



# HANDBOOK:

## Quality Assessment and Quality Assurance

First Edition - February 2009  
with revisions to June 2022

Campus Alberta Quality Council

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## PREFACE

In 1984, the government of Alberta created the Private Colleges Accreditation Board (PCAB) as an independent body to establish standards and procedures to conduct the review of proposals from Alberta private institutions intent on offering undergraduate degree programs. Until the late 1980s, PCAB dealt with only affiliated private colleges until policy was changed to allow non-affiliated private institutions, including for-profit institutions to apply to offer undergraduate degrees. Later, the Minister allowed public colleges and technical institutions to offer approved Applied Degrees in the province; these credentials supplemented the degrees the Minister had authorized for offering by the four public universities and by several private institutions. Faced with a growing need and demand for post-secondary education, the Alberta government decided to increase access to degree programs by allowing not only the four universities and private institutions, but also some of the public colleges and technical institutes to apply to offer university-level degree programs in addition to Applied Degrees. That important policy decision is reflected in the [Post-secondary Learning Act](#) (Appendix A) which brings all publicly funded post-secondary educational institutions under one piece of legislation. Desiring a mechanism to ensure a rigorous review of all new degree program proposals, the Alberta government established the Campus Alberta Quality Council (CAQC) under the [Post-secondary Learning Act](#) (Appendix A), and described the Council's responsibilities and functions in the accompanying [Programs of Study Regulation \(AR 91/2009\)](#) (Appendix A). The Council is legislatively mandated to conduct reviews of new degrees proposed by all providers of degree-level credentials in Alberta, whether public or private, resident or non-resident, and to make recommendations to the Minister of Advanced Education.

Designed primarily to provide guidance to post-secondary institutions as they seek to understand the mandate, standards, policies and procedures of the Campus Alberta Quality Council, this *Handbook* presents information about the role of the Council in assessing and assuring the quality of new degree-level programs in Alberta. It includes:

- **General information about Council's work**
- Application procedures for resident and non-resident institutions
- Standards, policies and guidelines for organizational evaluations
- Standards, policies and guidelines for program evaluations
- **Information about Council's monitoring role**
- Relevant documents and forms
- Glossary of terms used in the *Handbook*.

The Campus Alberta Quality Council acknowledges the work of the Private Colleges Accreditation Board, which was **phased out in 2004, and it also acknowledges its indebtedness to PCAB's *Accreditation Handbook*** which was uncommonly helpful in the preparation of the first *Handbook*.

Readers of this *Handbook* should note that though many formerly web-based documents are consolidated here, **additional information about Council, its activities and its interests can be found on Council's website: [caqc.alberta.ca](http://caqc.alberta.ca)**. Readers should also note that Council has determined that the electronic version of this *Handbook* is to be the official version of record, to enable timely updates and revisions to the text. In the interest of improving the quality of the *Handbook*, Council invites the *Handbook's* users to let us know about errors and omissions and to provide us with both with comments and criticisms.

## RECORD OF CHANGES

| Section          | Explanation of Change   | Date  |
|------------------|---|---|
| 1.2.2            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Modified Principle 9 and added a new principle 15</li> <li>Revised Principles</li> <li>Modified Principles 5 and 11</li> </ul>   | December 2010<br>November 2015<br>August 2018         |
| 1.2.4            | Added description of the Proposal Review Standing Committee and Terms of Reference  | July 2009   |
| 1.2.5            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Added a new section on Council's Monitoring Standing Committee</b></li> <li>Revised section</li> </ul>  | April 2011<br>June 2021                               |
| 2.1.2            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updated Figure 1, Post-secondary institutions in Alberta to reflect closure and name changes</li> <li>Revised to update institution names</li> <li>Revised Classification of Post-secondary institutions in Alberta to reflect category and institution changes</li> </ul> | September 2009<br><br>April 2015<br><br>February 2019 |
| 2.1.3            | Updated Figure 2, Degree Program Approval Flowchart to reflect legislation changes  | August 2009   |
| 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 | Revised to reflect changes to degree program approval process   | June 2013   |
| 2.2.2            | Revised section   | December 2017   |
| 2.3.1 and 2.3.3  | Added the requirement that admission policies of Canadian non-resident institutions must not automatically prohibit consideration of graduates of Alberta approved degree programs  | March 2009  |
| 2.3.1 and 2.3.2  | Revised sections  | March 2021  |
| 2.3.4            | Revised to clarify that financial security only applies if an institution is collecting tuition from students for a program offered in Alberta  | May 2011  |
| 3.2              | Minor amendments made to first two paragraphs   | December 2020   |
| 3.3              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revised Organizational Assessment Standard 5</li> <li>Revised Organizational Assessment Standards 3, 5, 7 and 10</li> <li>Revised Organizational Assessment Standard 3</li> </ul>  | December 2019<br>December 2021<br>June 2022           |
| 3.5              | Revised to correspond to the new Organizational Evaluation Framework – Undergraduate Programs   | February 2017   |
| 3.6              | Added new section to outline governance and administration expectations   | June 2009   |

| Section             | Explanation of Change   | Date   |
|---------------------|---|--|
| 3.7.1 and 3.7.2     | Revised to clarify sections   | September 2017   |
| 3.7.3 and 3.7.4     | Revised   | June 2019  |
| 3.8.3               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revised one information requirement under Category 4</li> <li>Revised two information requirements under Category 4</li> <li>Added one information requirement under Category 5</li> <li>Revised and/or added information requirements under Categories 1, 2, 4 and 8</li> </ul> | February 2017<br>December 2019<br>December 2019<br>December 2021 |
| 4.3.1               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Added sentence on Additional Quality Assessment Standards for Programs Delivered in Blended, Distributed or Distance Modes</li> <li>Revised program assessment standard #5</li> <li>Revised section</li> </ul>   | April 2011<br><br>December 2011<br>June 2021                     |
| 4.3.3.2             | Revised to reflect revisions to the Teaching Quality Standard, the nature of the practicum/field experience, and the ATA Code of Conduct  | October 2019   |
| 4.3.3               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revised Expectation 3 to include reference to engaged and active learning</li> <li>Added new paragraph below Expectation 3 to reference learning outcomes</li> <li>Revised section</li> </ul>  | December 2011<br><br>February 2017<br><br>June 2021              |
| 4.3.3.7             | Revised section   | June 2021  |
| 4.3.3.5 and 4.3.3.8 | Added new sections on Baccalaureate Degrees in Nursing and Degrees involving Diplomas in Campus Alberta to the Expectations for Design and Structure of Undergraduate Degrees   | December 2009  |
| 4.3.4               | Revised to include new wording for program standard #1  | June 2021  |
| 4.3.4.3             | Revised to remove requirement referring to submission of written requests for equivalency   | December 2019  |
| 4.3.4.7             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Added Standard 6: Teaching Effectiveness</li> <li>Revised statement on Teaching Effectiveness and added eight principles</li> </ul>  | February 2017<br>December 2019                                   |
| 4.4                 | Added preamble  | December 2011  |
| 4.4.1               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revised the Graduate Program Assessment Standards</li> <li>Revised Graduate Program Assessment Standards</li> </ul>  | September 2009<br>December 2011                                  |
| 4.4.2               | Revised Graduate Program Evaluation Framework   | December 2011  |

| Section | Explanation of Change  | Date  |
|---------|--|---|
| 4.4.3   | Revised Graduate Degree Types  | December 2011   |
| 4.5     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Added paragraph on Additional Quality Assessment Standards for Programs Delivered in Blended, Distributed or Distance Modes</li> <li>Revised section on Additional Quality Assessment Standards for Programs Delivered in Blended, Distributed or Distance Modes</li> <li>Revised Standard 5, Additional Quality Assessment Standards for Programs Delivered in Blended, Distributed or Distance Modes</li> </ul> | April 2011<br>April 2011<br>December 2021                     |
| 4.6     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Added a new section on Council's protocol for dealing with collaborative degree arrangements</b></li> <li>Title of section changed</li> <li><b>Added reference to ministry's <i>Collaborative Programs</i> guideline and Program Design and System Innovation branch in first paragraph</b></li> <li>Revised to remove requirement referring to submission of written requests for equivalency</li> </ul>      | April 2010<br>December 2018<br>December 2018<br>December 2019 |
| 5.1     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Added a new preamble and monitoring principles prior to section 5.2</li> <li>Modified second paragraph of preamble prior to section 5.2 to add reference to audits</li> </ul>   | April 2011<br>December 2014                                   |
| 5.2     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updated the section on comprehensive evaluations</li> <li>Revised to remove paragraph referring to possibility of a second comprehensive evaluation.</li> <li>Revised second paragraph to add reference to audits for the CARUs</li> <li>Minor amendments made to first two paragraphs</li> </ul>   | April 2010<br>June 2013<br>December 2014<br>December 2020     |
| 5.2.1   | Revised  | June 2013   |
| 5.2.2   | Added a new section on Self-Study Guidelines for Comprehensive Evaluations   | April 2010  |
| 5.2.2.4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revised one information requirement under Category 4</li> <li>Revised one information requirement under Category 4</li> <li>Added one information requirement under Category 5</li> </ul>   | February 2017<br>December 2019<br>December 2019               |
| 5.3.2   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revised to clarify reporting for programs having undergone a cyclical review</li> <li>Revised to reflect move to monitoring reporting (annually, biennially or triennially) instead of annual reporting</li> </ul>  | June 2013<br>December 2020                                    |
| 5.3.3   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Substantially revised and title of section changed</li> <li>Revised to clarify what information institutions are expected to provide</li> <li><b>Revised guidelines, added a new section "Submission of cyclical review results", and title of section changed</b></li> </ul>   | December 2012<br>May 2016<br>April 2018                       |

| Section          | Explanation of Change   | Date  |
|------------------|---|---|
|                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Added new guideline (e.)</li> <li>Revised section</li> </ul>   | December 2019<br>June 2021  |
| 5.3.5            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Added a new section on audits</li> <li>Substantially expanded information on Quality Assurance Process Audits, title of section changed</li> <li>Revised section</li> </ul>  | December 2014<br>April 2018<br><br>June 2021  |
| 5.3.5.2          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Added criterion 1(d) for moving to Quality Assurance audit status</li> </ul>   | June 2022   |
| 5.3.6            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Added a new section on Delegated New Program Approval Status</li> </ul>  | June 2021   |
| Glossary         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Added 10 new definitions</li> <li><b>Added a new entry for 'Engaged and Active Learning'</b></li> <li><b>Added a new entry for 'Audit'</b></li> <li><b>Added new entries for 'Competencies', 'Learning (or course or program) objectives', and 'Learning outcomes'</b></li> <li><b>Added new entry for 'Academic Integrity'</b></li> </ul> | April 2011<br>December 2011<br>December 2014<br>September 2017<br><br>December 2021 |
| Appendix C       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Changed to reflect new Part A and Part B template (resident institutions)</li> <li>Updated with latest version of Part A template (resident institutions)</li> <li>Changed to provide access to revised Part A and Part B template (resident institutions)</li> </ul>  | February 2013<br><br>August 2018<br>June 2022                                       |
| Appendix E (old) | Deleted former Appendix E (Contents Checklist for full CAQC Review of Undergraduate and Graduate Programs)  | September 2013  |
| Appendix E (old) | Deleted former Appendix E (CV Template)   | September 2019  |
| Appendix E       | Completely revised<br>Revised introductory section  | December 2016<br>March 2020   |
| Appendix F       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Added a reference to engaged and active learning under Criterion 3</li> <li><b>Revised to remove references to Council's proposal checklist</b></li> <li>Revised one criterion under each of Category 3 and Category 8</li> <li>Added an introductory section</li> </ul>   | December 2011<br>September 2013<br>February 2017<br>March 2020                      |
| Appendix G       | Revised; new section on Cyclical Review of Programs added   | December 2012   |
| Appendix H       | Changed to reflect new Part A and Part B template (non-resident institutions)   | September 2013  |
| Appendix I       | Added Appendix I – Terms and Conditions of Ministerial Approval for Non-Resident Institution Degree Programs  | April 2010  |

| Section    | Explanation of Change   | Date   |
|------------|---|--|
| Appendix J | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Added Appendix J – Financial Security Requirements for Non-Resident Institutions</li> <li>Added <b>definition of “institution”</b> and revised s. 1.2 and 1.6</li> </ul>                         | April 2010<br><br>October 2020               |
| Appendix L | Revised Graduate Program Evaluation Framework<br>Added an introductory section  | June 2012<br>March 2020                      |
| Appendix M | Added Appendix M – Audit Pilot Project Task Force Process   | December 2014                                |
| Appendix N | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Added Appendix N – Organizational Evaluation Framework – Graduate Programs</li> <li>Revised introductory section</li> <li>Revised criteria under organizational assessment Standard 3</li> </ul> | December 2011<br><br>March 2020<br>June 2022 |
| All        | Updated pagination and numbering schemes throughout document for ease of reference  | April 2010                                   |
| All        | Updated regulation references to the new <i>Program of Study Regulation (AR 91/2009)</i>  | April 2010                                   |
| All        | <b>Updated references to Alberta’s Six Sector Model to reflect category name changes</b>  | February 2019                                |

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## SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 SCOPE AND PURPOSE

The *Handbook* is intended to provide a comprehensive description of the role the Campus Alberta Quality Council (CAQC) plays in quality assurance. It sets out a broad operating framework and consistent requirements for quality assessment of degree programs offered in the post-secondary education system in Alberta. For institutions, the *Handbook* provides an overview of what to expect during a review and an outline of how to prepare for the review. The *Handbook* is also intended to assist post-secondary institutions in undertaking planning and preparation for their quality reviews by indicating the areas on which the review will focus and the kinds of data it may be helpful for the provider to assemble in the period before the review is scheduled.

Council regularly reviews its existing policies, standards and practices. An effort is also made to be anticipatory or proactive in the development of policies and practices suited to evolving needs and changing circumstances. Changes made to Council's policies, standards and practices will be reflected in this *Handbook* and on Council's website at [caqc.alberta.ca](http://caqc.alberta.ca).

It is the applicant's responsibility to use current policies, procedures, criteria, and forms.

### 1.2 BACKGROUND

The Campus Alberta Quality Council was established in 2004 under the new [Post-secondary Learning Act](#) (Appendix A). Unlike many other jurisdictions in Canada where each institution has its own Act, in Alberta, the [Post-secondary Learning Act](#) (Appendix A) brings all public institutions and most other aspects of higher education under one piece of legislation.

Faced with a growing need and demand for post-secondary education, the Alberta government decided to increase access to degree programs by allowing public colleges and technical institutes to apply to offer university-level degree programs. However, the government wanted a mechanism that would ensure a rigorous review of all new degree programs to assure their quality. Consequently, it established the Campus Alberta Quality Council under the [Post-secondary Learning Act](#) (Appendix A) to conduct those reviews and make recommendations to the Minister of Advanced Education.

#### 1.2.1 MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES

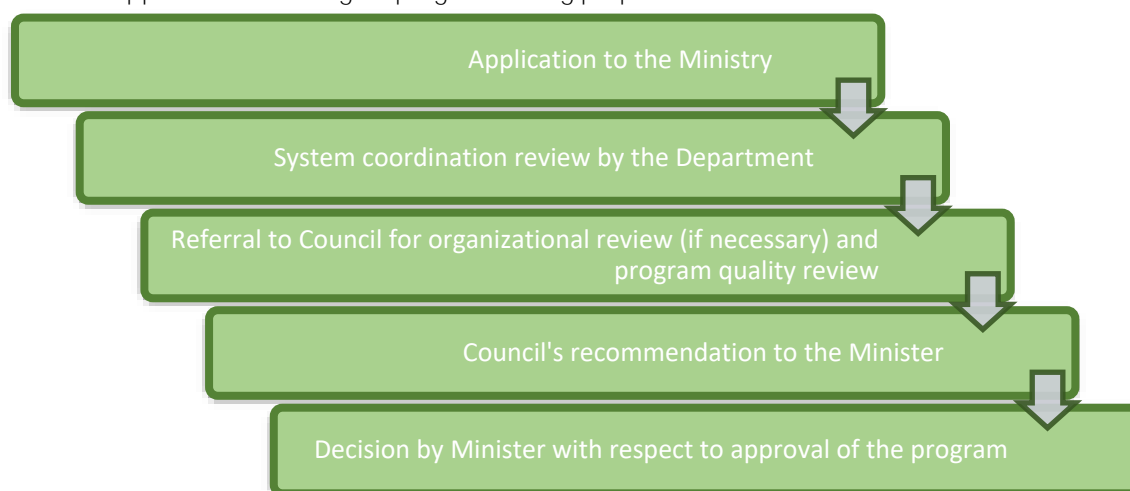
The Campus Alberta Quality Council is an arms-length quality assurance agency that makes recommendations to the Minister of Advanced Education on applications from post-secondary institutions wishing to offer new degree programs in Alberta under the terms of the [Post-secondary Learning Act](#) (Appendix A) and the [Programs of Study Regulation \(AR 91/2009\)](#) (Appendix A). Other than degrees in divinity, all programs offered in Alberta, including degrees offered by non-resident institutions, must be approved by the Minister. Therefore, Council is charged with the quality review of all degree programs proposed by:

- resident public institutions,
- resident private institutions, both for-profit and non-profit,
- non-resident (out-of-province) public institutions,
- non-resident (out-of-province) private institutions, both for-profit and non-profit.

In fulfillment of its mandate, the Council

- reviews all applications for new academic undergraduate and graduate programs referred to it by the Minister,
- determines the criteria and procedures for its reviews,
- strikes organizational, program and comprehensive peer review teams,
- monitors approved degree programs,
- conducts comprehensive evaluations,
- reviews approved programs delivered off-site,
- **undertakes research to assist in Council's work, and**
- makes recommendations to the Minister based on an organizational review of the institution and/or a review of the degree program to ensure quality.

The full process of approval for new degree programs being proposed is as follows:



## 1.2.2 CAQC PRINCIPLES

November 2005  
With revisions to August 2018

To guide its decisions, Council has adopted some key operating principles. **These will be considered in all of Council's work.** The principles were originally adopted in November 2005, and are reviewed annually.

### CORE PRINCIPLES

Principle 1 – The best interests of learners are at the core of Council's activities as it assesses proposed degree programs and monitors the quality of existing degree programs.

Principle 2 – Council's standards are appropriate to the nature and degree level of programs and are comparable to national and international standards. Council encourages innovation and creativity in degree programming when there is a demonstrated benefit to learners.

Principle 3 – Council recognizes that the primary responsibility for academic and institutional quality assurance rests with degree granting institutions themselves.

Principle 4 – Council respects the foundational role of academic freedom in the provision of high quality degree programs.

Principle 5 – Peer review is an essential component of all of **Council's evaluation** processes.

*Principle 5 modified August 2018*

Principle 6 – Consultation with stakeholders is an integral part of degree program development, appraisal, and monitoring.

Principle 7 – Council exhibits and promotes appreciation of institutional diversity and respect for institutional autonomy.

## OPERATING PRINCIPLES

Principle 8 – Council exhibits and promotes equity, openness, transparency, and efficiency in all its practices and policies.

