proposal (see Program Proposal Checklist) and any supporting documentation provided by the applicant institution and the Program Assessment Standards of the Quality Council. The program evaluation team will address each criterion in its final report to the Quality Council.

The Quality Council wants to ensure that all degree programs it recommends to the Minister of Innovation and Advanced Education offer an education of sufficient breadth and rigour to meet national and international standards of programs at recognized post-secondary institutions. The onus is on the institution to satisfy the Council that the level of learning to be achieved is consistent with that which is expected at the applicable degree level, and that the program is comparable in quality to similar programs (if any) offered in Alberta and elsewhere. Program proposals should demonstrate how their unique dimensions set them apart from similar programs offered elsewhere, and thus provide new educational opportunities for students.

The program evaluation team will assess the program being proposed by an institution under the following 14 criteria, each of which has several sample standards.

Program Evaluation Criteria

Criterion #1: Program has an appropriate fit between name, program content, and nomenclature for credential. *(See CAQC's Program Assessment Standard #4.)*

The applicant has:
- Demonstrated that the name and nomenclature fits the Quality Council's guidelines where specified.
- Provided the rationale for choice of name and nomenclature.

Criterion #2: Program implementation date is appropriate given the timing of the proposal and the readiness of the institution to mount the program.

The applicant has:
- Specified the desired implementation date.
- Provided a rationale for the readiness of the institution to meet this deadline given known circumstances (e.g., application deadline, Quality Council review timelines, etc.).

Criterion #3: Program learning objectives and student outcomes are comparable to programs of similar length and level of program. *(See CAQC's Program Assessment Standard #6 and Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework.)*

The applicant has:
- Specified clear and achievable learning objectives and outcomes.
- Demonstrated that learning objectives are at the appropriate level of learning for a 3- or 4-year baccalaureate program.
- Specified a competency profile for graduates of the program.

- Provided an explanation of how program objectives relate to the institutional mission and objectives.
- Demonstrated that it has a process in place to maintain the currency of the program and the quality of its learning outcomes.

Criterion #4: Program responds to adequate level of student demand.

The applicant has:
- Provided an indication of the process used to assess student demand and employment prospects for graduates of the proposed program.
- Provided comparative analysis with other institutions offering similar programs to demonstrate adequacy of demand.
- Described the student target group and provided a strong rationale for the targeted student group.
- Indicated the level of societal demand for graduates of the program.
- Specified the proposed enrolment (both full-time and part-time) and how it relates to the above factors.

Criterion #5: Program curriculum is clear and well integrated with the objectives and outcomes. *(See CAQC's Program Assessment Standard #6 and 7.)*

The applicant has:
- Demonstrated that the program curriculum has a clear focus.
- Demonstrated that the courses are taught at the appropriate depth and breadth for the proposed level.
- Demonstrated that the program has an appropriate balance between core requirements and specialized courses.
- Provided course descriptions of all the courses included in the curriculum.
- Indicated if there is any integration of the proposed program with other areas.
- Indicated clearly how the curriculum meets Quality Council program structure guidelines (total number of courses, number of senior courses, etc.).
- Provided a sample student program for each year of the program.

Criterion #6: Relationship of proposed program to existing programs within and outside the institution is appropriate. *(See CAQC's Program Assessment Standard #2 and 6.)*

The applicant has:
- Indicated the existing or planned for external portability and internal transferability.
- Demonstrated how the program provides appropriate preparation for postgraduate or professional degrees, or graduate studies, if applicable.
- Indicated any possible positive or negative impacts on other existing programs within the institution.

Criterion #7: Program resources are adequate. (*See CAQC's Program Assessment Standard #3.)*

The applicant has:
- Demonstrated that there are adequate library and learning resources (both physical and electronic) to support the proposed program.

- Demonstrated that there are appropriate labs, computing facilities, and/or specialized equipment to support the program.
- Indicated how practica or other such experiences shall be utilized to achieve program objectives, and how they will be organized and managed.
- Provided a fiscal plan for implementation of the program (including, e.g., fees to be charged, government funding, if applicable, etc.).
- Demonstrated how any advisory committees shall be selected and operate, where appropriate.
- Demonstrated that there are sufficient and appropriate academic student services to support the program (e.g., student advising).
- Demonstrated institutional commitment to maintaining and supplementing resources and equipment for the program as needed.