Principle 9 – Where appropriate, Council applies iterative processes in discussions with institutions to clarify and improve degree programs.

Principle 10 – Members and peer reviewers act in ways that build trust in **Council's processes and decisions**.

Principle 11 – Members and peer reviewers act respectfully, autonomously, and in accordance with ethical standards, **and abide by Council's code of conduct, which includes provisions on conflict of interest**.

*Principle 11 modified August 2018*

Principle 12 – Council is committed to the quality assurance review of its own activities and to sharing effective practices in degree program quality assessment.

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### 1.2.3 MEMBERSHIP OF COUNCIL

The Council currently consists of 11 members appointed by the Minister of Advanced Education, including a chair and 10 members with expertise in the post-secondary system. The normal term of office for members is three years, and members may be reappointed. **Biographical information about the members is available on Council's website a** <http://caqc.alberta.ca/members/caqc-members/>.

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### 1.2.4 COUNCIL'S PROPOSAL REVIEW STANDING COMMITTEE (PRSC)

*Revised and Terms of Reference added July 2009*

**In keeping with its commitment to being expeditious, Council's Proposal Review Standing Committee acts on behalf of the full Council according to the following terms of reference:**

Terms of Reference of the Proposal Review Standing Committee (PRSC):

- exists as a standing committee of the Campus Alberta Quality Council until such time as Council may decide by formal motion to dissolve it;
- **is comprised of Council's Chair and, normally, three Council members;**
- **reviews all requests for partially or fully expedited reviews, in accordance with Council's policies and criteria;**
- conducts a desk review of all proposals granted a fully expedited review;

- reviews any other issue that Council, or Council's Chair and Secretariat, decide to refer to it for advice. Council members will be given the opportunity to comment before acting on PRSC's advice/decision;
- may make a positive recommendation to the Minister on behalf of the full Council. Negative recommendations to the Minister can only be made by the full Council;
- reports in writing to the full Council at each meeting following any evaluative work it does or any recommendations it has made.

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### 1.2.5 COUNCIL'S MONITORING STANDING COMMITTEE (MSC)

*Added April 2011  
With revisions to June 2021*

Section 8 of the [Programs of Study Regulation \(AR 91/2009\)](#) (Appendix A) gives Council the responsibility to ensure compliance with Council's standards and conditions once a degree program has been approved. This is a responsibility complementary to Council's role in assessing the quality of all new degree program applications referred to it by the Minister.

In performing its monitoring role, the Campus Alberta Quality Council subscribes to the principles that it may adopt to inform its oversight of degree programs offered by institutions in Campus Alberta. Monitoring is undertaken in order to ensure that the organizations, the degree programs, and the providers of those degree programs continue to meet **Council's conditions and standards of organizational and program quality. In addition to degree programs approved on the recommendation of CAQC, Council's monitoring role extends** to degree programs approved by the former Private Colleges Accreditation Board (PCAB) and to other approved degree programs referred to it by the Minister.

The Monitoring Standing Committee exists as a standing committee of the Campus Alberta Quality Council until such time as Council may decide by formal motion to dissolve it. Council has delegated to this Committee the following specific tasks:

- to consider the adequacy of institutional responses to conditions and expectations set by Council regarding any organization or degree program that is seeking approval or has been approved;
- on behalf of Council, to provide feedback to institutions on their monitoring reports;
- on behalf of Council, to decide on the adequacy of information provided by institutions about changes to their approved programs (such as regards to curriculum, faculty or delivery);
- to report in writing to Council at each meeting following any evaluative work it does or any decision/recommendation it has made in its discharge of its monitoring role;
- to recommend to Council that it make a negative ruling about a matter it has considered in the course of discharging its delegated responsibility;
- on behalf of Council, to decide when a program has satisfied its quality reporting requirements and is no longer required to provide monitoring reports and results of cyclical reviews.

The Monitoring Standing Committee is comprised of Council's Chair or delegate and, normally, two Council members.

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### 1.2.6 CAQC SECRETARIAT

The CAQC Secretariat assists the Chair and Council in their activities by providing advice on matters of policy and procedure, organizing meetings, helping to set meeting agendas, and preparing publications. It also provides information and advice in response to inquiries from various agencies, current and prospective applicants, and members of the public about matters related to quality assurance of new degree programs. As well, it coordinates all

activities of Council's external evaluation teams; the Secretariat's Director or designate serves as an advisory member on these teams.

### 1.3 ACTIVITIES OF COUNCIL

The primary work of Council is to review and make recommendations to the Minister on applications from post-secondary institutions seeking to offer new degree programs in Alberta. In addition, it conducts periodic **evaluations of degree programs that have been approved on Council's recommendation or by the Private Colleges Accreditation Board (PCAB)**, as well as any other approved degree program referred to it by the Minister. Certain other **activities flowing from Council's primary work include providing advice and consultation, monitoring related developments in the post-secondary milieu, and reporting on its work.**

#### 1.3.1 ORGANIZATIONAL EVALUATIONS

The [Post-secondary Learning Act](#) (Appendix A) requires the Campus Alberta Quality Council, in making its recommendation to the Minister, to consider the ability and readiness 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, depth and rigour to meet national and international standards of programs at recognized post-secondary institutions. Council has established assessment standards and criteria to guide institutions through an organizational evaluation (Section 3). Typically, a peer-review team commissioned by Council assists it to determine whether an institution has the capacity to offer the program(s) proposed.

For institutions wishing to offer a first degree program, or a first degree at a new level, a satisfactory outcome from an organizational review must be achieved before a program review can be conducted. This kind of review assesses whether an institution can in fact support the program(s) under review.

**The institution's self-study** provides evidence used by Council and its external evaluators to determine whether the institution is ready to implement and sustain degree programs. The institution is not necessarily required to be completely ready at the time of application to deliver the new program(s) proposed, but, if it is not ready at that time, it is expected to have the necessary plans in place.

#### 1.3.2 PROGRAM EVALUATIONS

According to the [Programs of Study Regulation \(AR 91/2009\)](#) (Appendix A), Council reviews any degree proposal the Minister refers to it after a system coordination review by the Department of Advanced Education<sup>1</sup> (please see Section 2).

A program evaluation focuses on a review of the specific curriculum and the intellectual and physical resources needed to deliver the program proposed. **The program's subject matter and the learning outcome standards must be** appropriate to the level and type of degree proposed. Council also wants to ensure the institution has plans to continually improve the degree program and intends to review it systematically and periodically using external evaluators. Council has established assessment standards and criteria to guide institutions through a program

<sup>1</sup> Approval of degree programs under the *Post-secondary Learning Act* and the *Programs of Study Regulation (AR 91/2009)* follows a two-stage review process once a proposal is received by the Ministry.

- Stage 1 is a system coordination review of the proposed program by the Ministry to make a determination of the need for the program and how it fits with other programs currently offered in **Alberta's post-secondary system**.
- Stage 2 is a quality review enacted if the Minister forwards the proposal to CAQC.



evaluation (Section 4). Typically, Council commissions a team of peer adjudicators to assist it in determining whether a program proposed meets its program assessment standards.

The full review for institutions proposing to offer their first degree, or first degree at a new level, normally involves both organizational and program reviews using external evaluators. Expedited reviews are possible in other cases (see Section 2.1.1). The Secretariat manages the stages of review, including support for review teams and organization of and participation in site visits.

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### 1.3.3 COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATIONS

Section 8 of the [Programs of Study Regulation \(AR 91/2009\)](#) (Appendix A) stipulates, among other things, that the Campus Alberta Quality Council may review and monitor any degree program to ensure compliance with the standards and conditions established under section 7 [duty to establish standards and conditions].

**Council's Comprehensive Evaluations provide it with an opportunity**

- to assess whether the institution has lived up to the promises made and has executed the plans developed when the programs were first approved,
- **to ensure that the institution and its degree programs remain in compliance with Council's standards, including Council's expectation that the institution has internal systems to ensure continuous improvement and periodic external evaluation, and**
- **to review the institution's future plans and directions for the strengthening of a program or programs.**

In addition to degree programs approved on recommendation of the Council, Council's monitoring role also applies to degree programs previously approved by the PCAB and to any other approved degree program referred to it by the Minister.

Section 9 of the [Programs of Study Regulation \(AR 91/2009\)](#) (Appendix A) indicates that, if Council determines that any of the standards or conditions established under section 7 are no longer being met with respect to an institution or an approved degree program offered by an institution, it may recommend that the Minister cancel the approval of one or more degree programs offered by the institution. In the case of a resident private institution, Council may also recommend that the Order in Council designating the institution as a private college that may grant approved degrees be rescinded.

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### 1.3.4 NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF COUNCIL

**Council is committed to ensuring the national and international recognition of Alberta's degrees**, and works closely with other provinces in pan-Canadian quality assurance initiatives.

**Council's Secretariat** was involved in an important national initiative – the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) Quality Assurance Subcommittee under the chairmanship of Marilyn Patton, **Director of Council's Secretariat**. **The Subcommittee's work** at the pan-Canadian level was crucial in improving the understanding of Canadian degrees and how they are assessed while also facilitating interprovincial student mobility. In April 2007, CMEC announced that ministers in all provinces and territories had endorsed a *Ministerial Statement on Quality Assurance of Degree Education in Canada*. The *Statement* contains a Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework as well as standards and processes for assessment of new degree programs and new degree providers.

**Council's processes and assessment standards are consistent with those contained in the *Statement*** and Council has adopted the *Statement's* [Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework](#) (Appendix B) for use when assessing the level of proposed degree program

## SECTION 2 - APPLICATION PROCEDURES

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The following Section outlines the various application procedures that must be followed by resident and non-resident institutions submitting applications for new degree programs at both undergraduate and graduate levels.

Approval of degree programs under the [Post-secondary Learning Act](#) (Appendix A) and the [Programs of Study Regulation \(AR 91/2009\)](#) (Appendix A) follows a two-stage review process once a proposal is received by the Ministry.



The Campus Alberta Quality Council reviews all proposals for new degree programs to ensure they are of high quality before they are approved. The time it takes for Council to make a recommendation is affected by various factors such as **the completeness of the institution's final proposal, whether or not an organizational evaluation is required before the program review, the time it takes to recruit external reviewers and establish a site visit date mutually agreeable to all reviewers and the institution, and whether or not the institution is asked to provide further refinements of the proposal.**

#### 2.1.1 TYPES OF REVIEWS

Reviews by Council may proceed in one of three ways:

- **Full Review** – 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 each review.
- **Partially Expedited Review** – 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.
- **Fully Expedited Review** – when Council determines that neither an organizational review nor program review using Council-appointed external evaluators is needed. The PRSC will do a desk review.

#### 2.1.2 CLASSIFICATION OF POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS IN ALBERTA

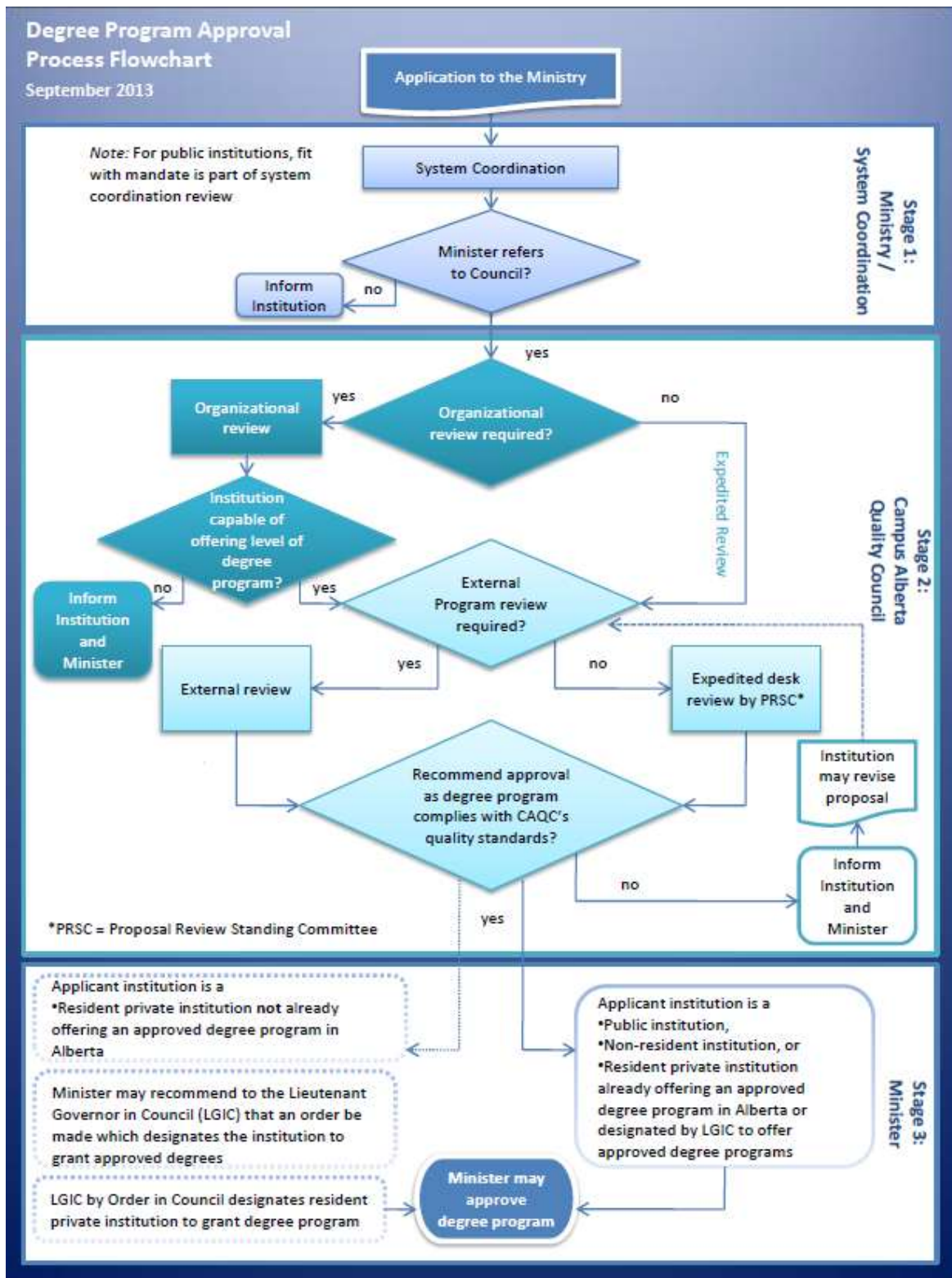
*With revisions to June 2010*

*The Roles and Mandates Policy Framework for the Publicly-Funded Advanced Education System (November 2007), which was developed in consultation with Alberta's students and publicly funded institutions, classifies all publicly funded post-secondary institutions in Alberta within a six sector model of institutional differentiation based on credentials offered, type and intensity of research activity, and geographic focus.*

| <b>Alberta's Six Sector Model<br/>(Publicly Funded Institutions)</b> |  |   |   |   |  | <b>Other<br/>Institutions<br/>Offering<br/>Degrees</b>      |
|--|--|---|---|---|--|---|
| Comprehensive<br>Academic and<br>Research<br>Universities            | Undergraduate<br>Universities                      | Polytechnic<br>Institutions                                   | Comprehensive<br>Community<br>Colleges            | Independent<br>Academic<br>Institutions               | Specialized<br>Arts and<br>Culture<br>Institutions | Private<br>Resident<br>Institutions                         |
| <b>Athabasca University</b><br>(Athabasca)                           | <b>Grant MacEwan University</b><br>(Edmonton)      | <b>Northern Alberta Institute of Technology</b><br>(Edmonton) | <b>Bow Valley College</b><br>(Calgary)            | <b>Ambrose University</b><br>(Calgary)                | <b>Banff Centre</b><br>(Banff)                     | <b>Newman Theological College</b><br>(Edmonton)             |
| <b>University of Alberta</b><br>(Edmonton)                           | <b>Mount Royal University</b><br>(Calgary)         | <b>Southern Alberta Institute of Technology</b><br>(Calgary)  | <b>Keyano College</b><br>(Fort McMurray)          | <b>St. Mary's University</b><br>(Calgary)             |  | <b>Non-resident<br/>Institutions</b>                        |
| <b>University of Calgary</b><br>(Calgary)                            | <b>Alberta University of the Arts</b><br>(Calgary) | <b>Northwestern Polytechnic</b><br>(Grande Prairie)           | <b>Lakeland College</b><br>(Vermilion)            | <b>Burman University</b><br>(Lacombe)                 |  | <b>Cape Breton University</b><br>(Edmonton)                 |
| <b>The University of Lethbridge</b><br>(Lethbridge)                  |  | <b>Red Deer Polytechnic</b><br>(Red Deer)                     | <b>Lethbridge College</b><br>(Lethbridge)         | <b>Concordia University of Edmonton</b><br>(Edmonton) |  | <b>City University of Seattle</b><br>(Calgary and Edmonton) |
|  |  |   | <b>Medicine Hat College</b><br>(Medicine Hat)     | <b>The King's University</b><br>(Edmonton)            |  | <b>Cornell University</b> (Calgary and Edmonton)            |
|  |  |   | <b>NorQuest College</b><br>(Edmonton)             |   |  | <b>Gonzaga University</b> (various locations)               |
|  |  |   | <b>Northern Lakes College</b> (Lesser Slave Lake) |   |  | <b>Queen's University</b><br>(Calgary and Edmonton)         |
|  |  |   | <b>Olds College</b><br>(Olds)                     |   |  | <b>University of Portland</b><br>(Edmonton)                 |
|  |  |   | <b>Portage College</b><br>(Lac La Biche)          |   |  |   |

### 2.1.3 DEGREE PROGRAM APPROVAL PROCESS FLOWCHART

June 2005  
With revisions to September 2013





## 2.2 RESIDENT INSTITUTIONS – DEGREE PROGRAM APPROVAL PROCESS

*With revisions to April 2015*

### 2.2.1 APPLICATIONS UNDERGOING A FULL REVIEW

A full Council review includes both an organizational review (the readiness of the institution to mount and sustain the degree program) and a program review (the quality of the degree program being proposed) using external evaluators appointed by Council.

1. Institutions that are proposing
  - a first degree program (e.g., first applied degree, first baccalaureate),
  - a first degree at a new level (e.g., first graduate degree), or
  - other precedent-setting degree (e.g., first BSc when only BA programs offered),will normally be subject to the full Council review process. In other words, both the organizational and program review phases will normally be followed. Normally proposals from Alberta's Comprehensive and Academic Research Institutions will not be subject to a full Council review.
2. Prospective applicants seeking to offer a new degree program are encouraged to discuss their plans with the Campus Alberta Quality Council Secretariat prior to submitting a proposal. Please contact the CAQC Secretariat by phone at 780 427 8921 or by e-mail at [caqc@gov.ab.ca](mailto:caqc@gov.ab.ca).
3. Institutions are to submit Part A of proposals to offer a new degree or a new specialization in an existing degree program through the Provider and Program Registry System (PAPRS), using the proposal template provided in PAPRS.
4. Initially the Ministry conducts a system coordination review (Stage 1) to determine the need for and sustainability of the program in the context of Campus Alberta. The review will:
  - examine the institution's rationale for the program in the context of the institution's **strategic plans**, mandate and learner and employer needs,
  - assess the implications of the program for existing programs offered by the institution and in the wider context of Campus Alberta, and
  - examine the institution's **budget plan for the program** in relation to financial sustainability and implications for students and taxpayers.