Criterion #8: Faculty resources are adequate for the program. *(See CAQC's Program Assessment Standard #1.)*

The applicant has:
- Demonstrated that the institution meets Quality Council requirements for number and quality of faculty and support staff.
- Indicated a plan for future hiring, if appropriate.
- Given evidence of faculty workload policies and actual workload statistics.
- Provided a staffing plan if rotation of courses is being proposed.
- Demonstrated an appropriate level of scholarly activity, research or creative activity by faculty teaching in the baccalaureate or graduate program involved.

Criterion #9: Interdisciplinary programs are well designed and integrated (if such programs are proposed). *(See CAQC's Program Assessment Standard #6.)*

The applicant has:
- Demonstrated that the interdisciplinary program has a clear focus.
- Demonstrated that the program meets Quality Council staffing standards.
- Provided a staffing plan in relation to other programs, when interdisciplinary faculty are shared across programs.

Criterion #10: Teaching approach and objectives have an appropriate fit. *(See CAQC's Program Assessment Standard #5.)*

The applicant has:
- Provided a rationale and demonstrated effectiveness for the teaching approach, especially if innovative.
- Demonstrated how the teaching approach will allow the student to achieve the desired learning objectives and outcomes.
- Provided evidence of possible student evaluation of the teaching approach.
- For programs to be delivered by non-traditional means, demonstrated that the institution has the expertise and resources to support the proposed method of delivery.

Criterion #11: Program evaluation plan is evident. *(See CAQC's Program Assessment Standard #8.)*

The applicant has:
- Demonstrated that a formal, approved policy and procedure for periodic review and improvement is in place for the proposed program to determine whether student outcomes are achieved. Normally such assessments include the advice of external experts.
- Demonstrated that the institution regularly allows for student, faculty and employer review of programs within the institution.
- Demonstrated that information gathered from such evaluation is, or can be, utilized to improve the programs.

Criterion #12: Academic policies related to the program are planned or in place. *(See CAQC's Program Assessment Standard #2.)*

The applicant has:
- Demonstrated that appropriate academic policies are in place for the program (e.g., admission, mature students, grading, student academic code, academic progress, academic dishonesty, appeals, graduation).
- Demonstrated that it has established policies and procedures that outline the process by which transfer of academic credits is awarded.

Criterion #13: Consultation with other institutions and professional licensing or regulatory bodies, where appropriate, has occurred. *(See CAQC's Program Assessment Standard #9.)*

The applicant has:
- Demonstrated that there has been sufficient consultation with other institutions and or academic experts who either offer or are familiar with similar programs.
- Demonstrated adequate support from other institutions for the offering of the program.
- Demonstrated that graduates of the program are prepared to meet the requirements of the relevant regulatory or professional body.

Criterion #14: Independent academic expert reports are available (normally needed for 4-year programs).

The applicant has:
- Provided independent academic expert reports and a description of each expert's qualifications for each 4-year program proposals (see *Handbook* Article 8.3.3).
- Provided evidence of thoughtful responses to the issues and recommendations raised in the reports of the independent academic experts.

APPENDIX D

Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework

CANADIAN DEGREE QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

A. DESCRIPTIONS OF DEGREE CATEGORIES

The following descriptions of degree categories are intended to capture the most salient general aspects of the three principal degree levels offered in Canada. They apply to a broad spectrum of disciplines, program types, and program lengths. The descriptors on the left-hand side are similar to the "Bologna Descriptors" used by many other jurisdictions, notably including the 25 countries in the European Union, the 20 countries that have formally associated with the European Union's project to develop common standards and quality assurance procedures, and many quality assurance agencies belonging to the International Network of Quality

Assurance Agencies for Higher Education. The intent of such frameworks is to provide an agreed description of what each degree level is intended to achieve in general learning outcomes. This Canadian version is intended to provide a broad framework for each degree level, leaving to each province the development of more detailed qualifications frameworks for degree credentials offered in its jurisdiction. Other credentials, such as associate degrees, special categories of applied degrees, and certificates and diplomas related to both undergraduate and post-graduate study will need to be articulated at the provincial level.