For information with respect to the criteria that will be used by the Ministry in conducting the system coordination review (Stage 1), contact Paul Gaudette, Director of the Program Design and System Innovation branch of Alberta Advanced Education, by phone at 780 644 8138, or by e-mail at [paul.gaudette@gov.ab.ca](mailto:paul.gaudette@gov.ab.ca).

5. Alberta institutions that deliver ministerially approved degrees are invited to make comments on proposed degree programs during the system coordination review phase. Upon receipt by the Ministry, Part A of a proposal will be distributed by e-mail to the Vice-President, Academic or equivalent. Institutions wishing to comment on a proposal may provide written comments to the Vice-President, Academic or equivalent at the proposing institution and forward a copy to Paul Gaudette, Director, Program Design and System Innovation at [paul.gaudette@gov.ab.ca](mailto:paul.gaudette@gov.ab.ca). Comments should be forwarded within one month of the proposal being distributed to the system. Institutions receiving comments on their degree proposals are expected to respond to those comments by writing to the

Vice-President, Academic or equivalent of the commenting institution and copying Paul Gaudette, Director, Program Design and System Innovation in the response.

6. Following a successful system coordination review, the Minister will formally refer the proposal to the Campus Alberta Quality Council and request that it conduct its quality review (Stage 2). Council will then inform the applicant institution and request that it send the necessary documentation to Council at:

Chair  
Campus Alberta Quality Council  
19th Floor, Commerce Place  
10155 - 102 Street  
Edmonton, AB T5J 4G8

7. Applicants should familiarize themselves with the review process and assessment standards that will be used by Council and its reviewers to ensure the documentation provided as part of the application is complete and gives evidence to show the standards are or will be met should the institution be authorized to offer the degree program. The onus is on the applicant to make the strongest case possible. **Council's guidelines and assessment standards** can be found in [Section 3 – Organizational Evaluation](#) and [Section 4 – Program Evaluation](#).
8. The information needs of Council expand on what is required for the system coordination review by the Ministry. The following information is needed for a full Campus Alberta Quality Council review:

- a. Payment of the application fee of \$2,500 (private institutions only). The application fee, payable to Government of Alberta, should be submitted to the Campus Alberta Quality Council Secretariat in Canadian funds and is due at the time the program has been referred to the Quality Council. Further information and the Fee Schedule are **available on Council's** website at [caqc.alberta.ca](http://caqc.alberta.ca).

The additional direct costs for all evaluation activities with respect to applications from public and private institutions will be charged to the applicant institution. Evaluation activities include, but are not limited to, organizational and program evaluations.

- b. The signed [Statement of Institutional Integrity](#) (Appendix D).
- c. Sixteen copies of a self-assessment (self-study) proving the applicant's readiness to mount and sustain the proposed degree programs, including appropriate supporting documentation such as audited financial statements, planning documents, faculty handbook (or equivalent) and CVs of key administrators. The [Institutional Self-Study Guidelines for Organizational Evaluations](#) (Section 3.8) outline the 11 categories that must be addressed in the self-study. The self-study is the primary document used by Council's external organizational review team.
- d. Five copies of the program proposal (Parts A and B). Part A must reflect any changes as a result of discussions with the Ministry during the system coordination stage. Part B is the additional information Council needs. To ensure all necessary information is included in the final program proposal, refer to the [Resident Institutions – Degree Program Proposal Template](#) (Appendix C). In addition to the five paper copies of the program proposal, please send an electronic copy of Parts A and B via e-mail (preferably in Word or copyable PDF) to [caqc@gov.ab.ca](mailto:caqc@gov.ab.ca).
- e. A list of possible organizational and program reviewers, together with their coordinates (i.e., rank/position, institution, areas of expertise/specialization, professional experience, and how they can be reached),



identification of any previous affiliation with the applicant institution and the reason for recommending each. Do not contact the individuals to see if they are available prior to submitting their names. As reviewers will be asked to sign a conflict of interest statement, do not suggest names of individuals who have been involved in any way with the proposed program.

9. When submitting CVs as part of the application ensure that approval is received from the individual to do so.
10. Once the application has been received, Council will engage a team of external experts to assess the institution's readiness to implement and sustain the proposed degree program using Council's [Organizational Assessment Standards](#) (Section 3.3) and the [Organizational Evaluation Framework](#) (Appendix E). The team initially reviews the self-study and other information provided by the applicant institution and interviews appropriate members of the **institution's community during a site visit**. Once the team's report is written, it is forwarded to the institution for response. Both the report and response are then discussed at a Council meeting.
11. Following a successful organizational evaluation, Council engages a team of external subject experts to assess the quality of the proposed degree program using Council's [Program Assessment Standards](#) (Section 4.3.1) and the [Undergraduate Program Evaluation Framework](#) (Appendix F). The team reviews the program proposal and interviews **appropriate members of the institution's community during a site visit**. Once again, the team's report and the institution's response to it are discussed by Council. The decision on whether or not to recommend the program be approved is sent to the Minister.
12. The process culminates with the Minister notifying the institution of his decision. Once the Minister has acted on **Council's recommendation**, Council will send an outcomes letter. If a program has been approved, the letter will outline any expectations with respect to implementation and monitoring.

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## 2.2.2 ELIGIBILITY FOR AN EXPEDITED REVIEW

June 2005  
With revisions to December 2017

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.



### 2.2.2.1 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.**

### 2.2.2.2 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 G).**

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### 2.2.3 APPLICATIONS UNDERGOING AN EXPEDITED REVIEW

*January 2006  
With revisions to April 2015*

A partially expedited review is one that does not require an organizational evaluation, and a fully expedited review is one where the PRSC completes a desk review rather than using external evaluators for the program review. Normally, applicants must apply to Council for either type of review using the criteria outlined above in Section 2.2.2.

1. Prospective applicants seeking to offer a new degree program are encouraged to discuss their plans with the Campus Alberta Quality Council Secretariat prior to submitting a proposal. Please contact the CAQC Secretariat by phone at 780 427 8921 or by e-mail at [caqc@gov.ab.ca](mailto:caqc@gov.ab.ca).
2. Institutions are to submit Part A of proposals to offer a new degree or a new specialization in an existing degree program through the Provider and Program Registry System (PAPRS), using the proposal template provided in PAPRS.
3. At the same time as the application is sent to the Ministry, applicants should write to the Chair of Council to apply for either a partially or fully expedited review and provide its rationale for the request. This enables Council to rule on requests for partially expedited reviews (no organizational evaluation) prior to referral to the Council by the Minister. However, Council is not able to decide on a fully expedited review until the final program proposal (Parts A and B) has been received. **Council's criteria** for partially and fully expedited reviews are described in Section 2.2.2. *NOTE:* As degree proposals from Alberta Comprehensive Academic and Research Universities will not normally be subject to a full Council review, they need only apply for a fully expedited review.
4. Initially the Ministry conducts a system coordination review (Stage 1) to determine the need for and sustainability of the program in the context of Campus Alberta. The review will:
  - examine the institution's rationale for the program in the context of the institution's **strategic plans**, mandate and learner and employer needs,
  - assess the implications of the program for existing programs offered by the institution and in the wider context of Campus Alberta, and
  - examine the institution's budget plan for the program in relation to financial sustainability and implications for students and taxpayers.

For information with respect to the criteria that will be used by the Ministry in conducting the system coordination review (Stage 1), contact Paul Gaudette, Director of the Program Design and System Innovation branch of Alberta Advanced Education, by phone at 780 644 8138, or by e-mail at [paul.gaudette@gov.ab.ca](mailto:paul.gaudette@gov.ab.ca).

5. Alberta institutions that deliver ministerially approved degrees are invited to make comments on proposed degree programs during the system coordination review phase. Upon receipt by the Ministry, Part A of a proposal will be distributed by e-mail to the Vice-President, Academic or equivalent. Institutions wishing to comment on a proposal may provide written comments to the Vice-President, Academic or equivalent at the proposing institution and forward a copy to Paul Gaudette, Director, Program Design and System Innovation at [paul.gaudette@gov.ab.ca](mailto:paul.gaudette@gov.ab.ca). Comments should be forwarded within one month of the proposal being distributed to the system. Institutions receiving comments on their degree proposals are expected to respond to those comments by writing to the Vice-President, Academic or equivalent of the commenting institution and copying Paul Gaudette, Director, Program Design and System Innovation in the response.
6. Following a successful system coordination review, the Minister will ask formally refer the proposal to the Campus Alberta Quality Council and request that it conduct its quality review (Stage 2). Council will then inform the applicant institution of the referral and request that it send the necessary documentation to Council at:

Chair  
Campus Alberta Quality Council  
19th Floor, Commerce Place  
10155 - 102 Street  
Edmonton, AB T5J 4G8

7. Applicants should familiarize themselves with the review process and assessment standards that will be used by Council and its reviewers to ensure the documentation provided as part of the application is complete and gives evidence to show the standards are or will be met should the institution be authorized to offer the degree program. The onus is on the applicant to make the strongest case possible. **Council's guidelines and assessment standards** can be found in [Section 3 – Organizational Evaluation](#) and [Section 4 – Program Evaluation](#).
8. The information needs of Council expand on what is required for the system coordination review by the Ministry. The following information is needed for an expedited Campus Alberta Quality Council review:
  - a. Payment of the application fee of \$2,500 (private institutions only). The application fee, payable to Government of Alberta, should be submitted to the Campus Alberta Quality Council Secretariat in Canadian funds and is due at the time the program has been referred to the Quality Council. Further information and the Fee Schedule are **available on Council's website** at [caqc.alberta.ca](http://caqc.alberta.ca).

The additional direct costs for all evaluation activities with respect to applications from public and private institutions will be charged to the applicant institution. Evaluation activities include, but are not limited to, organizational and program evaluations.

- b. The signed [Statement of Institutional Integrity](#) (Appendix D).
  - c. An electronic copy of Parts A and B of the program proposal (preferably in Word or copyable PDF) should be sent to [caqc@gov.ab.ca](mailto:caqc@gov.ab.ca). Part A must reflect any changes as a result of discussions with the Ministry during the system coordination stage. Part B is the additional information Council needs. To ensure all necessary information is included in the final program proposal, refer to the [Resident Institutions – Degree Program Proposal Template](#) (Appendix C) document.
  - d. A list of possible program reviewers, together with their coordinates (i.e., rank/position, institution, areas of expertise/specialization, professional experience, and how they can be reached), identification of any previous affiliation with the applicant institution and the reason for recommending each. Do not contact the individuals

to see if they are available prior to submitting their names. As reviewers will be asked to sign a conflict of interest statement, do not suggest names of individuals who have been involved in any way with the proposed program.

9. When submitting CVs as part of the application ensure that approval is received from the individual to do so.
10. When a partially expedited review process is to be followed, once the application has been referred to Council for quality review, Council will engage a team of external subject experts to assess the quality of the proposed degree program using Council's program assessment standards. Paper copies of the proposal will be required at this time. The team reviews the program proposal and interviews appropriate members of the institution's **community** during a site visit. The team's report and the institution's response to it are then discussed by Council. The decision on whether or not to recommend the program be approved is sent to the Minister.
11. When PRSC determines that a fully expedited review process is to be followed, it will conduct a desk review of the proposed program. The review culminates in a decision on whether or not to recommend that the program be approved. The decision on whether or not to recommend the program be approved is sent to the Minister.
12. In either case, the process culminates with the Minister notifying the institution of his decision. Once the Minister **has acted on Council's recommendation**, Council will send an outcomes letter. If a program has been approved, the letter will outline any expectations with respect to implementation and monitoring.

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#### 2.2.4 FINANCIAL SECURITY REQUIREMENTS FOR NON-PUBLICLY FUNDED RESIDENT INSTITUTIONS

As part of the initial application, private non-publicly funded resident institutions will be required to provide satisfactory proof that they will be able to provide suitable financial security.

For details, please contact the CAQC Secretariat by phone at 780 427 8921 or by e-mail at [caqc@gov.ab.ca](mailto:caqc@gov.ab.ca).

## 2.3 NON-RESIDENT INSTITUTIONS – DEGREE PROGRAM APPROVAL PROCESS

January 2006  
With revisions to March 2021

In order to assure the quality of degree programming, all degree programs offered in Alberta, other than degrees in divinity, must be approved by the Minister of Advanced Education. Non-resident post-secondary institutions seeking to offer new degree programs in Alberta may do so under the terms of the [Post-secondary Learning Act](#) (Appendix A) and the [Programs of Study Regulation \(AR 91/2009\)](#) (Appendix A).

Article 124(k) of the [Post-secondary Learning Act](#) (Appendix A) indicates that the Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations respecting applications from non-resident institutions for approval to do the things referred to in section 106(1) [offering degrees], including regulations

- i. respecting the form of an application for approval;
- ii. respecting conditions to be met by applicants for approval;
- iii. respecting the renewal and cancellation of an approval.

Consequently, the [Programs of Study Regulation \(AR 91/2009\)](#) under the [Post-secondary Learning Act](#) applies to non-resident institutions in the same manner as for resident institutions. Article 2(b) of the *Regulation* states that a resident private college or non-resident institution that proposes to establish, extend, expand, reduce, suspend, terminate or transfer a degree program offered or to be offered in Alberta must apply to the Minister for approval to do so.

The Campus Alberta Quality Council is charged with reviewing all non-resident degree proposals referred to it by the Minister, including the following:

- i. degree programs from both public and private (for-profit and not-for-profit) non-resident institutions;
- ii. degree programs offered through distance learning by non-resident institutions in instances where these programs are being specifically marketed to Alberta students; and
- iii. degree programs offered by non-resident institutions at an Alberta institution that is acting as an agent or broker for the non-resident institution.

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### 2.3.1 APPLICATIONS UNDERGOING A FULL REVIEW

With revisions to March 2021

In certain cases, a non-resident institution may be required to undergo a full Council review that includes both an organizational review (the readiness of the institution to mount and sustain the degree program) and a program review (the quality of the degree program being proposed) using external evaluators appointed by Council. The focus of the organizational review will primarily be on the institution's operations in Alberta.

These cases include: non-resident institutions that are proposing

- a first degree program in Alberta (e.g., first baccalaureate); or
- a first degree program at a new level in Alberta (e.g., first graduate degree); or
- other precedent-setting degree (e.g., first BSc when only BA programs offered).

Prospective applicants seeking to offer a new degree program are encouraged to discuss their plans with the CAQC Secretariat prior to submitting a proposal. Please contact the CAQC Secretariat by phone at 780 427 8921 or by e-mail at [caqc@gov.ab.ca](mailto:caqc@gov.ab.ca).

1. All applications from non-resident institutions to offer a proposed degree program are to be submitted by e-mail to Paul Gaudette, Director, Program Design and System Innovation at [paul.gaudette@gov.ab.ca](mailto:paul.gaudette@gov.ab.ca) using the [Non-resident Institutions – Degree Program Proposal Template](#) (Appendix H).
2. Applications to the Ministry consist of the following:
  - a. Evidence
    - that the non-resident institution has had, for at least the previous five years, the authority to offer (and has been offering) the degree program in its home jurisdiction (i.e., is appropriately recognized either at the program or institutional level by an accrediting body or quality assurance agency acceptable to the Ministry, where such a body or agency exists, and/or by the appropriate public authority;
    - that the applicable oversight body in the home jurisdiction has approved or does not object to the institution's request for approval to offer the program in Alberta (evidence should be in the form of a letter from the oversight body);
    - of the non-resident institution's status, whether public or private, in the home jurisdiction; and
    - that the admission policies of Canadian non-resident institutions do not automatically prohibit consideration of graduates of Alberta approved degree programs.
  - b. An electronic copy of Part A of the Program Proposal via e-mail (preferably in Word or copyable PDF) to [paul.gaudette@gov.ab.ca](mailto:paul.gaudette@gov.ab.ca).
3. Initially the Ministry conducts a system coordination review (Stage 1) to determine the need for and sustainability of the program in the context of Campus Alberta. The review will:
  - examine the non-resident institution's rationale for the program in the context of learner and employer needs,
  - assess the implications of the program for existing programs offered in the context of Campus Alberta, and
  - **examine the institution's budget plan for the program in relation to financial sustainability and** implications for students and taxpayers.

*Last bullet added March 2009*

For information with respect to the criteria that will be used by the Ministry in conducting the system coordination review (Stage 1), contact Paul Gaudette, Director of the Program Design and System Innovation branch of Alberta Advanced Education, by phone at 780 644 8138, or by e-mail at [paul.gaudette@gov.ab.ca](mailto:paul.gaudette@gov.ab.ca).

4. Alberta institutions that deliver ministerially approved degrees are invited to make comments on proposed degree programs during the system coordination review phase. Upon receipt by the Ministry, Part A of a proposal will be distributed by e-mail to the Vice-President, Academic or equivalent. Institutions wishing to comment on a proposal may provide written comments to the Vice-President, Academic or equivalent at the proposing institution and forward a copy to Paul Gaudette, Director, Program Design and System Innovation at [paul.gaudette@gov.ab.ca](mailto:paul.gaudette@gov.ab.ca). Comments should be forwarded within one month of the proposal being distributed to the system. Institutions receiving comments on their degree proposals are expected to respond to those comments by writing to the Vice-President, Academic or equivalent of the commenting institution and copying Paul Gaudette, Director, Program Design and System Innovation in the response.
5. Following a successful system coordination review, the Minister will formally refer the proposal to the Campus Alberta Quality Council and request that it conduct its quality review (Stage 2). Council will then inform the applicant institution and request that it send the necessary documentation to Council at:

Chair  
Campus Alberta Quality Council  
19th Floor, Commerce Place  
10155 - 102 Street  
Edmonton, AB T5J 4G8

6. Applicants should familiarize themselves with the review process and assessment standards for non-resident institutions that will be used by Council and its reviewers to ensure the documentation provided as part of the application is complete and gives evidence to show the standards are or will be met should the institution be authorized to offer the degree program. The onus is on the applicant to make the strongest case possible.
7. The information needs of Council expand on what is required for the system coordination review by the Ministry. The following information is needed for a full Campus Alberta Quality Council review:
  - a. Evidence noted in no. 4 (above).
  - b. Payment of the application fee of \$2,500 (private institutions only). The application fee, payable to Government of Alberta, should be submitted to the Campus Alberta Quality Council Secretariat in Canadian funds and is due at the time the program has been referred to the Quality Council. Further information and the Fee Schedule are **available on Council's** website at [caqc.alberta.ca](http://caqc.alberta.ca).

The additional direct costs for all evaluation activities with respect to applications from public and private institutions will be charged to the applicant institution. Evaluation activities include, but are not limited to, organizational and program evaluations.

- c. A signed [Statement of Institutional Integrity](#) (Appendix D).
- d. The proposed location(s) of the program in Alberta.
- e. Evidence that the following assessment standards have been met:
  - i. Equivalence of standards  
The standards of the degree program provided by the non-resident institution are comparable to or commensurate with Council's guidelines and assessment standards for resident institutions, which can be found in [Section 3 – Organizational Evaluation](#) and [Section 4 – Program Evaluation](#). Provide a copy of the assessment standards used in the home jurisdiction.
  - ii. Degree program comparability  
The non-resident institution is providing the program to students in its home jurisdiction, and the institution must demonstrate to Council that the course(s) are comparable in requirements and learning outcomes to courses at the same level in a similar field in Alberta. The curriculum and delivery methodologies used for degree programs delivered by the non-resident institution are substantively the same as, or of comparable quality to those used for the same or similar degree program in the institution's home jurisdiction, or a sound rationale for any differences is clearly demonstrated.
  - iii. Canadian content  
Where appropriate, consideration has been given to ensure that the curriculum demonstrates relevant levels of Canadian content.



iv. Admissions and transfer

Admissions standards and policies are appropriately stated such that they conform to Alberta's post-secondary educational context and are understandable to Alberta students. Credits earned by students in programs offered by the non-resident institution in Alberta will be accepted as credit towards degrees offered in its home jurisdiction. The institution demonstrates it has established policies and procedures that outline the process by which transfer of academic credits is awarded, and is committed to exploring and maximizing transfer opportunities between its Alberta students and relevant Alberta educational institutions.

v. Credential recognition

If the degree program is intended specifically to prepare graduates for employment or licensure in a particular profession or occupation, the institution provides evidence that the degree conferred on graduates will be recognized by Alberta employers or by relevant Alberta professional or occupational associations as being acceptable for employment or licensure.

vi. Financial and academic resources

Appropriate financial, academic and other resources exist to permit the successful delivery of the program in Alberta.

- f. Fifteen copies of a self-assessment (self-study) proving the applicant's readiness to mount and sustain the proposed degree programs, including appropriate supporting documentation such as audited financial statements, planning documents, faculty handbook (or equivalent) and CVs of key administrators. The [Institutional Self-Study Guidelines for Organizational Evaluations](#) (Section 3.8) outline the 11 categories that must be addressed in the self-study. The self-study is the primary document used by Council's external organizational review team.
- g. Five copies of the program proposal (Parts A and B). Part A must reflect any changes as a result of discussions with the Ministry during the system coordination stage. Part B is the additional information Council needs. To ensure you have all the information included in your final program proposal, refer to the [Non-resident Institutions – Degree Program Proposal Template](#) (Appendix H) document. In addition to the five paper copies of the program proposal, please send an electronic copy of Parts A and B via e-mail (preferably in Word or copyable PDF) to [caqc@gov.ab.ca](mailto:caqc@gov.ab.ca).
- h. A list of possible organizational and program reviewers (if required), together with their coordinates (i.e., rank/position, institution, areas of expertise/specialization, professional experience, how to reach the individual), identification of any previous affiliation with the applicant institution and the reason for recommending each. Do not contact the individuals to see if they are available prior to submitting their names. As reviewers will be asked to sign a conflict of interest statement, do not suggest names of individuals who have been involved in any way with the proposed program.
8. When submitting CVs as part of your application ensure that you have approval from the individual to do so.
9. Once the application has been received, Council will engage a team of external experts to assess the institution's readiness to implement and sustain the proposed degree program using Council's organizational assessment standards. The team initially reviews the self-study and other information provided by the applicant institution, and interviews appropriate members of the institution's **community during a site visit**. Once the team's report is written, it is forwarded to the institution for response. Both the report and response are then discussed at a Council meeting.



10. Following a successful organizational evaluation, Council engages a team of external subject experts to assess the quality of the proposed degree program using Council's program assessment standards. The team reviews the program proposal and interviews appropriate members of the institution's **community during a site visit**. Once again, the team's report and the institution's response to it are discussed by Council. The decision on whether or not to recommend the program be approved is sent to the Minister. **The process culminates with the Minister's notification of decision. Once the Minister has acted on Council's recommendation, Council will send an outcomes letter.** If a program has been approved, the letter will outline any expectations with respect to implementation and monitoring.
11. Council also has a role in the accountability and on-going monitoring of all approved degree programs to ensure quality standards continue to be met. The following are the accountability and monitoring criteria for non-resident degree programs:
  - i. Terms and conditions of approval (see Appendix I)  
Before the approval to offer the degree program can be finalized, the non-resident institution must sign a copy of an accountability agreement specifying any conditions of approval required by Council and the Ministry. The non-resident institution also agrees to abide by any additional accountability and monitoring requirements that Council may require, including external evaluation reports from the home jurisdiction's accrediting and/or oversight body.
  - ii. Time limit on program implementation  
Approvals of non-resident degree programs are not term certain. However, if the program is not offered within three years of being approved by the Minister, Council may recommend that approval be revoked.
  - iii. Annual reporting requirements  
Council may impose annual reporting requirements on institutions offering approved non-resident degree programs, and may request that institutions submit data on enrolments, graduates, faculty and staffing, and courses offered. In addition, the Ministry may request a letter from the institution attesting that the approval conditions are still in place.
  - iv. Periodic review  
When circumstances warrant, Council may conduct a more extensive review with respect to any approved degree program offered by a non-resident institution.
  - v. Notification of change or discontinuance  
The non-resident institution agrees to notify the Minister and Council if there is a
    - a. change in ownership;
    - b. change in location;
    - c. material change to the approved program; or
    - d. plans to discontinue an approved program.
12. Approved degree programs offered by private non-resident institutions are subject to a [Financial Security Requirement](#) (Section 2.3.4).

### 2.3.2 ELIGIBILITY FOR AN EXPEDITED REVIEW

*June 2005**With revisions to March 2021*

A non-resident 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 for a fully expedited review 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.

#### Partially Expedited Review

A request from a non-resident institution for a partially expedited review will be considered if the following criteria are met:

1. an institution has had approval in its home jurisdiction to offer the degree program in its own name for at least five years;
2. an institution has been appropriately recognized (either at the program or institutional level) by an accrediting body or quality assurance agency acceptable to the Council, where such a body or agency exists, and/or by the appropriate public authority for at least five years; and
3. an institution has been successfully enrolling students in approved degree programs at that level in its home jurisdiction for at least five years.

A recent completion of a successful organizational review conducted by an accrediting body, quality assurance agency or appropriate public authority acceptable to the Council strengthens the case for a partially expedited review.

#### Fully Expedited Review

A request for a fully expedited review from a non-resident institution will be considered on its own merits, and only if an institution meets 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 for the system. 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 criteria for a partially expedited review, the following are the criteria to be met:

1. An appropriate number of permanent, qualified faculty are in place in the department/discipline.
2. 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.

3. 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.
4. Program scale is well within the capacity and the resources of the institution to implement and sustain the program.
5. 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.
6. 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 G).

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### 2.3.3 APPLICATIONS UNDERGOING AN EXPEDITED REVIEW

*January 2006  
With revisions to September 2013*

Mature institutions will not usually undergo a full Council review requiring a separate organizational evaluation. However, some elements of an organizational review may be combined within a program review. For example, if a non-resident institution plans to offer a degree program under a collaborative arrangement with a resident Alberta institution, the capacity of the Alberta institution may also be examined. In all cases, the institution must satisfy Council that it has the academic and administrative capacity to provide effective oversight to ensure the quality of the degree program being offered in Alberta.

Such mature institutions may therefore be eligible for either a partially expedited review (one that does not require an organizational evaluation) or a fully expedited review (one where Council's PRSC does a desk review rather than using external evaluators for the program review). Applicants must apply to Council for either type of review using the criteria outlined above in Section 2.3.2.

1. Prospective applicants seeking to offer a new degree program are encouraged to discuss their plans with the CAQC Secretariat prior to submitting a proposal. Please contact the CAQC Secretariat by phone at 780 427 8921 or by e-mail at [caqc@gov.ab.ca](mailto:caqc@gov.ab.ca).
2. All applications from non-resident institutions to offer a proposed degree program are to be submitted by e-mail to Paul Gaudette, Director, Program Design and System Innovation at [paul.gaudette@gov.ab.ca](mailto:paul.gaudette@gov.ab.ca) using the [Non-resident Institutions – Degree Program Proposal Template](#) (Appendix H).
3. At the same time as the application is sent to the Ministry, applicants should write to the Chair of Council to apply for either a partially or fully expedited review providing its rationale for the request. This enables Council to rule on requests for partially expedited reviews (no organizational evaluation) prior to referral to Council by the Minister.

However, Council is not able to decide on a fully expedited review until the final program proposal (Parts A and B) has been received. See Section 2.3.2 for criteria explaining [Eligibility for an Expedited Review](#).

4. Applications to the Ministry consist of the following:

a. Evidence

- that the non-resident institution has had, for at least the previous five years, the authority to offer (and has been offering) the degree program in its home jurisdiction (i.e., is appropriately recognized either at the program or institutional level by an accrediting body or quality assurance agency acceptable to the Ministry, where such a body or agency exists, and/or by the appropriate public authority);
- that the applicable oversight body in the home jurisdiction has approved or does not object to the institution's request for approval to offer the program in Alberta (evidence should be in the form of a letter or official document from the oversight body);
- of the non-resident institution's status, whether public or private, in the home jurisdiction; and
- that the admission policies of Canadian non-resident institutions do not automatically prohibit consideration of graduates of Alberta approved degree programs.

*Last bullet added March 2009*

b. An electronic copy of the Program Proposal (preferably in Word or copyable PDF).

5. Initially the Ministry conducts a system coordination review (Stage 1) to determine the need for and sustainability of the program in the context of Campus Alberta. The review will:

- examine the non-resident institution's rationale for the program in the context of learner and employer needs,
- assess the implications of the program for existing programs offered in the context of Campus Alberta, and
- **examine the institution's budget plan for the program in relation to financial sustainability and** implications for students and taxpayers.

For information with respect to the criteria that will be used by the Ministry in conducting the system coordination review (Stage 1), contact Paul Gaudette, Director of the Program Design and System Innovation branch of Alberta Advanced Education, by phone at 780 644 8138, or by e-mail at [paul.gaudette@gov.ab.ca](mailto:paul.gaudette@gov.ab.ca).

6. Alberta institutions that deliver ministerially approved degrees are invited to make comments on proposed degree programs during the system coordination review phase. Upon receipt by the Ministry, Part A of a proposal will be distributed by e-mail to the Vice-President, Academic or equivalent. Institutions wishing to comment on a proposal may provide written comments to the Vice-President, Academic or equivalent at the proposing institution and forward a copy to Paul Gaudette, Director, Program Design and System Innovation at [paul.gaudette@gov.ab.ca](mailto:paul.gaudette@gov.ab.ca). Comments should be forwarded within one month of the proposal being distributed to the system. Institutions receiving comments on their degree proposals are expected to respond to those comments by writing to the Vice-President, Academic or equivalent of the commenting institution and copying Paul Gaudette, Director, Program Design and System Innovation in the response.
7. Following a successful system coordination review, the Minister will formally refer the proposal to the Campus Alberta Quality Council and request that it conduct its quality review (Stage 2). Council will then inform the applicant institution and request that it send the necessary documentation to Council at:

Chair  
Campus Alberta Quality Council

19th Floor, Commerce Place  
10155 - 102 Street  
Edmonton, AB T5J 4G8

8. Applicants should familiarize themselves with the review process and assessment standards for non-resident institutions that will be used by Council and its reviewers to ensure the documentation provided as part of the application is complete and gives evidence to show the standards are or will be met should the institution be authorized to offer the degree program. The onus is on the applicant to make the strongest case possible.
9. The information needs of Council expand on what is required for the system coordination review by the Ministry. The following information is needed for an expedited Campus Alberta Quality Council review:
  - a. Evidence noted in no. 4 (above).
  - b. Payment of the application fee of \$2,500 (private institutions only). The application fee, payable to the Government of Alberta, should be submitted to the Campus Alberta Quality Council Secretariat in Canadian funds and is due at the time the program has been referred to Council. Further information and the Fee Schedule are available on Council's website at [caqc.alberta.ca](http://caqc.alberta.ca).
  - c. A signed [Statement of Institutional Integrity](#) (Appendix D).
  - d. The proposed location(s) of the program in Alberta.
  - e. Evidence that the following assessment standards have been met:
    - i. Equivalence of standards  
The standards of the degree program provided by the non-resident institution are comparable to or commensurate with Council's guidelines and assessment standards for resident institutions, which can be found in [Section 3 – Organizational Evaluation](#) and [Section 4 – Program Evaluation](#). Provide a copy of the assessment standards used in the home jurisdiction.
    - ii. Degree program comparability  
The non-resident institution is providing the program to students in its home jurisdiction, and the institution must demonstrate to the Council that the course(s) are comparable in requirements and learning outcomes to courses at the same level in a similar field in Alberta. The curriculum and delivery methodologies used for degree programs delivered by the non-resident institution are substantively the same as, or of comparable quality to, those used for the same or similar degree program in the institution's home jurisdiction, or a sound rationale for any differences is clearly demonstrated.
    - iii. Canadian content  
Where appropriate, consideration has been given to ensure that the curriculum demonstrates relevant levels of Canadian content.
    - iv. Admissions and transfer  
Admissions standards and policies are appropriately stated such that they conform to Alberta's post-secondary educational context and are understandable to Alberta students. Credits earned by students in programs offered by the non-resident institution in Alberta will be accepted as credit towards degrees offered in its home jurisdiction. The institution demonstrates it has established policies and procedures that outline the process by which transfer of academic credits is awarded, and is committed to

exploring and maximizing transfer opportunities between its Alberta students and relevant Alberta educational institutions.

v. Credential recognition

If the degree program is intended specifically to prepare graduates for employment or licensure in a particular profession or occupation, the institution provides evidence that the degree conferred on graduates will be recognized by Alberta employers or by relevant Alberta professional or occupational associations as being acceptable for employment or licensure.

vi. Financial and academic resources

Appropriate financial, academic and other resources exist to permit the successful delivery of the program in Alberta.

- f. An electronic copy of the program proposal (Parts A and B). Part A must reflect any changes as a result of discussions with the Ministry during the system coordination stage. Part B is the additional information Council needs. To ensure all the information is included in the final program proposal, refer to the [Non-resident Institutions – Degree Program Proposal Template](#) (Appendix H) document. In addition to the two paper copies of the program proposal, please send an electronic copy of Parts A and B via e-mail (preferably in Word or copyable PDF) to [caqc@gov.ab.ca](mailto:caqc@gov.ab.ca).
- g. A list of possible organizational and program reviewers (if required), together with their coordinates (i.e., rank/position, institution, areas of expertise/specialization, professional experience, how to reach the individual), identification of any previous affiliation with the applicant institution and the reason for recommending each. Do not contact the individuals to see if they are available prior to submitting their names. As reviewers will be asked to sign a conflict of interest statement, do not suggest names of individuals who have been involved in any way with the proposed program.

10. When submitting CVs as part of your application ensure that you have approval from the individual to do so.
11. When a partially expedited review process is to be followed, once the application has been received, Council engages a team of external subject experts to assess the quality of the proposed degree program using Council's program assessment standards. The team reviews the program proposal and interviews appropriate members of the institution's **community during a site visit**. The team's report and the institution's response to it are discussed by Council. The decision on whether or not to recommend the program be approved is sent to the Minister.
12. When a fully expedited review process is to be followed, a desk review of the proposed program is conducted by **Council's Proposal Review Standing Committee (PRSC)**. The review culminates in a decision on whether or not to recommend that the program be approved. That decision is sent to the Minister.
13. In either case, the review process culminates with the Minister notifying the institution of his decision. Once the **Minister has acted on Council's recommendation, Council will send an outcomes letter**. If a program has been approved, the letter will outline any expectations with respect to implementation and monitoring.
14. Council also has a role in the accountability and on-going monitoring of all approved degree programs to ensure quality standards continue to be met. The following are the accountability and monitoring criteria for non-resident degree programs:

i. Terms and conditions of approval (see Appendix I)

Before the approval to offer the degree program can be finalized, the non-resident institution must sign a copy of an accountability agreement specifying any conditions of approval required by Council and the Ministry. The non-resident institution also agrees to abide by any additional accountability and monitoring requirements that Council may require, including external evaluation reports from the home jurisdiction's accrediting and/or oversight body.

ii. Time limit on program implementation

Approvals of non-resident degree programs are neither time definite nor term certain. However, if the program is not offered within three years of being approved by the Minister, Council may recommend that approval be revoked.

iii. Annual reporting requirements

Council may impose annual reporting requirements on institutions offering approved non-resident degree programs, and may request that institutions submit data on enrolments, graduates, faculty and staffing, and courses offered. In addition, the Ministry may request a letter from the institution attesting that the approval conditions are still in place.

iv. Periodic review

When circumstances warrant, Council may conduct a more extensive review with respect to any approved degree program offered by a non-resident institution.

v. Notification of change or discontinuance

The non-resident institution agrees to notify the Minister and Council if there is a

- a. change in ownership;
- b. change in location;
- c. material change to the approved program; or
- d. plans to discontinue an approved program.

15. Approved degree programs offered by private non-resident institutions are subject to a Financial Security Requirement (Appendix J).

## 2.3.4 FINANCIAL SECURITY REQUIREMENTS FOR PRIVATE NON-RESIDENT INSTITUTIONS

*With revisions to May 2011*

As part of the initial application, private non-resident institutions will be required to provide satisfactory proof that they will be able to provide suitable financial security. If a private non-resident institution offering an approved collaborative or dual degree program in Alberta is not collecting tuition from students then no financial security will be required.

For details, please contact the CAQC Secretariat by phone at 780 427 8921 or by e-mail at [caqc@gov.ab.ca](mailto:caqc@gov.ab.ca).

## 2.4 POLICY ON RELEASE OF INFORMATION

*July 2007*

Council has adopted the following policies regarding the release of information about its review processes and decisions.



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### 2.4.1 PREAMBLE

As a public body, the Campus Alberta Quality Council is subject to the [Post-secondary Learning Act](#) (Appendix A), the [Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#) and the [Programs of Study Regulation \(AR 91/2009\)](#) (Appendix A) in the province of Alberta.

In evaluating program proposals, Council is committed to the principle of openness and transparency. While a review by Council is underway, or while the Minister is deliberating on a recommendation from Council, it is imperative that evaluation reports and institutional responses to these reports be regarded as components of a larger process. It is therefore necessary that Council distinguish between the release of material while a review is in process and the release of material after the Minister's decision. To ensure that institutions and those to whom they are accountable are clear **on Council's aims and objectives with respect both to release of information and to protection of privacy, the following proviso will be included on all evaluation team reports when forwarded to institutions:**

*"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 and procedures 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."*

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### 2.4.2 RESPONSIBILITIES OF COUNCIL

#### 1. Public Announcements

Council may make public announcements of any decisions, actions, or recommendations it has taken (once the Minister has acted on its recommendation). These announcements pertain chiefly to the consequences of the three types of review it is legislatively mandated to conduct (organizational, program, or comprehensive).