DESCRIPTION	BACHELOR DEGREE	MASTER'S DEGREE	DOCTORAL DEGREE
Program Design and Outcome Emphasis	The credential awarded for the bachelor degree is designed to acquaint the student with the basic conceptual approaches and methodologies of the principal discipline or disciplines that constitute the program of study, to provide some specialized knowledge, and to nurture the capacity for independent work in the discipline/disciplines and field of practice. All bachelor programs are designed to provide graduates with knowledge and skills that enable them to develop the capacity for independent intellectual work. That capacity may be demonstrated by the preparation, under supervision, of one or more essays, a terminal research paper, thesis, project, exhibition, or other research-based or performance-based exercise that demonstrates methodological competence and capacity for independent and ethical intellectual/creative work and, where relevant, the exercise of professional responsibility in a field of practice. Some bachelor degree programs are intended to provide a wide exposure to several disciplines, others to provide an in-depth education in one or more disciplines (often as preparation for graduate study), and still others to provide a blend of theory and practice that equips students for entry into an occupation or profession. Despite that diversity, each bachelor degree program must meet a substantial and common set of competency outcomes, as outlined below, to justify use of the bachelor degree label. The range of Bachelor programs includes:	A master's degree program builds on knowledge and competencies acquired during related undergraduate study and requires more specialized knowledge and intellectual autonomy than a bachelor degree program. Much of the study undertaken at the master's level will have been at, or informed by, the forefront of an academic or professional discipline. Students will have shown some originality in the application of knowledge, and they will understand how the boundaries of knowledge are advanced through research. They will be able to deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, and they will show independent capacity in addressing issues and problems. Research-oriented master's programs are typically for graduates of related undergraduate or professional programs in the field or students who have taken bridging studies to equip them for graduate study in the field; the focus is on developing the research, analytical, methodological, interpretive and expository skills necessary for doctoral studies or for leadership in society. Some programs are thesis-based and require the student to develop and demonstrate advanced research skills under supervision. Others are course-based and require students to demonstrate the necessary research, analytical, interpretative, methodological and expository skills in course exercises. Examples: M.A.programs in the humanities and	A doctoral program builds on the knowledge and competencies in a field or discipline acquired during prior study, usually at the graduate level. Study at the doctoral level is at the forefront of an academic or professional discipline. Holders of the doctoral degree must have demonstrated a high degree of intellectual autonomy, an ability to conceptualize, design and implement projects for the generation of significant new knowledge and/or understanding, and their ability to create and interpret knowledge that extends the forefront of a discipline, usually through original research or creative activity. Preparation for doctoral work may involve course work of varying lengths aimed at cultivating further conceptual depth or breadth. It may also involve written and oral examinations of knowledge and skills in aspects of the discipline prior to authorization to proceed to work on a dissertation. Research-oriented doctoral programs focus on the development of the conceptual and methodological knowledge and skills required to do original research and to make an original contribution to knowledge in the form of a dissertation. In some fields an internship or exhibition component may be required, but without diluting the significance of the dissertation as the primary demonstration of mastery. Such programs lead to the award of the Ph.D. Examples: Ph.D. (Psychology), Ph.D. (Education),

	• *Programs designed to provide a broad education as an end in itself*. They may also prepare graduates for employment in a variety of fields and or for admission to second entry professional programs. Examples: B. Hum (Humanities); General B.A. and General B.Sc.degrees. • *Programs designed to provide in-depth study in academic disciplines*. They normally prepare students for graduate study in the discipline(s) and for employment in a variety of fields. • *Programs with an applied focus*. They blend theory and practice, with content selected to ensure mastery of the field of practice rather than to deepen knowledge in the discipline/disciplines for their own sake or as preparatory to further study in the discipline. Even so, they may prepare students for further study depending upon the field and length and depth of the program; graduates may or may not require preparatory studies before entering graduate programs. While professional associations or accrediting bodies may set entry-to-practice standards for such programs, those standards are not normally obligatory for the institution offering the program. • *Programs with a professional focus*. They are designed to prepare graduates to meet admission requirements and to be competent practitioners in the profession. Some of them are first entry programs, others are second entry programs (that is, they require some prior degree-level study or even a degree). They normally require periods of practical experience (apprenticeship, internship, articling, clinical, etc.). The capacity for independent professional work is demonstrated by academic and practical exercises, under supervision, followed by admission tests to the profession. Though considered to be bachelor programs in academic standing, some professional programs yield degrees with other nomenclature—e.g., D.D.S. (Dental Surgery); M.D. (Medicine); LL.B; or J.D. (Juris Doctor).	social sciences; M.Sc. programs. Profession-oriented master's programs normally admit students holding baccalaureate degrees and provide them with a selection of courses and exercises intended to prepare them for a particular profession or field of practice or, if they are already involved in the profession or field, to extend their knowledge base and skills as professionals/practitioners. Example: MSW (Social Work)	Ph.D. (Music). Practice-oriented doctoral programs are of a more applied nature, relate to a professional or creative activity and, where there is an internship or exhibition requirement, may also require a dissertation. Doctoral programs with an orientation to practice typically involve more course work than doctoral programs with a more theoretical or disciplinary focus. Such programs lead to the award of a degree designation reflecting the field or discipline. Examples: Ed.D. (Education), Mus. Doc. (Music), Psy.D. (Psychology).