#### 2. Evaluation Team Reports

All evaluation team reports (including those arising from any periodic review process and including associated **correspondence**) that result from the evaluation of an institution or its programs pursuant to Council's policies and procedures are under the custody and control of Council until a final decision has been made by Council or the Minister, as appropriate.

At that time, the responsibility for distributing or providing access to these documents rests with the institution, which may supply copies of evaluation reports, with the proviso referenced above, and any ensuing correspondence, to any party. In the first instance, Council will endeavour to work cooperatively with the institution to ensure that **communications about Council's policies, processes, recommendations and decisions are accurate.**

To ensure accurate representation, Council reserves the right to release the full report if it finds that an institution has misrepresented the contents or context of the report, misquoted excerpts from it, used those excerpts out of context, or relied on the report to create a misleading impression about the institution, its degree programs, or the processes administered by Council.

Council may provide copies of any evaluation reports, and any ensuing correspondence, to any person engaged by Council to evaluate an institution or its programs, to assist it in the development of policy, to advise it in the conduct of its statutory duties, or to aid it in the correction of the public record, should that intervention be necessary.



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### 2.4.3 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REVIEWERS

Reviewers engaged by Council are entrusted, on a need-to-know basis, with information about the operations and policies of institutions and the programs they deliver or propose to deliver. It is imperative that members of evaluation teams and others engaged by Council hold this information, particularly information about academic staff, internal financial affairs, or other proprietary information, in absolute confidence. Reviewers must not communicate publicly about the materials provided to them or the impressions they have formed either before or after a site visit and must return to the Secretariat all written materials to which they are given access during the course of the review.

In order to encourage candour, the Chair of an evaluation team shall speak in confidence to Council at a duly **constituted Council meeting about the report produced and the institution's response to it**. Council expects the Chair not to disclose, either at that time or later, the nature of that discussion.

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### 2.4.4 RESPONSIBILITIES OF INSTITUTIONS

#### 1. Public Announcements

During its early contacts with an institution that is applying to have one or more of its degree programs recommended **for approval, Council will secure the institution's written commitment to abide by the following** advice regarding public statements:

- a. The review process may be lengthy and will proceed by stages. At each stage Council may, for good reason, delay the application, refer it back to the institution for further consideration, or recommend that it not be approved. The institution, therefore, shall avoid any public statement in calendars, on websites or in any other form of communication which, for whatever reason, may be construed as an attempt to influence, pre-empt or circumvent the process, or which may later embarrass or create pressure upon the institution, Council or the Ministry of Advanced Education.
- b. **Any public statement made by the institution about Council's work shall be confined to facts that are appropriate to the status of the institution's proposals with Council at the time of the statement.** Any uncertainty about the nature of the facts that can be publicized will be resolved by the Chair of Council in consultation with the Secretariat.
- c. An institution's public statements making reference to programs being planned or proposed should specify particular degree programs, keeping in mind that Council recommends specific program approval, not approval or accreditation of an institution, per se.
- d. No public statements shall be made that state or imply that the institution seeks, or has been given, "full" or **"institutional" approval or "accreditation", notwithstanding Council's mandate to conduct both organizational and comprehensive reviews.**
- e. In its public statements about proposals for new programs, an institution must avoid expressions to the effect
  - that it anticipates receiving program approval from Council, or
  - that approval from Council or the Minister is imminent or anticipated, or
  - that potential students may seek admission to the program on the basis of anticipated approval.It is preferable for an institution to report that the proposal is under consideration and that the outcome is not a foregone conclusion.

## 2. Evaluation Team Reports

**Reports of Council's evaluation teams are only one form of** information considered during the program approval process in Alberta. It should be noted that Council may not accept or endorse all recommendations or comments contained in these reports. Consequently, it is incumbent on the institution to provide this context if and when, at the conclusion of the review process and after the Minister has made a decision about a recommendation from Council, it distributes a report of an evaluation team. The same is true of excerpts from evaluation team reports — appropriate context must be provided if an institution uses excerpts from an evaluation team report, and the institution must offer to make the full report available on request.

## SECTION 3 – ORGANIZATIONAL EVALUATION

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the organizational evaluation is to examine the extent to which the systems and processes of the institution are clearly established to achieve excellence in learning. That is, the evaluation will establish the extent to which the institution has created sustainable processes within the organization, the extent to which its financial and operational resources are adequate to sustain the learning processes students will experience, and the link between students' experiences and demonstrable needs.

### 3.2 EXTERNAL ORGANIZATIONAL EVALUATION TEAM

*With revisions to December 2020*

Peer evaluation is an essential component of Council's evaluation. To assist in the assessment of an institution's application for a degree program, Council appoints an external evaluation team to conduct a site visit and provide independent opinion with respect to the organizational evaluation. **The team's review of the application documentation, its on-site appraisal and its report to Council are expected to aid Council's understanding of the relative strengths and weaknesses of the institution's readiness to implement and sustain degree programs of the type and level for which the institution is applying.**

In the cases where an organizational evaluation or a comprehensive evaluation is to be conducted, Council requires the institution to conduct a self-study. The self-study is a key document for organizational evaluation teams. Council provides [Institutional Self-study Guidelines](#) (Section 3.8) for this purpose.

Using the institution's self-study and insights gained from a site visit to the applicant institution, the external evaluation team provides thoughtful assessment of the applicant institution's readiness and capacity to offer and sustain the proposed programs. Please see Council's guide on *Hosting an Institutional Site Visit* on its website at [caqc.alberta.ca](http://caqc.alberta.ca).

Using Council's [Organizational Assessment Standards](#) (Section 3.3) and its [Organizational Evaluation Framework](#) (Appendix E) the evaluators will develop a report providing an independent opinion on:

- the extent to which the systems and processes of the institution are clearly established to achieve excellence in learning outcomes,
- the extent to which the institution has created sustainable processes within the organization,
- the extent to which its financial and operational resources are adequate to sustain the learning process students will experience,
- the link between students' experiences and demonstrable needs, and
- for private institutions, an assessment of risk to help determine Council's financial security requirements should the program be approved.

### 3.3 ORGANIZATIONAL EVALUATION ASSESSMENT STANDARDS

December 2004  
With revisions to June 2022

In making its recommendation to the Minister, the [Post-secondary Learning Act](#) (Appendix A) requires the Campus Alberta Quality Council to consider the ability (readiness) 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.

#### 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.

Please see Council's policy on [Governance and Administration](#) in Section 3.6.

#### 3. Academic freedom and integrity

The organization maintains an atmosphere in which academic freedom exists. Student and academic staff display a high degree of intellectual independence. Academic integrity is supported by a commitment to educate faculty, staff, and students, and by policies, procedures and practices that include clear definitions and disciplinary processes.

*Revised last sentence, December 2021  
Revised to delete second sentence, June 2022*

Please see Council's policy on [Academic Freedom and Scholarship](#) in Section 3.7.

#### 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, assessment and improvement of teaching effectiveness, academic integrity, and periodic program review to ensure the ongoing quality of its programs and learning outcomes. Such assessments normally include the advice of external experts.

*Revised to add "assessment and improvement of teaching effectiveness", December 2019*

*Revised to add "academic integrity", December 2021*

#### 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, upholds, and supports academic integrity and ethical conduct as critical to excellence in academic work, 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. The organization understands that academic integrity is open to threats and puts procedures and policies in place to guard against these threats.

*Revised first sentence and added last sentence, December 2021*

#### 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; robust policies to support academic and research integrity; clear and informative student enrollment agreements verifying student awareness of relevant policies; support services; payment requirements and refund policies; financial assistance; and transcript protection.

*Revised to add "robust policies to support academic and research integrity", December 2021*

**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.

Please see Council's [Research and Scholarship in Campus Alberta: CAQC Interpretation of Roles and Mandates Policy Framework for Alberta's Publicly Funded Advanced Education System \(March, 2008\)](#) in Appendix K, and Council's policy on [Academic Freedom and Scholarship](#) in Section 3.7.

**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.

### 3.4 ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT STANDARDS FOR GRADUATE PROGRAMS

*February 2005*

In addition to the regular organizational assessment standards, the following standards shall be applied to institutions proposing graduate programs. These organizational assessment standards may be applied in the case of an institution proposing to offer its first graduate degree program, in which case the Council will, to some extent, be evaluating the **institution's potential and plans to put in place the resources, personnel and organizational support to deliver and sustain graduate programs.**

#### 1. Graduate program policies

Organizations proposing graduate programs have policies, structures and mechanisms in place appropriate to graduate studies and research (e.g., policies concerning supervisory responsibilities, appeal systems, satisfactory standing, etc.).

#### 2. Commitment to graduate students

The institution has core faculty committed to the graduate program(s) and to the intellectual life of graduate students through sustained participation in activities involving graduate students (seminars, colloquia, conferences, journal clubs, etc.). The organization is committed to the timely program completion of its graduate students and to their financial support through such means as teaching assistantships, scholarships, bursaries, faculty research grants, research contracts, etc. The quality of graduate supervision is commensurate with an excellent program.

#### 3. Faculty

Faculty, as a group, should provide intellectual leadership. In doctoral and research-oriented master's programs, the scholarly activity and intellectual atmosphere of the academic unit is based on the number and quality of significant publications or creative research output of the members and on the unit's continuing insistence on originality and excellence. In the case of programs in professional areas, there must be a solid basis of appropriate scholarly or creative activities.

The evidence of accomplishment must be demonstrated through peer review and critical analysis, with peer-adjudicated publication as the predominant way of assessing scholarly achievement in the traditional disciplines. For some fields of study, evidence of professional achievement and intellectual leadership may be inferred from other scholarly or creative activities.

It is essential that the intellectual engagement of faculty, as a whole, be maintained through regular participation in scholarly activities, the validity of which has been verified by peer review. Most members of the unit must be involved in ongoing research and publication of findings, or other scholarly activity as appropriate. The commitment to graduate students, above, also requires a faculty involved in the scholarly life of the department and institution.

Research done by the department or unit should have, or have the potential to have, a significant impact provincially, nationally and internationally, commensurate with the size of the department or unit, and appropriate to the program being proposed.

#### 4. Library and information resources

The institution must provide the essential information resources and support appropriate to graduate student work. These resources must be adequate for the number of students enrolled and for the level of study.

#### 5. Research facilities

The institution has laboratory, computer, studio, and/or creative facilities, as well as essential resources, to support the faculty and students adequately in their research.

### 3.5 ORGANIZATIONAL EVALUATION FRAMEWORKS

*With revisions to February 2017*

#### 3.5.1 INTRODUCTION

Resident institutions that are proposing a first degree program, a first degree at a new level, or other precedent-setting degree will normally undergo an organizational evaluation.

As noted in section 3.1, the purpose of the organizational evaluation is to examine the extent to which the structures, systems and processes of the institution are clearly established to achieve excellence in learning.

As part of its organizational evaluation, an institution must provide evidence **that it meets Council's Organizational Assessment Standards**, and is ready to implement and sustain degree programming at the applicable undergraduate or graduate level.

The requirements for the institutional self-study are described in section 3.8. The self-study is the primary source of **information for CAQC's team of evaluators but evaluators may require access to all relevant documentation: such** financial records as are available, minutes of meetings throughout the organization, planning and related documents, measurement instruments and performance data. Evaluators should be given access to any documents they require to complete their task. Documents that are confidential to the evaluators should be clearly marked as such.

The Organizational Evaluation Framework – Undergraduate Programs ([Appendix E](#)) uses 11 evaluation categories, coinciding with those of the self-study and cross-referenced to **CAQC's organizational standards**, to assess the extent to which the systems and processes of the institution are clearly established to achieve excellence in learning. The Organizational Evaluation Framework – Graduate Programs ([Appendix N](#)) uses 13 evaluation categories, coinciding with the general and graduate organizational standards.

Institutions may adopt any paradigm for institutional assessment they wish in meeting the requirement to demonstrate effectiveness in a number of categories. The Council will examine the report of the evaluators **and the institution's** response to it and determine whether or not standards have been met. The evaluation is based on the statement of vision, strategy and goals provided by the institution, not on a **comparison of the institution with "traditional" and "established" modes of operating for organizations delivering degree level education.**

#### 3.5.2 NEW INSTITUTIONS

The Frameworks are designed to serve as a matrix for the evaluation of an institution throughout its lifetime. However, the peculiar situation facing a new institution as it approaches the challenge of launching a first degree program calls for a different approach by the Council. Clearly a new institution will not have financial statements for previous years of operation or an existing calendar of course offerings and programs. In the case of a proposal by a new institution, the Council will look for a thorough planning process and evidence that the institution will have in place the resources, personnel, and organizational ability for launching the proposed program. The criteria used to evaluate the new



institution will be prospective, intended to detect the promise the institution shows of being able to produce the structures, processes, and outcomes outlined in this document.

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### 3.5.3 ORGANIZATIONAL EVALUATION CATEGORIES FOR UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

The categories used in the organizational evaluation are these:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| (1) Mission/Mandate, Educational Objectives and Academic Freedom | (7) Learning Resources and Services             |
| (2) Organization and Administration                              | (8) Academic Policies and Records               |
| (3) Financial Structure  | (9) Student Services and the Student Experience |
| (4) Curricula and Instruction                                    | (10) Physical Plant and General Facilities      |
| (5) Academic Staff   | (11) Institutional Communications               |
| (6) Strategic Planning   |   |

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### 3.5.4 ORGANIZATIONAL EVALUATION CATEGORIES FOR GRADUATE PROGRAMS

The categories used in the organizational evaluation are these:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| (1) Mandate and Mission   | (8) Financial Planning and Resources         |
| (2) Governance and Administrative Capacity                          | (9) Faculty and Staff                        |
| (3) Academic Freedom and Integrity                                  | (10) Scholarly and Research Support          |
| (4) Ethical Conduct   | (11) Information Services and Systems        |
| (5) Dispute Resolution  | (12) Student Services and Student Protection |
| (6) Academic Policies   | (13) Physical Plant                          |
| (7) Organizational Policies, Strategic Planning and Periodic Review |  |

For more information about how these categories are assessed, please see the Organizational Evaluation Framework – Undergraduate Programs document in [Appendix E](#) and the Organizational Evaluation Framework – Graduate Programs document in [Appendix N](#).

The process begins with a self-study by the institution dealing with each of the categories (see the [Institutional Self-study Guidelines](#) in section 3.8) and measuring them against the indicators outlined in the Frameworks. The external evaluation team then evaluates the self-study and other documentation, visits the campus, and consults with personnel and students. For each of the categories in the Frameworks, the evaluation team will be looking for the approach taken by the organization, the way in which the approach is deployed within the organization, and the results of such deployment.

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## 3.6 GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

June 2009

Governance is a process through which an institution achieves its mission and vision. Administration is the process of managing an institution.

Governance is **broad**er than the institution's governing board. Council recognizes that, depending on the type of institution, governance and administration will vary from one institution to another. For Alberta public institutions, the [Post-secondary Learning Act](#) (Appendix A) describes the powers, duties and composition of their governing boards and

general faculties councils/academic councils, and prescribes key officers and staff. In order to ensure effective governance and administration of other institutions which may apply to offer degrees in Alberta, Council expects certain elements to be in place and will look for evidence of the following:

- An institution must have a governing board which has the authority to carry out the mandate/mission of the institution, and which operates as an independent policy-making body. The governing board should normally have at least five voting members, a majority of whom are without any contractual, employment or ownership interest in the institution.
- An institution must have a chief executive officer whose full-time or major responsibility is to the institution, and sufficient administrative staff to conduct the affairs of the institution.
- The governing board shall make provisions for adequate academic staff participation in academic decision-making and for faculty, staff, students and administrators to be involved in the development of institutional policies.
- It is within the discretion of the institution to determine the form of participation. Normally, however, faculties (academic units) will conduct much of their business through structures such as committees, councils, and senates, operating within the broad policies determined by the governing boards.
- An institution must have a strategic plan which addresses its future educational, physical and fiscal growth. It must have in place effective procedures for on-going institutional self-study and planning which involves its academic staff and its students. Basic planning for the development of the institution must integrate plans for facilities, services, academic personnel, resource centre and library, and financial development, as well as procedures for program review and institutional improvement.

### 3.7 ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND SCHOLARSHIP

June 2006

As stated in its Key Operating Principles, Council respects the foundational role of academic freedom in the provision of high quality degree programs. Thus, Council requires that institutions meet its organizational assessment standards on academic freedom, institutional integrity, and scholarly and research activity. In making its recommendation to the Minister, the [Post-secondary Learning Act](#) (Appendix A) requires the Campus Alberta Quality Council to consider the ability (readiness) of institutions to deliver and sustain high quality degree.

#### 3.7.1 ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Academic freedom is a defining freedom of an institution, enshrined in statements and principles formally adopted by those institutions. Expressed in language appropriate to the institution, academic freedom includes freedom to investigate, teach, and publish, without fear of sanction or discipline; many statements also include the freedom to criticize the institution and society at large. Institutions are guided by their founding and sustaining mission and organize themselves in accordance with that mission. Academic freedom brings attendant responsibilities in scholarship, teaching, and service to and respect for the institution, the discipline/profession, and the community.

An institution must ensure that it maintains an atmosphere in which intellectual freedom exists.

**An institution's academic staff and students must be free to examine and to test all knowledge appropriate to their disciplines as judged by the academic community in general.**

An institution must adopt and distribute to all members of the academic staff a statement of the principle of academic freedom as established by the governing board of the institution, assuring freedom in teaching, scholarship/research and publication (see below), and community activities. The principles of natural justice and peer review must be followed in the event of alleged violations of the policy; these principles must be clearly stated, widely available, and actively followed in written policies and practices.

*With revisions to September 2017*

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### 3.7.2 INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY

In general terms, the institution must recognize and protect the right of the individual to the honest search for knowledge, wherever knowledge is to be found, without fear of reprisals by the institution or by third parties. Academic freedom implies the right to communicate freely the acquired knowledge and the result of scholarship/research. It implies the duty, however, to respect the rights of others, to exercise that freedom in a reasonable and responsible manner, and to respect the academic objectives of the institution.

The institution must present itself accurately and truthfully in all of its written documents. This includes the manner in which it describes its mission, qualities, programs, and conditions of membership in the academic community as either a student or employee, and compares them with other institutions. Full compliance with principles of natural justice and matters of copyright law is expected.

*With revisions to September 2017*

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### 3.7.3 SCHOLARSHIP / RESEARCH / CREATIVE ACTIVITY

*With revisions to June 2019*

Scholarship is a multi-faceted activity involving the creation, integration and dissemination of knowledge in forms that are open to peer review. Scholarship can take many forms including the following:

- Independent or collaborative research across the full spectrum (basic, applied, educational, policy, quantitative, qualitative, etc.)
- Scholarship of teaching and learning which is disseminated in some form, such as through presentation or publication
- Knowledge translation and reformulation for new applications
- Composition, creative activity and performance
- Publication
- Presentation at scholarly conferences or expert groups
- Applied scholarship through problem solving practices, innovation, product development (tools, handbooks, manuals, software, etc.)
- Technology development, patents, technology transfer and commercialization
- Developing standards, guidelines, and best practices

See also [Research and Scholarship in Campus Alberta: CAQC Interpretation of the Roles and Mandates Policy Framework for Alberta's Publicly Funded Advanced Education System \(March, 2008\)](#) in Appendix K.

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### 3.7.4 INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES ON SCHOLARLY ACTIVITY

*With revisions to June 2019*

- The institution's organization, administrative structure and policies should facilitate the expectations in scholarship (and in research where applicable).
- Institutions which include research in their mission statement should have supportive policies, e.g., sabbatical leaves, research leaves, in-house grants to support research, a system which supports research grant applications to external

agencies, recognition of research time demands in the assignment of teaching loads, recognition of research output in salary rewards, etc.

- The scholarship, research and creative activities policies and practices of the institution should be developed and administered under the direction of a representative committee. These policies and practices should clearly differentiate scholarly activity expectations for faculty from their professional development (i.e., maintaining currency within the discipline, keeping up with changing technology), teaching responsibilities (i.e., course development, curriculum development, supervising student projects), and academic service (i.e., review committee work, professional organizational leadership).
- **The investigator's freedom in research, including the communication of results, shall be preserved.**
- In support of research activities, the institution must have appropriate policies and procedures related to ethical conduct and reviews, intellectual property and ownership, safety and biohazards, responsibility and accountability, animal care and maintenance, technology transfer and commercialization, etc., that meet all accreditation standards and requirements.
- Staffing policies must make certain that academic staff engage in scholarly activities to ensure that their course content remains current.
- An institution may require a specific level of scholarship productivity (or other equivalent research or creative activity) and if so must state this clearly in its mission statement and include this expectation in its contractual employment documents.

### 3.8 INSTITUTIONAL SELF-STUDY GUIDELINES FOR ORGANIZATIONAL EVALUATIONS

January 2006

With revisions to December 2019

Institutions whose proposals for new degree programs have been referred to the Campus Alberta Quality Council and whose application will undergo a full review by Council must present an institutional self-study in addition to the program proposal. The self-study is the main documentation needed for the organizational evaluation stage of **Council's review which assesses the institution's readiness** to implement and sustain the degree program(s).

#### 3.8.1 PURPOSES

The institutional self-study serves three purposes:

1. For an institution, it provides a very useful analysis of its objectives, resources, students and achievements and of the relationships among them **that is valuable for the institution's strategic planning and improvement.**
2. For the Council and its evaluators, it provides the detailed information whereby they become familiar with the institution.
3. It reveals the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities of an institution in relation to the achievement of its purposes and objectives. Thus, the self-study indicates to both the Council and the institution the areas with respect to which the institution must change and improve.

#### 3.8.2 GENERAL GUIDELINES

The nature of the self-study is to be comparative, reflective, and outcome oriented. Where possible it should include feedback from students, alumni, transfer institutions, employers, and graduate programs. The self-study should be **attentive to the institution's current place** in the broader Alberta educational context and should address any concerns identified in previous reviews.

In preparation for a comprehensive evaluation the institution should apply the above process to an analysis and evaluation relating to all approved degree programs. Council expects that self-studies prepared for comprehensive evaluations will be more analytical than those prepared for organizational evaluations.

The following are intended to guide the preparation of the self-study:

1. All institutions shall include an analytical summary of the major strengths and weaknesses of the institution and the challenges encountered in the achievement of its objectives.
2. Commentary on the major categories should be included in the body of the document while supporting documentation is to be placed in appendices.
3. An institution that previously provided Council (or the Private Colleges Accreditation Board) with a self-study should focus its subsequent self-study on changes that have taken place since that submission rather than duplicating previously presented information.

### 3.8.3 ESSENTIAL CONTENTS OF THE SELF-STUDY

*With revisions to June 2022*

The self-study should address each of the following 11 categories and measure them against the indicators contained in the [Organizational Evaluation Framework](#) (Appendix ) to examine the extent to which the systems and processes of the institution are clearly established to achieve excellence in learning outcomes. Immediately following each category is listed the applicable [Organizational Evaluation Assessment Standard](#) (Section 3.3) and [Organizational Assessment Standards for Graduate Programs](#) (Section 3.4) that will be used by Council and its evaluators. Please note that a standard may apply to more than one category.

Category 1: Mission/Mandate, Educational Objectives and Academic Freedom  
Applicable 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.

#### 3. Academic freedom and integrity

The organization maintains an atmosphere in which academic freedom exists. Student and academic staff display a high degree of intellectual independence. Academic integrity is supported by a commitment to educate faculty, staff, and students, and by policies, procedures and practices that include clear definitions and disciplinary processes.

The institution might include information on the following items in its self-study:

1. a brief history of the institution
2. official mandate/mission statement and specific educational objectives
3. statement of educational philosophy
4. relevant constitutional statements

5. academic freedom policies, procedures, and practices as they pertain to faculty and students
6. academic integrity policies, procedures, and practices

*Requirements no. 5 revised and no. 6 added December 2021*

## Category 2: Organization and Administration

### Applicable Organizational Assessment Standards:

#### 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.

#### 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.

#### 7. Ethical conduct

The organization values, upholds, and supports academic integrity and ethical conduct as critical to excellence in academic work, 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. The organization understands that academic integrity is open to threats and puts procedures and policies to guard against these threats.

The institution might include information on the following items in its self-study:

1. ownership of the institution
2. relationship to other organizations (government, university, church, business)
3. composition and responsibilities of the institution's governing bodies
4. organizational and decision-making flow charts of the institution
5. CEO or other officer with overall responsibility for degree programs and other key administrative staff, their abbreviated vitae and position descriptions
6. provision for continuity of leadership
7. policies regarding hiring, employment conditions and benefits, dismissal of administrative officers, health and safety, codes of staff and student behaviour and dispute resolution policies
8. policies and procedures that acknowledge threats to academic integrity (e.g., contract cheating, plagiarism) and research integrity (e.g., data fabrication and falsification) and that provide clear processes to deal with breaches when they occur
9. procedures for the evaluation and improvement of administrative effectiveness
10. academic staff organization and administration
11. effectiveness of the methods used to communicate with faculty: do faculty perceive themselves to be well informed about important issues at the institution? Do faculty believe that they have sufficient opportunities to make themselves heard?
12. information systems that support the administrative structure and plans to meet future needs

*Requirement no. 8 added December 2021*

## Category 3: Financial Structure

Applicable Organizational Assessment Standard:

## 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.

The institution might include information on the following items in its self-study:

1. financial resources and sources of revenue
2. financial obligations and expenditures
3. 3 or 4 year business plan
4. financial ratios (cost per student per course completion, cost per student per credit hour, cost per graduate, ratio of teaching costs to overhead costs per year, % of budget allocated to learning resources and library each year, % of expenditures on contracts for teaching staff who are not full-time employees of the organization per year, net of earned revenue minus costs per year, information technology expenditure per student per year, information technology expenditure per graduate per year)
5. organization and staffing of the business office
6. budget preparation, financial control, and audit
7. recent audited financial statements
8. fund-raising policies and procedures
9. degree to which pressures to generate revenue (e.g., from tuition or research funding) affect the desired balance of activities of faculty members. If so, which mechanisms are in place to protect the accomplishment of **the institution's mission?**
10. evidence of methods to protect student financial involvement in the case of the cessation of activity
11. policies and procedures regarding student fees
12. future fiscal priorities
13. process of costing new programs and assessing risks

## Category 4: Curricula and Instruction

Applicable Organizational Assessment Standard:

## 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, assessment and improvement of teaching effectiveness, academic integrity, and periodic program review to ensure the ongoing quality of its programs and learning outcomes. Such assessments normally include the advice of external experts\*.

\* CAQC's guidelines with respect to selection and use of [Independent Academic Experts](#) are available in Appendix G.

The institution might include information on **the** following items in its self-study:



1. programs currently offered<sup>2</sup>
2. transferability of course credits to other educational institutions and historical performance of students after transfer
3. procedures for curricular development, approval, implementation and change, including the use of learning outcomes and their assessment
4. instructional methods and procedures (including the provision of support for engaged and active learning and the application of technology in the teaching/learning process)
5. class-size analysis and student-instructor ratio
6. procedures for the assessment and improvement of teaching effectiveness
7. future plans and priorities regarding curricula and teaching effectiveness
8. practices to build awareness among faculty and learners about threats to academic integrity (including plagiarism, misappropriation or failure to attribute intellectual property, collusion, copying, impersonation, contract cheating, and data fabrication and falsification) and policies to deal with breaches when they occur
9. feedback from students and alumni
10. retention of students
11. success of graduates
12. historical performance of the institution in providing learning and support to students (outcomes) – new institutions should provide performance indicators and predictions of targets

*Requirements no. 6 and no. 7 revised December 2019*

*Requirement no. 8 added December 2021*

#### Category 5: Academic Staff

Applicable Organizational Assessment Standards:

##### 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.

##### 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.

The institution might include information on the following items in its self-study:

1. academic staff members and their abbreviated vitae<sup>3</sup> (include any key academic administrators not already included under Category 1)
2. academic staff profile with respect to number, discipline, degrees, rank, tenure, teaching experience, age, gender, and salary
3. policies with respect to the employment of full-time and part-time academic staff

<sup>2</sup> For self-studies prepared for comprehensive evaluations, institutions must provide an assessment for each degree program approved on recommendation of either the Campus Alberta Quality Council or the Private Colleges Accreditation Board.

<sup>3</sup> For organizational evaluations, only key academic administration staff abbreviated CVs are needed. For comprehensive evaluations, abbreviated CVs are needed for key academic administration staff and academic staff teaching in the approved degree programs.



4. teaching loads, committee work, and administrative duties of academic staff members
5. policies and practices regarding academic staff involvement in scholarship and/or research in the context of **the institution's mission statement**
6. policies and practices regarding assessment of, support for, and rewarding of academic staff teaching effectiveness
7. policies regarding hiring, evaluation, promotion, tenure, employment conditions and benefits, and dismissal of academic staff members
8. policies regarding academic freedom and ethical conduct
9. **adequacy of institutional and departmental conflict of interest policies relating to faculty members'** performance of their academic responsibilities
10. communication of academic staff responsibilities, obligations, employment conditions, and benefits
11. provisions for academic staff participation in governance
12. opportunities and support for professional development and improvement of instruction
13. future plans and priorities regarding academic staff. For new institutions or those proposing to offer a first degree, provide evidence of sufficient academic expertise or concrete plans to obtain it in order to launch the proposed program(s)

*Requirement no. 6 added December 2019*

#### Category 6: Strategic Planning

Applicable Organizational Assessment Standard:

##### 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, assessment and improvement of teaching effectiveness, and periodic program review to ensure the ongoing quality of its programs and learning outcomes. Such assessments normally include the advice of external experts.

The institution should have in place an integrated, comprehensive planning process that links **the institution's various** planning initiatives (program, staffing, facilities, marketing, etc.).

The institution might include information on the following items in its self-study:

1. **strategic plan or planning document that outlines the institution's major directions**
2. executive summary highlighting the main priorities
3. statement regarding how the planning process reflects and supports **the institution's mission**
4. explanation of how the strategic plan guides decision-making at the institution
5. **description of the institution's overall planning process that links and coordinates the institution's different** planning activities. The description might include the following:
  6. who at the institution has major responsibility for coordinating institution-wide planning
  7. who else participates and how various stakeholders are involved in the process
  8. timeframe or length of the planning cycle
  9. how academic, financial, facilities, etc. planning is integrated into an overall comprehensive planning process.
10. information about how the planning process is disseminated and understood throughout the institution
11. explanation of environmental scanning or similar mechanism used to update the strategic plan/ensure that the plan remains current

## Category 7: Learning Resources and Services

Applicable Organizational Assessment Standard:

## 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.

**The information services which support the institution's academic programs include** resource centres and libraries but also extend beyond these to convenient access to information held in other depositories and information available through electronic means.

The institution might include information on the following items in its self-study:

1. quality, quantity, and accessibility of library collection on site as a resource for students and faculty members to support the available degree programs
2. summary of holdings in various subject areas
3. collection policies
4. policies regarding ordering and budget allocations
5. accessibility and usage of information services
6. **information technology services sufficiently well integrated to assure achievement of institution's missions**
7. space analysis (including student study space)
8. resource staff and their vitae and job descriptions
9. agreements regarding student access to other conveniently located libraries
10. provisions for student access to information by electronic means (e.g., CD-ROM, internet)
11. future plans and priorities regarding resource centres, libraries and other information services

## Category 8: Academic Policies and Records

Applicable Organizational Assessment Standards:

## 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.

#### 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; robust policies to support academic and research integrity; clear and informative student enrollment agreements verifying student awareness of relevant policies; support services; payment requirements and refund policies; financial assistance; and transcript protection.

#### 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.

Policies concerning the requirements for admission, progression, and graduation should be consistent with both the educational objectives of the institution and the practice of Canadian universities. Students' academic files should be accurately maintained.

The institution might include information on the following items in its self-study:

1. policies and procedures regarding student recruitment, including financial aid
2. policies and procedures regarding admissions
3. policies and procedures regarding registration
4. policies and procedures regarding transfer students and evaluating and awarding of transfer credit
5. policies and procedures regarding class schedules and length of academic terms
6. policies and procedures regarding student and alumni records, including the confidentiality of these records
7. demographic profile of the student body
8. policies and procedures regarding academic behavior (attendance, completion of assignments, academic misconduct)
9. policies and procedures regarding academic accommodation
10. policies and procedures for educating students about academic integrity, and the serious consequences of breaching it; for educating instructors about identifying and responding to apparent breaches
11. policies and practice regarding evaluation of students (methods, grading system and grading distribution, examination policy, appeal process, etc.)
12. policies and procedures regarding academic probation and academic honours
13. graduation requirements
14. communication of academic policies to students and academic staff
15. future plans regarding academic policies and records
16. residence requirements
17. policies in place to ensure that academic records of students are secure

*Requirements no. 8 revised and nos. 9 and 10 added December 2021*

Category 9: Student Services and the Student Experience

Applicable Organizational Assessment Standard:

**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.

The provision of student services, such as counselling, extracurricular activities, and residential accommodations, should be appropriate to the institution's mission and educational objectives.

The institution might include information on the following items in its self-study:

1. services provided (counselling, residence, athletics, recreation, student government, clubs and other extracurricular activities, food, health services, financial aid, etc.)
2. policies and practices regarding each service provided
3. policies relating to such matters as equality and diversity, anti-bullying, disability, gender, race, sexual orientation, etc.
4. future plans and priorities regarding student services

**Category 10: Physical Plant and General Facilities**

Applicable Organizational Assessment Standard:

**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.

The institution's buildings, classrooms, laboratories, and their furnishings should be appropriate to support the institution's curricula and instructional methods.

The institution might include information on the following items in its self-study:

1. facilities available
2. policies and practices regarding utilization and maintenance
3. future plans and priorities regarding physical plant facilities
4. computer and related equipment to support information services and technology used in the teaching/learning process
5. adequacy of security systems on campus and at affiliated sites

**Category 11: Institutional Communications**

Applicable Organizational Assessment Standard:

#### 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.

Institutional publications and promotional material should accurately describe the institution and its programs, and how students can access them.

The institution might include information on the following items in its self-study:

1. statement of policies regarding production of institution publications
2. current academic calendar samples of institution publications (brochures, newsletters, handbooks for internal use, etc.), or alternately an institution may wish to provide samples of publications for review at the site visit
3. statement of future plans regarding institutional publications

## SECTION 4 – PROGRAM EVALUATION

### 4.1 PURPOSE

In making its recommendation to the Minister, the [Post-secondary Learning Act](#) (Appendix A) requires the Campus Alberta Quality Council to consider the ability of institutions to deliver and sustain high quality undergraduate and graduate degree programs.

While the organizational evaluation has already examined the way the institution is organized to support excellence in **learning, and the extent to which the institution's financial and operational resources are adequate to sustain the** student learning processes, Council's program evaluation also provides a measure of assurance to students, other post-secondary institutions and prospective employers that the program is recognized as having met certain standards. This has two basic purposes: quality assurance and institutional and program improvement.

An institution that has satisfied Council with respect to the organizational evaluation may submit one or more program proposals.

The onus is on the institution to satisfy 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. Council has adopted the [Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework](#) (Appendix B) for use when assessing the level of proposed degree programs.

Program proposals should also demonstrate how their unique dimensions set them apart from similar programs offered elsewhere, and thus provide new educational opportunities for students. **Proposals must meet Council's general** guidelines on [Program Assessment Standards](#) (Section 4.3.1) with respect to degree programs and academic staff.

### 4.2 EXTERNAL PROGRAM EVALUATION TEAM

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

The primary purpose of the external evaluation team is to provide Council with information about the academic merits **of the proposed program(s) as well as the institution's capacity to support them.** This information will help Council decide on its recommendation to the Minister.

## 4.3 UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

### 4.3.1 PROGRAM ASSESSMENT STANDARDS

April 2005  
With revisions to June 2021

The responsibility for the quality of programs and for their ongoing review and improvement rests with the institution. **It is Council's responsibility to ensure that appropriate standards are met. This process begins with the institution's** preparation of a program proposal (see [Resident Institutions – Degree Program Proposal Template](#) in Appendix C or [Non-resident Institutions – Degree Program Proposal Template](#) in Appendix H), in which the institution is required to engage in a self-analysis and to seek the advice of [Independent Academic Experts](#) (Appendix G) in the particular field.

Proposals for undergraduate degrees must meet the [CAQC Expectations for Design and Structure of Undergraduate Degrees](#) in Section 4.3.3. Please note that degree programs delivered in whole or in part in blended, distributed or **distance modes are expected to also meet Council's** [Additional Quality Assessment Standards for Programs Delivered in Blended, Distributed or Distance Modes](#) in Section 4.5.

#### 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 programs with an applied or professional focus, faculty shall maintain continuing academic and professional competence and accreditation in their discipline or field, as appropriate.

With revisions to June 2021

Council has separate [Standards on Academic Staff for Baccalaureate Programs](#) (Section 4.3.4).

#### 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 programs involving work integrated learning, the institution must have policies and procedures which define the roles of the institution, employer, and student in the work integrated component of the program, and resources in place to effect these policies.

With revisions to June 2021

#### 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.

*With revisions to June 2021*

#### 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 methods of delivery and ensure their effectiveness. The institution should also demonstrate the ways in which it understands and attends to the learning needs of students in the program, and supports their engaged and active learning.

*Revised December 2011*

#### 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.

### 4.3.2 PROGRAM EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

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 review the Program Proposal (see [Resident Institutions – Degree Program Proposal Template](#) (Appendix C) or [Non-resident Institutions – Degree Program Proposal Template](#) (Appendix H)) and any supporting documentation provided by the applicant institution against the [Program Assessment Standards](#) (Section 4.3.1) of Council. The program evaluation team will address each criterion in its final report to Council.