Preparation for Employment and Further Study	In addition to providing personal and intellectual growth, bachelor programs, in varying degrees, may prepare students for entry into graduate study in the field, second-entry professional degree programs, or employment in one or more fields.	Graduates will have the qualities needed for either further study in the discipline or for employment in circumstances requiring sound judgment, personal responsibility and initiative, in complex and unpredictable professional environments.	Holders of doctorates will have the qualities needed for employment requiring the ability to make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields, and innovation in tackling and solving problems.
Length of Program	Owing primarily to variations in pre-university studies among the provinces, classroom instruction is typically six to eight semesters or more in duration (normally 90-120 credits, or the equivalent) and may be supplemented by required professional experience (e.g., supervised practica, internships, and work terms).	Master's programs vary typically from two to six semesters in duration, depending on the field and the speed at which individuals progress through requirements.	A doctoral program is typically three to six years in length, depending on the field and the speed at which individuals progress through requirements.
Admission Requirements	Admission normally requires at a minimum a secondary school or CEGEP diploma and/or university preparatory courses, a minimum grade-point average, and other program-specific requirements. Students lacking these credentials may be admitted on a part-time or probationary basis, with continuation subject to acceptable academic achievement. Second entry programs normally require at least two or three years of completed degree-level studies or in some cases the prior or concurrent completion of another undergraduate degree.	Normally an undergraduate degree with an appropriate specialization, or an undergraduate degree with relevant bridging studies.	Normally a master's degree with an appropriate specialization, or a masters degree with appropriate bridging studies.

B. DEGREE LEVEL STANDARDS

The focus of the following degree level standards is on the expectations of graduates at each degree. The standards stipulate the demonstrable transferable learning skills and level of mastery of a body of specialized knowledge in six dimensions: 1. Depth and Breadth of Knowledge; 2. Knowledge of Methodologies; 3. Application of Knowledge; 4. Communication Skills; 5. Awareness of Limits of Knowledge; 6. Professional Capacity/Autonomy. The shades of distinction between degrees are determined by the capacity of the graduate at each level to act competently, creatively and independently, and by their proximity to the forefront of a discipline and/or profession. Among other things, the degree level standards are intended (a) to facilitate the assessment of credentials for broad purposes of credit transfer and credential recognition, (b) to provide clear learning outcome standards to instructional and program designers, (c) as a broad framework for quality assurance purposes. The standards are intended to be cumulative — each degree level presupposes the accomplishment of an earlier one.

EXPECTATIONS	BACCALAUREATE DEGREE	MASTER'S DEGREE	DOCTORAL DEGREE
	This degree is awarded to students who have demonstrated:	*This degree is awarded to students who have demonstrated:*	*This degree is awarded to students who have demonstrated:*
1. Depth and Breadth of Knowledge	(a) Knowledge and critical understanding in a field of study that builds upon their secondary education and includes the key assumptions, methodologies, and applications of the discipline and/or field of practice; (b) Basic understanding of the range of fields within the discipline/field of practice and of how the discipline may intersect with fields in related disciplines; (c) The ability to gather, review, evaluate and interpret information, including new information relevant to the discipline; and to compare the merits of alternate hypotheses or creative options relevant to one or more of the major fields in a discipline; (d) The capacity to engage in independent research or practice in a supervised context; (e) Critical thinking and analytical skills inside and outside the discipline; (f) The ability to apply learning from one or more areas outside the discipline.	A systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study, or area of professional practice.	A thorough understanding of a substantial body of knowledge that is at the forefront of their academic discipline or area of professional practice.