The evaluation criteria used in the program evaluation are these:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| (1) Appropriate fit between name, program content, and nomenclature for credential                 | (8) Faculty resources   |
| (2) Appropriate program implementation date  | (9) Design of interdisciplinary programs  |
| (3) Program learning objectives and student outcomes   | (10) Teaching approach and objectives   |
| (4) Adequate level of student demand   | (11) Program evaluation   |
| (5) Program curriculum   | (12) Academic policies  |
| (6) Relationship between proposed program and existing programs within and outside the institution | (13) Consultation with other institutions and professional licensing or regulatory bodies |
| (7) Program resources  | (14) Independent academic expert reports  |

The Quality Council wants to ensure that all degree programs it recommends to the Minister of 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 14 criteria, each of which has several examples (see [Undergraduate Program Evaluation Framework](#) (Appendix F)).

### 4.3.3 CAQC EXPECTATIONS FOR DESIGN AND STRUCTURE OF UNDERGRADUATE DEGREES

May 2007  
With revisions to June 2021

The following expectations use the language of Part A (Description of Degree Categories) of the [Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework](#) (Appendix B), which has been endorsed by Alberta and all other Canadian jurisdictions.<sup>4</sup>

To assist both the applicant institution in preparing new degree proposals and CAQC's evaluators in assessing the quality of degree programs, with input from three institutional stakeholder groups namely the Alberta Universities Association (AUA), the Alberta Association of Colleges and Technical Institutes (AACTI) and the Independent Academic Institutions Council (IAIC)<sup>5</sup>, CAQC has developed the following specific expectations with respect to the most commonly

<sup>4</sup> The complete Framework is part of a larger *Ministerial Statement on Quality Assurance of Degree Programs in Canada* which is found on CAQC's website at [caqc.alberta.ca](http://caqc.alberta.ca).

<sup>5</sup> Formerly known as the Private Accredited Post-secondary Institutions Council (PAPIC).

offered undergraduate degree programs. They add further detail to the description of undergraduate programs to be offered in Alberta.

Although it has specified its expectations here, CAQC is open to innovation in degree programming and recognizes that boundaries between and among disciplines may be blurred in emerging areas. Further, CAQC recognizes that degrees may be offered concurrently, and that degree programs fall within a wide spectrum – with one extreme being the most liberal-arts or liberal-science programs and the other being the most applied programs, some but not all of them in professional areas.

#### EXPECTATION 1

Each proposed program must be consistent **with the applicant institution's approved mandate or mission statement** and educational objectives.<sup>6</sup> It must also meet the following criteria:

- a. Applicants must demonstrate how the proposal conforms to the structure and meets the quality standards expected for the proposed degree.
- b. Applicants must show that the expectations of graduates of the program are at the baccalaureate level as defined in Part B of the [Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework](#) (Appendix B) in terms of: i) depth and breadth of knowledge, ii) knowledge of methodologies and research, iii) application of knowledge, iv) communication skills, v) awareness of limits of knowledge, and vi) professional capacity/autonomy.
- c. In the case of professional degrees, the proposal will also be evaluated within the context of any pertinent professional guidelines, accreditation requirements, or regulatory requirements in effect at the time of application.

#### EXPECTATION 2

All degree proposals for undergraduate degrees will be evaluated within the context of the type of institution proposing the degree as defined by legislation<sup>7</sup> and with reference to the nature of the degree: e.g., content, objectives, structure, faculty and institutional resources, delivery method, and student outcomes for the degree.

#### EXPECTATION 3

**All new Bachelor's degree programs will meet the Program Design and Outcomes expectations established in the CDQF, and endorsed in the Alberta Credential Framework (ACF) updated in May 2018, as follows:**

**The credential awarded for the bachelor's 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.**

Applicants should demonstrate how the undergraduate degree is designed to produce the learning outcomes that it is intended to accomplish.

**All bachelor's 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-**

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<sup>6</sup> The mandate of public Alberta post-secondary institutions must be approved by the Minister of Advanced Education. This is not a requirement for private institutions, which operate with mission statements rather than ministerially approved mandates.

<sup>7</sup> In 2008, an amendment to the PSLA, 2003 defined the six sectors within the publicly funded post-secondary system in Alberta and the degree granting roles of institutions within each sector. With further amendments to the PSLA in 2019, these sectors now include: (a) Comprehensive Academic and Research Universities; (b) Undergraduate Universities; (c) Polytechnic Institutions; (d) Comprehensive Community Colleges; (e) Independent Academic Institutions; (f) Specialized Arts and Cultural Institutions.

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's 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's degree program must meet a substantial and common set of competency outcomes, as outlined below, to justify use of the bachelor's degree label. The range of bachelor's programs include:

- 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: BHum (Humanities), General BA and General BSc 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 preparation for 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 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's programs in academic standing, some professional programs yield degrees with other nomenclature. Examples: DDS (Dental Surgery), MD (Medicine), LLB, or JD (Juris Doctor).

#### EXPECTATION 4

All new Bachelor's programs will meet the Knowledge and Skills Standards established in the CDQF, and endorsed in the ACF (May 2018), as follows:

| Depth and Breadth of Knowledge  | Conceptual Awareness and/or Knowledge of Research   | Communications Skills   | Application of Knowledge   | Professional Capacity/ Autonomy  | Awareness of Limits of Knowledge  |
|---|---|---|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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</li> </ul> | a) An understanding of methods of enquiry or creative activity, or both, in their primary area of study that enables the student to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems</li> </ul> | The ability to communicate information, arguments, and analyses accurately and reliably, orally and in writing, to specialist and non-specialist audiences, using structured and coherent arguments, and, | a) The ability to use a range of established techniques to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>initiate and undertake critical evaluation of arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts, and information,</li> <li>propose</li> </ul> | Qualities and transferable skills necessary for further study, employment, community involvement and other activities requiring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the exercise of initiative, personal responsibility</li> </ul> | An understanding of the limits to their own knowledge and ability; an appreciation of the uncertainty and ambiguity of and limits to knowledge, and an appreciation of how this might influence analyses and interpretations. |

|  |  |  |   |  |  |
|--|--|--|---|--|--|
| <p>practice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• The capacity to engage in independent research or practice in a supervised context.</li> <li>• Critical thinking and analytical skills inside and outside the discipline.</li> <li>• The ability to apply learning from one or more areas outside the discipline.</li> </ul> | <p>using well established ideas and techniques,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• devise and sustain arguments or solve problems using these methods, and</li> <li>• describe and comment upon particular aspects of current research or equivalent advanced scholarship in the discipline and on their relevance to the evolution of the discipline.</li> </ul> <p>b) The ability to review, present, and critically evaluate qualitative and quantitative information to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop lines of argument,</li> <li>• make sound judgments in accordance with the major theories, concepts, and methods of the subject(s) of study,</li> <li>• apply underlying concepts, principles, and techniques of analysis, both within and outside the discipline; and</li> <li>• where appropriate, use this knowledge in the creative process.</li> </ul> | <p>where appropriate, informed by key concepts and techniques of the discipline.</p> | <p>solutions,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• frame appropriate questions for the purpose of solving a problem,</li> <li>• solve a problem or create a new work.</li> </ul> <p>b) The ability to make critical use of scholarly reviews and primary sources.</p> | <p>and accountability in both personal and group contexts,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• working effectively with others,</li> <li>• behaviour consistent with academic integrity.</li> </ul> |  |
|--|--|--|---|--|--|

With revisions to June 2021

#### 4.3.3.1 BACHELOR OF ARTS AND BACHELOR OF SCIENCE DEGREES<sup>8</sup>

##### Program Design and Outcomes

These bachelor degree programs are intended to provide a wide exposure to several disciplines, or to provide an in-depth education in one or more disciplines. In addition to providing personal and intellectual growth, BA and BSc programs, in varying degrees, prepare students for entry into graduate study in the field, into second-entry professional degree programs, or into employment in one or more fields, not necessarily fields directly related to the discipline or disciplines in which the degree has been taken.

- *Programs designed to provide a broad education as an end in itself.* These programs prepare graduates for employment in a variety of fields and/or for admission to second-entry professional programs. E.g., General BA and General BSc degrees.
- *Programs designed to provide in-depth study in academic disciplines.* These BA and BSc programs normally prepare students for graduate study in the discipline(s) and for employment in a variety of fields. E.g., BA and BSc honours degrees.

##### Credits

These programs are normally 90-120 credits, or the equivalent (typically six to eight semesters or equivalent of full-time study will be required to complete such a program).

##### Admission Requirements<sup>9</sup>

At a minimum, admission normally requires a secondary school or CEGEP diploma, and/or university preparatory courses (specific 30-level high school courses or equivalent), a minimum grade-point average, and other program-specific requirements, set by the institution.

##### Credential

- A Bachelor of Arts degree is normally the credential awarded in programs of study where the majority of courses required for the major fall into the Humanities or Social Sciences, broadly defined.
- A Bachelor of Science degree is normally the credential awarded in programs of study where the majority of courses taken for the major fall into the Sciences, broadly defined.

##### Degree Structure

All degree proposals for three- or four-year BSc or BA programs must have a common structure that demonstrates breadth and depth, even though the number and type of courses included in the program may vary by the specific subject-matter area or interdisciplinary area they treat.

In order to ensure that students are provided with sufficient breadth of study, an institution proposing to offer a BA or BSc degree must normally offer courses in at least three areas of study: Humanities, Sciences and Social Sciences:

- with not less than three disciplines available in each of the three areas of study, and
- with a minimum of ten disciplines available in total.

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<sup>8</sup> CAQC recognizes that combined Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science programs exist, e.g., the BASc at the University of Lethbridge.

<sup>9</sup> CAQC recognizes that some institutions have open admission policies that may differ from the “normal” requirements set out above.

A three-year baccalaureate in Arts or Science will normally consist of the following:

- a. a minimum of 90 credits or the equivalent;
- b. a minimum of six credits in each of the three areas of study: Humanities, Social Sciences, and Sciences;
- c. a minimum of 72 credits in Arts and/or Science courses;
- d. a minimum of 45 credits at the senior level;<sup>10</sup>
- e. a minimum of three credits in each of five disciplines;
- f. a maximum of 42 credits in any one discipline.

Any proposed modification of the above should be explained by the applicant institution.

A four-year baccalaureate in Arts or Science will normally consist of the following:

- a. a minimum of 120 credits or the equivalent;
- b. a minimum of six credits in each of the three areas of study: Humanities, Social Sciences, and Sciences;
- c. a minimum of 102 credits in Arts and/or Science courses;
- d. a minimum of 72 credits at the senior level;
- e. a minimum of three credits in each of five disciplines;
- f. a maximum of 72 credits in any one discipline;
- g. a minimum of 42 credits in the major. Normally 30 of the 42 credits should be at the senior level. The relevance to the major of any cognate or prerequisite courses counted towards the 42 credits should be explained.

Any proposed modification of the above should be explained by the applicant institution.

#### Specialization / Major

Each four-year BA or BSc program will normally have at least one major, area of specialization, or interdisciplinary area. The minimum number of courses required by the institution for the major or specialization must be specified.

#### Areas of Study

The applicant institution must specify which disciplines will satisfy the requirement that a BA or a BSc normally includes Humanities, Sciences and Social Sciences areas of study. E.g.,

- Humanities: Classics, English, one of the Fine Arts, History, a Language, Philosophy, Religious Studies;
- Sciences: Astronomy, Biology, Chemistry, Computing Science, Earth Sciences, Mathematics, Physics, Psychology;
- Social Sciences: Anthropology, Economics, History, Human Geography, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology.

For courses that may be affiliated with more than one area of study (e.g., psychology), the institution should specify for which area or areas of study those courses will be accepted for credit.

#### General Programs

A broadly based three-year or four-year general Bachelor of Arts and/or Bachelor of Science degree program, without a major, may also be proposed. These general programs normally draw from more than one area of study in the Humanities, Social Sciences and Sciences, and are sometimes identified by the term “general” or “general studies.” Except for the requirement for a major, the expectations for these three- and four- year programs shall replicate those listed above for BA or BSc degrees with majors or specializations.

#### Interdisciplinary, Transdisciplinary and Thematic Programs

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<sup>10</sup> “Senior level” implies that the course transmits or articulates knowledge beyond the basic level and that it may require prerequisites, co-requisites, linguistic ability or quantitative skills.



Since the evolution and confluence of disciplines may lead to new areas of study, an institution may also propose to offer an interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary or thematic BA or BSc degree.

- a. An interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary or thematic BA or BSc degree is a program based on a combination and integration of courses and staffing from two or more academic areas. Such interdisciplinary and thematic concentrations or majors are **sometimes identified by the term “studies” (e.g., BA in Canadian Studies)**.
- b. Interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary and thematic programs must meet the same expectations for breadth and depth as outlined in 4.3.3.1.
- c. Each interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary and thematic program shall have at least one appropriately qualified continuing faculty member whose responsibilities include coordination of the program.

### PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMS

These programs are designed to prepare graduates to be competent practitioners in a profession and to meet admission requirements for entry to the profession. Therefore, professional programs are often strongly influenced by specific provincial legislation or by regulations of licensing or accrediting bodies. In addition to providing personal and intellectual growth, professional programs also prepare students for entry into graduate study in the field. **CAQC's** expectations for Education, Business, Music and Nursing programs are included in this section.

#### 4.3.3.2 BACHELOR OF EDUCATION DEGREES

Bachelor of Education degrees are governed by specific legislative requirements, primarily section 7 (1) (2) (3) of the *Certification of Teachers and Teacher Leaders Regulation*, since certification of teachers is a government responsibility. Consequently, greater specificity is provided for Education degree programs than for other professional programs. Institutions preparing Bachelor of Education proposals are strongly encouraged to consult with appropriate personnel **in Alberta's Ministry of Education, including the Director, Teacher Certification**.

#### Proposals

In addition to the general expectations with respect to all degree proposals, for Bachelor of Education program proposals the following guidelines apply:

- a. Proposals for teacher preparation programs must include an assessment of the competencies for each course in the program in order to demonstrate that the program meets the Teaching Quality Standard adopted by the Minister.
- b. Program proposals should list the available teaching subject majors and minors and demonstrate that the number of teaching subject majors are appropriate to the resources and viability of the program.
- c. Program proposals should indicate the minimum number of credits that must be at the senior level in both the major and the minor.
- d. Proposals should demonstrate that students in these programs would be able to obtain appropriate practicum/field placements.
- e. In addition to consulting with appropriate personnel in Alberta Education, applicants are encouraged to consult with other relevant organizations **such as the Alberta Teachers' Association, the Association of Independent Schools and Colleges in Alberta, the College of Alberta School Superintendents, the Association of Alberta Deans of Education**, and selected school jurisdictions regarding the proposed program. Relevant outcomes of the consultations should be included with the program proposal. It is particularly important to provide evidence that students will be able to obtain the required practicum experiences in a variety of school settings.

*With revisions to (e), December 2008; (a), October 2019*

### BEd After Degree Proposals

In addition to the general proposal guidelines noted above, the following guidelines are unique to after degree BEd proposals:

- a. Once an institution is authorized to offer at least one Alberta government approved degree program, it may apply to offer two-year baccalaureate after-degree programs in Education.
- b. The degree required for admission to the after degree must be a three- or four-year baccalaureate that provides relevant prior education of both breadth and depth in preparation for the more specialized after-degree program to follow.
- c. It is incumbent upon the applicant institution for an after-degree program to specify the nature and relevance of the prerequisite first degree for the after degree applied for.

### Program Design and Outcome Emphasis

Bachelor of Education programs prepare students for certification and work in the teaching profession. They also prepare students for graduate study in the field, second-entry professional degree programs, and employment in one or more fields as well as providing personal and intellectual growth. BEd programs are normally either four years or, if a previous degree has been completed, two years in duration.

### Credits

Four-year BEd programs are normally 120 credits, or the equivalent, and include at least one practicum (instruction is typically eight semesters or equivalent of full-time study).

After-degree BEd programs are normally 60 credits, or the equivalent and include at least one practicum (instruction is typically 4 semesters or equivalent of full-time study).

### Admission Requirements

At a minimum, admission to the four-year program normally requires a secondary school or CEGEP diploma and/or university preparatory courses (specific 30-level high school courses or equivalent), a minimum grade-point average, and other program-specific requirements.

Admission to an after-degree BEd requires a recognized degree. For admission to the secondary education area of study, the minimum number of courses in a teaching subject required for admission must be stated. There may be specific courses required, as well, for admission to an elementary education area of study.

### Credential

A Bachelor of Education is normally the credential awarded in programs of study where the majority of required courses fall in the discipline of Education.

### Degree Structure

Bachelor of Education programs must be planned with an elementary and/or a secondary education area of study.

A four-year baccalaureate in the elementary education area of study will normally consist of the following:

- a. At least 120 credits or the equivalent. (If the program includes pre-professional year(s), the courses and the number of credits that may be taken in that year(s) should be specified.)
- b. A minimum of 24 credits in non-Education areas. For each area, the institution should specify the number of course credits, the areas from which courses may be selected, and whether any specific courses are recommended.

- c. A minimum of 48 professional Education course credits. These should be specified in terms of required and optional courses and the manner in which each of these fulfills the competencies for teachers listed in the Teaching Quality Standard adopted by the Minister.
- d. A minimum of 12 weeks of practicum/field experience (student teaching) in a kindergarten to Grade 12 program supervised by academic staff of an approved basic professional teacher preparation program. An institution should specify whether this experience would be divided into an introductory and an advanced placement and the number of weeks comprising each experience. No placement should solely be in a kindergarten setting.
- e. A teaching subject minor will consist of 18 to 24 course credits. These should be specified for each minor offered. Each minor in a program must specify the number of credits required, how many must be at the senior level, the number of non-Education and Education courses, as well as any prerequisites that are required.
- f. Programs should specify the number of credits that may be taken as non-Education options and open options. Open options may include Education courses.

*With revisions to (c) and (d), October 2019*

Any proposed modification from the above should be justified by the applicant institution.

A four-year baccalaureate in the secondary education area of study will normally consist of the following:

- a. At least 120 credits or the equivalent. (If the program includes pre-professional year(s), the number of credits that may be taken in that year(s) should be specified.)
- b. A teaching subject major with a minimum of 36 course credits. The required number of credits in curriculum and **instruction related to the major must be specified in the institution's calendar.**
- c. A teaching subject minor with a minimum of 18 course credits. The required number of credits in curriculum and **instruction related to the teaching subject minor must be specified in the institution's calendar.**
- d. A minimum of 48 professional Education course credits. These should be specified in terms of required and optional courses and the manner in which each of these fulfills the competencies for teachers listed in the Teaching Quality Standard adopted by the Minister.
- e. Programs should specify the number of credits that may be taken as non-Education options and open options. Open options may include Education courses.
- f. Programs should indicate the minimum number of credits that must be at the senior level in both the teaching subject major/specialization and minor.
- g. A minimum of 12 weeks of practicum/field experience (student teaching) in a kindergarten to Grade 12 program supervised by academic staff of an approved basic professional teacher preparation program. An institution should specify whether this experience would be divided into an introductory and advanced placement and the number of weeks comprising each experience.

*With revisions to (d), October 2019*

Any proposed modification from the above should be justified by the applicant institution.