2. Knowledge of Methodologies and Research	(a) An understanding of methods of enquiry or creative activity, or both, in their primary area of study that enables the student to (i) evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems using well established ideas and techniques; (ii) devise and sustain arguments or solve problems using these methods; and (iii) describe and comment upon particular aspects of current research or equivalent advanced scholarship in the discipline and how these are relevant to the evolution of the discipline. (b) The ability to review, present and critically evaluate qualitative and quantitative information to: (i) develop lines of argument, (ii) make sound judgments in accordance with the major theories, concepts and methods of the subject(s) of study; (iii) apply underlying concepts, principles, and techniques of analysis, both within and outside the discipline, and, (iv) where appropriate, use this knowledge in the creative process.	A conceptual understanding and methodological competence that enables the graduate to: (a) have a working comprehension of how established techniques of research and inquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline; (b) have a capacity to evaluate critically current research and advanced research and scholarship in the discipline or area of professional competence, and on the basis of that competence, has shown at least one of the following: (i) the development and support of a sustained argument in written form, or (ii) originality in the application of knowledge.	A conceptual understanding and methodological competence that provides the graduate with the ability to: (a) conceptualize, design, and implement research for the generation of new knowledge, applications, or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the research design or methodology in the light of unforeseen problems; (b) make informed judgments on complex issues in specialist fields, sometimes requiring new methods; and (c) produce original research, or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, and to merit publication.
3. Application of Knowledge	(a) The ability to use a range of established techniques to (i) initiate and undertake critical evaluation of arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts and information; (ii) propose solutions; (iii) frame appropriate questions for the purpose of solving a problem; (iv) solve a problem or create a new work; and (b) The ability to make critical use of scholarly reviews and primary sources.	The capacity to (i) address complex issues and judgments based on established principles and techniques; and (ii) apply an existing body of knowledge in the research and critical analysis of a new question or of a specific problem or issue in a new setting.	The capacity to (i) undertake pure and/or applied research at an advanced level; and (ii) contribute to the development of academic or professional skill, techniques, tools, practices, ideas, theories, approaches, and/or materials.
4. Communication Skills	The ability to communicate information, arguments, and analyses accurately and reliably, orally and in writing, to a range of audiences, to specialist and non-specialist audiences, using structured and coherent arguments, and, where appropriate, informed by key concepts and techniques of the discipline.	The ability to communicate ideas, issues and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences..	The ability to communicate complex and/or ambiguous ideas, issues and conclusions clearly and effectively.
5. Awareness of Limits of Knowledge	An understanding of the limits to their own knowledge and ability, and an appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits to knowledge and how this might influence analyses and interpretations.	A cognizance of the complexity of knowledge and of the potential contributions of other interpretations, methods, and disciplines.	An appreciation of the limitations of one's own work and discipline, of the complexity of knowledge, and of the potential contributions of other interpretations, methods, and disciplines.

6. Professional Capacity/ Autonomy	Qualities and transferable skills necessary for further study, employment, community involvement and other activities requiring (i) the exercise of initiative, personal responsibility and accountability in both personal and group contexts, (ii) working effectively with others and (iii) behaviour consistent with academic integrity.	(a) The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring (i) the exercise of initiative and of personal responsibility and accountability; and ii) decision-making in complex situations, such as employment; and (b) The intellectual independence required for continuing professional development; and (c) The ability to appreciate the broader implications of applying knowledge to particular contexts.	(a) The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex situations; (b) The intellectual independence to be academically and professionally engaged and current; and (c) The ability to evaluate the broader implications of applying knowledge to particular contexts.

APPENDIX E

Campus Alberta Quality Council Code of Conduct for Reviewers

Purpose

The purpose of this Code is to establish rules of conduct to govern the professional and ethical responsibilities of reviewers engaged by the Campus Alberta Quality Council (CAQC) as it carries out its stated responsibilities for organizational, program and comprehensive reviews.

The Code is based on the principles of integrity, honesty, openness and concern for the public interest. It is designed to maintain the effectiveness of CAQC as a whole and to ensure the fairness of all CAQC procedures and decision making. It addresses common situations that reviewers may experience as they carry out their responsibilities, while recognizing that not all situations can be anticipated. All reviewers have a responsibility to consider appropriate standards of behavior and to conduct themselves in an ethical and professional manner. The Code assumes that it is not only the actual situation but also the *perception* others may have of it that may lead to a perception of bias or conflict of interest.

To Whom Does the Code Apply?

The Code applies to all reviewers appointed by CAQC to enable it to make informed recommendations and decisions about approval and monitoring of degree programs.

When is This Code Applicable?

The Code governs the conduct of reviewers from the date of appointment. It also includes the continuing responsibilities of reviewers after the completion of their terms with respect to decisions made by CAQC while the person was a reviewer.

General Rules of Conduct

All reviewers shall complete a statement attesting that they have read and agreed to the statements included in the Code of Conduct.

Sample Statement

I, _____, have been appointed as a member of an external evaluation team reporting to the Campus Alberta Quality Council. I have read and understand the CAQC Code of Conduct for reviewers.

I agree to comply fully and to the best of my ability with the provisions of the Code.

Dated at _____ this _____ day of _____ .

Reviewers should be committed to the principles and practices of quality assurance in post-secondary education. When considering the program proposal, or other matters referred to them, reviewers shall make their recommendations on the merits of the information available, and shall consider the information provided in good faith and to the best of their ability, not being concerned with the prospect of disapproval from any person, institution, or community.

Reviewers shall be sensitive to issues of gender, race, language, culture and religion that may affect the conduct of a review, the recommendations considered by Council, or a decision.

a. Confidentiality

A reviewer shall agree that all information related to a review, including information provided by an applicant institution, is confidential and shall treat such information in strict confidence and with the care and security required to ensure that the information is not disclosed without CAQC's prior written consent. A reviewer will not use the information provided for any purpose outside that of undertaking work for CAQC.

A reviewer must respect the confidential nature of third-party information submitted by the applicant and restrict the use of this information to CAQC work. Reviewers shall return (or attest that they have shredded) all material used in assessing applications when the activity for which it was required is completed. All electronic copies of confidential material should be disposed of within a term specified by agreement between the reviewer and the Ministry.

"Information" means all information, data, material and documents obtained by a reviewer before, during, or after the review and includes program proposals, institutional self-studies, information obtained during a site visit and all other information furnished or disclosed to him/her by CAQC, the Secretariat or an institution whether directly or indirectly, in written, oral, magnetic, electronic or other forms.

The confidentiality requirement set out in this Code does not apply to any part of the information which is in the public domain at the date of disclosure to the reviewer or which after that date enters the public domain, other than by any act or failure to act on the part of the reviewer.

A reviewer shall, at all times, adhere to the intent and requirements of Alberta's *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* which applies to all information, material and records relating to, or obtained, created, maintained, submitted or collected during the course of a review.

b. Conflict of Interest

A reviewer must avoid any conflict of interest or appearance of conflict of interest that might impair, influence or impugn the independence, integrity or impartiality of CAQC. Conflict of interest is any interest, relationship, association or activity that is incompatible with a reviewer's responsibilities as an impartial assessor. Reviewers shall ensure that they:

(i) conduct their duties with impartiality and disqualify themselves from dealing with anyone with whom a prior relationship could bring their impartiality into question;
(ii) refrain from furthering their private interests;
(iii) avoid accepting any commission, discount, allowance, payment, gift (other than a small token gift) or other benefit that is connected, directly or indirectly, with the performance of their duties related to the review, that causes, or would appear to cause, a conflict of interest;
(iv) have no financial interest in the business of a third party that causes, or would appear to cause, a conflict of interest in connection with the performance of their duties related to the review; if such financial interest is acquired during the term as identified in the agreement between a reviewer and CAQC, the reviewer shall promptly declare it to CAQC;

(v) decline to participate in a review for CAQC that involves a party or representative with whom they were formerly in a significant professional relationship until a period of 12 months has elapsed since the termination of that relationship. A significant professional relationship includes, but is not limited to, employment or consulting, collaboration on a project, supervision of students in the program, and providing expert advice during development of a proposal; and

(vi) do not participate in any advisory council or implementation committee for programs or institutions they have reviewed for CAQC for six months from the time of the Minister's decision.

The Chair shall ask all potential reviewers to indicate, prior to appointment, whether they have any reason to be in a conflict of interest if they were to review a given program or institution. A reviewer with a conflict of interest in regards to an application must decline to serve as a reviewer. If unsure whether a conflict of interest exists, the reviewer shall inform the Chair about his/her circumstances. The Chair will determine whether a conflict of interest exists and will inform a reviewer of his/her decision.

c. Public Statements

A reviewer shall not make public statements, orally or in writing, on any issues with respect to the institution or program he/she was involved in reviewing. In cases where it is not clear what a reviewer may say publicly about an issue, discretion should be used, and the reviewer should consult with the CAQC Chair or the Secretariat.

A reviewer shall refrain from communicating with the media regarding the deliberations or decisions of CAQC. All inquiries from the media or other parties shall be referred to the CAQC Chair or the Secretariat.

Reviewers should review carefully CAQC's *Policy on Release of Information*, especially section B, which outlines the responsibilities of reviewers. The policy is available on CAQC's website.