A two-year baccalaureate in Education after an approved degree will normally consist of the following:

- a. At least 60 credits or the equivalent.
- b. A minimum of 48 professional Education course credits. These should be specified in terms of required and optional courses and the manner in which each of these fulfills the competencies for teachers listed in the Teaching Quality Standard adopted by the Minister.
- c. A minimum of 12 weeks of practicum/field experience (student teaching) in a kindergarten to Grade 12 program supervised by academic staff of an approved basic professional teacher preparation program. An institution should specify whether this experience would be divided into an introductory and an advanced placement and

- the number of weeks comprising each experience. For the elementary area of study, no placement should solely be in a kindergarten setting.
- d. At least 6 credits in curriculum and instruction (methods).
  - e. At least three credits in each of the administrative (e.g., legal, professional), and social foundations (e.g., historical, philosophical, sociological) of Education; and at least six credits in the psychological (e.g., learning, development) foundations of Education.

*With revisions to (b) and (c), October 2019*

Any proposed modification from the above should be justified by the applicant institution.

If an institution has common core requirements across all its programs for all students, an institution must demonstrate how this core fits into the BEd program requirements.

An institution should specify how the program deals with professional ethics in education.

#### Specialization/Major/Minor

Teaching subject majors (specializations) or minors available at a particular institution within a secondary area of study **must be listed in the institution's calendar and must appear on a graduate's transcript**. The major or minor will not appear on the parchment which is awarded upon completion of the degree program. The minimum number of credits comprising a major or minor and the number of curriculum and instruction credits within the program must be stipulated. Secondary teaching subject majors and minors must be aligned with the Alberta Program of Studies or commonly accepted teaching specializations such as special education, intercultural education, instructional technology, religious and moral education, etc.

**An elementary area of study may identify one or more minors which must be listed in the institution's calendar and must appear on a graduate's transcript.** The minor will not appear on the parchment which is awarded upon completion of the degree program. Students may be required to complete one or more courses in curriculum and instruction in the minor discipline within the program. An institution must state the minimum number of courses comprising such minors.

For after degree BEd programs, students must complete a minimum of 3 credits in curriculum and instruction in each teaching subject area (major and minor) in a secondary program, and at least 9 credits in curriculum and instruction in an elementary program. Elementary and secondary education areas of study may recognize one or more minors completed by candidates prior to admission.

#### Areas of Study

An institution should identify which of its courses are considered to comprise Arts and Science disciplines, professional courses in Education, and other academic disciplines (Physical Education, Business, etc.).

#### Other Expectations

##### General

An institution must clearly state the graduation requirements a student must complete to receive a Bachelor of Education degree including:

- a. the minimum number of credits that must be successfully completed;
- b. the maximum number of credits (Education, Arts, Science and Vocational), that may be transferred from other recognized institutions;
- c. the graduation GPA and how it will be calculated; and
- d. successful completion of all practicum requirements.

There is an expectation that graduates of a four-year Bachelor of Education degree program will be eligible for certification and membership in the professional organization. An institution must inform students that Alberta teaching certificates are issued by the Minister responsible for K 12 Education and the Registrar, Teaching and Leadership Excellence. Students should be made aware that the Registrar may not issue a teaching certificate to persons who have been convicted of an indictable offence under the Criminal Code or who the Registrar has reason to believe should not be issued a certificate.

An institution should specify any professional standards that students in this program are expected to follow, including any applicable institutional codes of student conduct. As well, students should be made aware of the conduct **requirements of the Alberta Teachers' Association Code of Professional Conduct and the 'Professional Conduct Requirements for Teachers', found in the Schedule at the end of the *Practice Review of Teachers and Teacher Leaders Regulation*.**

An institution should provide evidence of all policies that will guide the management of this particular professional program, including any requirements for a criminal record check and speech/language competency, policies and practices related to field and practicum placements, credit transfer, transfer from one area of study to another (elementary to secondary; secondary to elementary), how inactive student programs will be treated, visiting students, etc.

*With revisions to October 2019*

BEd programs should have a program advisory committee. Provision should be made for representation from the **Alberta Teachers' Association and other educational stakeholders on the committee.**

#### Practicum Requirements

**A student's practicum placements must:**

- a. be in a public, separate, charter, Francophone, First Nations, or accredited private school, and
- b. clearly state the standards for successful completion, how and by whom those standards will be evaluated, and the nature of the appeal process in case of failure.

*With revisions to October 2019*

Provision must be made for the identification and selection of partnership schools to participate in the practicum and other aspects of the program, and for orienting teachers and administrators serving in those schools.

#### Faculty and Support Staff Components

Sufficient numbers of full-time continuing academic staff who have desirable qualifications and are appropriate to the objectives and subject matter of the proposed program of study shall be required and is subject to the approval by the Council. Academic staff teaching Education courses must be eligible for teacher certification in Alberta.

Appropriate numbers of administrative and support personnel with the appropriate qualifications for this program are required and are subject to the approval by the Council.

#### 4.3.3.3 BACCALAUREATE DEGREES IN BUSINESS

##### Program Design and Outcome Emphasis

A business degree is a professionally focused program designed to prepare students for work in business, industry, not for profit enterprises or other fields, and/or as preparation for graduate study, or pre-professional training. Some programs provide opportunity to pursue a major or an honours degree focusing in-depth on preparing students for graduate study and/or employment requiring higher level business skills; some programs may make students eligible

for professional designations. As well, there are baccalaureate programs designed for students who already possess a post-secondary degree in another field (after-degree programs), and there are interdisciplinary programs developed in collaboration with other fields of study where students benefit from acquiring basic business skills.

In order to comply with the [Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework](#) (Appendix B) degree-level standards, bachelor degrees in business must address the need for: i) depth and breadth of knowledge, ii) knowledge of methodologies and research, iii) application of knowledge, iv) communication skills, v) awareness of limits of knowledge, and vi) professional capacity/autonomy.

### Credits

These programs normally require a minimum of 120 credits, or the equivalent (instruction is typically eight semesters or equivalent of full-time study).

### Admission Requirements<sup>11</sup>

While admission to baccalaureate programs in business may be open to students entering directly from high school, there are programs where admission is based on completion of a pre-professional year at a post-secondary institution, fulfillment of specialized course requirements and competitive grade-point average. At the institutions that do not require completion of a pre-professional year, admission, at a minimum, normally requires a secondary school or CEGEP diploma and/or university preparatory courses (specific 30-level high school courses or equivalent), a minimum grade-point average, and other program-specific requirements.

### Credential

Baccalaureate degrees in business are offered in Alberta under a range of nomenclature, e.g., Bachelor of Commerce, Bachelor of Management, Bachelor of Business Administration and more occupationally focused degrees such as Bachelor of Business Operations and Bachelor of Hotel and Resort Management. Each represents programs with different structures and approaches. However, as business programs and their nomenclature have evolved over time, there is sometimes overlap in content among the programs despite differences in nomenclature. Applicants proposing a business degree must provide the rationale for the particular nomenclature and demonstrate that the curriculum is consistent with the degree name.

It is expected that institutions will provide learning outcomes for the proposed program in business and for any structured majors within it, as part of the justification for the chosen nomenclature.

### Degree Structure

Baccalaureate business programs generally include core business courses in the following: economics, mathematics and/or statistics, finance, accounting, marketing, operations management/management science, management information systems, organizational analysis/strategy, and organizational behaviour/human resource management. Programs also normally include a set of required and/or elective business courses made up of many of the above subjects regardless of the major or concentration selected. A minimum number of required and/or elective business/management courses is not suggested here, given the variations in how courses are labeled (e.g., accounting courses may not always be labeled as business courses).

Since all business degrees are expected to provide depth and breadth of knowledge to meet the requirements of the [Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework](#) (Appendix B), they normally include Arts and Science courses. In their proposals, applicants must indicate how business ethics and elements required by the [Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework](#) (Appendix B) are incorporated into the curriculum and what parts of the curriculum, if any, are shaped by

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<sup>11</sup> CAQC recognizes that some institutions have open admission policies that may differ from the “normal” requirements set above.

the accreditation requirements of professional bodies. Applicants are also encouraged to indicate in what ways, if any, international management issues are incorporated into the curriculum of the degree.

Although baccalaureate degree programs in business frequently benefit from having one or more advisory committees, the institution bears ultimate responsibility for the degree structure. Advisory committees should have clear roles and responsibilities that recognize and respect institutional autonomy.

A four-year baccalaureate business program will normally consist of the following:

- a. a minimum of 120 credits or the equivalent;
- b. a minimum of 72 credits at the senior level.<sup>12</sup>

Any proposed modification from the above should be justified by the applicant institution.

#### Specialization/Major/Concentration

In addition to general baccalaureate programs in business, many institutions offer business specializations in the form of majors or concentrations. An institution should clearly explain its rationale for using specific nomenclature in its business programs. The major or concentration should be consistent with the educational objectives of the institution and the expertise of available faculty members. At present, there exists a large variety of majors and concentrations in business degree programs in Alberta (e.g., accounting, finance, marketing, human resource management, international business, management information systems, etc.) and the areas of specializations continue to evolve.

Although there is some flexibility with regard to how majors and concentrations in business degree programs are **defined, it is CAQC's expectation that normally a major will include** seven or more courses (at least 21 credits) focused on a specific business topic. The institution should specify the number of courses it requires for a major or specialization and should also indicate any other requirements, including courses in other business areas as well as in non-business disciplines. Normally majors appear both on the parchment and transcript. A concentration usually includes 5-6 courses (15-18 credits) focused on a specific business topic, which is normally referred to on the transcript, but not on the parchment.

*Revised to add 3.Baccalaureate Degrees in Business, May 2008*

#### 4.3.3.4 BACHELOR OF MUSIC DEGREES

##### Program Design and Outcome Emphasis

These are bachelor degree programs with a professional focus and are intended to provide an in-depth education in music. They can generally be distinguished from BA programs in Music by the degree to which in-depth musical education is featured in the design of the curriculum. In addition to providing personal and intellectual growth, Bachelor of Music programs normally prepare students for entry into graduate study in the field, second-entry professional degree programs, or careers as professional musicians, including music educators.

In order to comply with the [Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework](#) (Appendix B) degree-level standards, Bachelor of Music programs in Alberta must address the need for i) depth and breadth of knowledge, ii) knowledge of methodologies and research, iii) application of knowledge, iv) communication skills, v) awareness of limits of knowledge, and vi) professional capacity/autonomy.

##### Credits

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<sup>12</sup> “Senior level” implies that the course transmits or articulates knowledge beyond the basic level and that it may require prerequisites, co-requisites, linguistic ability or quantitative skills.



These programs are normally 120 credits, or the equivalent (instruction is typically eight semesters or equivalent of full-time study).

#### Admission Requirements<sup>13</sup>

At a minimum, admission normally requires a secondary school or CEGEP diploma and/or university preparatory courses (specific 30-level high school courses or equivalent), a minimum grade-point average, an audition, and other program-specific requirements.

#### Credential

The nomenclature for the degree shall normally be Bachelor of Music (Major) or Bachelor of Music (General).

#### Degree Structure

The Bachelor of Music program normally consists of core and non-core music courses making up about 75% of the program requirements. The non-music courses constitute the remainder of the program to fulfill the breadth requirement.

A Bachelor of Music will normally consist of the following:

- a. a minimum of 120 credits or the equivalent;
- b. a minimum of 72 credits at the senior level.<sup>14</sup>

Each program will be evaluated by CAQC within the context of the Canadian University Music Society (CUMS) guidelines for the program in effect at the time of application. The CUMS guidelines are available on the Society's Website at <https://www.muscan.org/en/about-us/standing-committee-of-institutional-members>.

#### Specialization/Major

The Bachelor of Music (BMus) is a degree for which the concept of a major is defined in a specialized way. While not all **institutions in North America offering a BMus refer to their program "foci" (e.g., performance, music history, etc.) as majors**, there is general consensus that such foci are **referred to and detailed on the parchments as "majors"**.

The distribution of those courses not taken as part of the core determines whether the program shall be termed a **"general" program or one designated as having a specified major**. The minimum number of courses required by the institution for the major or specialization must be specified. (See the CUMS "Institutional Guidelines".)

*Revised to add 4. Bachelor of Music Degrees, May 2008*

#### 4.3.3.5 BACCALAUREATE DEGREES IN NURSING

In Alberta, baccalaureate nursing degrees are governed by the [Post-secondary Learning Act](#) (Appendix A) and the *Health Professions Act (2000)*. Consequently, nursing degrees must be approved by both the Minister of Alberta Advanced Education and the Nursing Education Program Approval Board (NEPAB) of the College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta (CARNA). Post-RN Nursing programs require ministerial approval, but do not require the approval of NEPAB as they are not entry-level programs. Except for the post-RN degree programs, all baccalaureate nursing degree programs prepare graduates for the Canadian Registered Nurse Examinations. These examinations are mandatory to register with CARNA and to work in Alberta as a RN.

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<sup>13</sup> CAQC recognizes that some institutions have open admissions policies which may differ from the requirements set out above.

<sup>14</sup> **Senior level" implies that the course transmits or articulates knowledge beyond the basic level and that it may require prerequisites, co-requisites, linguistic ability or quantitative skills.**



To meet the increasing professional requirements in nursing and health care, all applicants for initial registration as a **registered nurse in Alberta will need to have “a baccalaureate degree in nursing from an approved nursing program undertaken in Alberta” as of 1 January 2010.**<sup>15</sup>

#### Program Design and Outcome Emphasis

A nursing degree is a professionally-focused program designed to develop entry-to-practice competencies to ensure **students’ ability to practice with clients across the life span in a variety of clinical settings**. It also prepares students for entry into graduate study in the field.

Nursing programs in Alberta are available in various forms and formats. Some programs provide an opportunity to pursue an honors degree focusing in-depth on preparing students for graduate study and/or employment requiring advanced nursing skills. As well, there are baccalaureate programs designed for students who already possess a post-secondary degree in another field (after-degree/accelerated programs). Some institutions provide baccalaureate programs for registered nurses (post-RN programs), registered psychiatric nurses (post-RPN programs), paramedics (post-EMT-P programs), and licensed practical nurses that are built on or designed to incorporate certificates and/or diplomas in the relevant fields.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, there are combined programs developed in collaboration with other fields of study where students complete two degree programs and benefit from the knowledge of the related disciplines, as well as collaborative programs/arrangements between universities and colleges that allow students to complete baccalaureate nursing programs onsite in their communities through their local colleges.

In order to comply with the [Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework](#) (Appendix B) degree-level standards, baccalaureate nursing programs in Alberta must address the need for: i) depth and breadth of knowledge, ii) knowledge of methodologies and research, iii) application of knowledge, iv) communication skills, v) awareness of limits of knowledge, and vi) professional capacity/autonomy.

When a proposed baccalaureate program in nursing is designed as a collaborative degree that includes an off-site delivery arrangement, the onus is on the credentialing institution to satisfy the Campus Alberta Quality Council (CAQC) that its quality standards will be maintained in the collaborative version of the program.

#### Credits

Four-year programs normally require a minimum of 120 credits, or the equivalent. (instruction is typically eight semesters or equivalent of full-time study).

After-degree programs normally require a minimum 60 credits, or the equivalent. (Instruction is typically four to six semesters of full-time study, and may include the spring and/or summer terms to accelerate the program of study.)

#### Admission Requirements

At minimum, admission to the four-year program normally requires a secondary school or CEGEP diploma and/or university preparatory courses (specific 30-level high school courses or equivalent), a minimum grade-point average and other program-specific requirements. Specific minimum admission requirements to such programs are prescribed in the NEPAB standards.

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<sup>15</sup> *Registered Nurses Profession Regulation (2005)*, Section 3(1). Graduates from Nursing degree programs in other jurisdictions may apply for registration as a registered nurse in Alberta by providing evidence of substantially equivalent registration requirements, as defined in Sections 8 and 9 of *the Registered Nurses Profession Regulation*.

<sup>16</sup> See guidelines for Degrees Involving Diplomas (Section 8.0 below).

Admission to an after-degree program normally requires a recognized degree including specific prerequisite courses, a minimum grade-point average and other program-specific requirements.

Admission to a post-RN or post-RPN degree program normally requires a recognized diploma in nursing with a minimum grade-point average, active registration as a registered nurse or registered psychiatric nurse, practical experience in the field and other program specific requirements.

**When Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) is used to assess applicant's competencies for admission to the program, an institution must outline its policies on PLAR in its proposal.<sup>17</sup>**

### Credential

The nomenclature for the degree shall normally be Bachelor of Nursing or Bachelor of Science in Nursing. Applicants proposing a nursing degree must provide the rationale for the particular nomenclature and demonstrate that the curriculum is consistent with the degree name.

### Degree Structure

A four-year program must include in its requirements at least 60% nursing content while an after degree baccalaureate program has primarily nursing content. The non-nursing courses constitute the remainder of the program and include courses in sciences, behavioural sciences, social sciences and humanities to fulfill the supportive disciplines requirement as well as the breadth requirement.

In their proposals, applicants must indicate which courses are designated as nursing courses and how nursing ethics is incorporated into the curriculum. As well, proposals must specify how elements required by the [Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework](#) (Appendix B) are integrated into the curriculum and what parts of the curriculum, if any, are shaped by the accreditation requirements of professional bodies.

A four-year **bachelor's degree will normally** consist of the following:

- a. a minimum of 120 credits or the equivalent;
- b. a minimum of 72 credits at the senior level<sup>18</sup>
- c. a minimum of 72 credits in nursing courses.

A baccalaureate in nursing after an approved degree will normally consist of the following:

- a. a minimum of 60 credits or the equivalent;
- b. primarily nursing courses.

All nursing degree programs must include clinical placements in a variety of settings, as well as a full-time clinical preceptorship at the end of the program.

Each new nursing program proposed will be evaluated by CAQC within the context of the CRNA standards for the program in effect at the time of application. The [Nursing Education Program Approval Standards](#) are available on the CARN website.

*Revised to add Baccalaureate Degrees in Nursing, December 2009*

<sup>17</sup> Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer (ACAT) defines PLAR as “a process of identifying, assessing and recognizing skills, competencies, knowledge and formal learning to facilitate the transfer of skills and knowledge of individuals into further learning and work.” PLAR’s credits “may be based on formal or informal learning experiences including: (1) work experience, (2) maturity / life experience, (3) unstructured educational experiences such as self-study, and (4) structured educational activity.” For more information on ACAT’s principles, policies and procedures on PLAR see its website <http://www.acat.gov.ab.ca/pdfs/PPP.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> “Senior level” implies that the course transmits or articulates knowledge beyond the basic level and that it may require prerequisites, co-requisites, linguistic ability or quantitative skills.

#### 4.3.3.6 BACHELOR OF TECHNOLOGY DEGREES

The Bachelor of Technology is a relatively new kind of degree in Canada. Although not all degrees focused on technology will be termed Bachelor of Technology degrees (e.g., Bachelor of Music in Music Technology), a useful aid in understanding a Bachelor of Technology is to compare it to Engineering degrees. A Bachelor of Technology can usually be distinguished from an Engineering degree by its clear focus on applications of engineering principles in specific industrial areas and its development of hands-on skills needed to function within a technological environment, and by its lesser emphasis on the mathematical, scientific and theoretical foundations that underlie engineering concepts and analytical models. **Engineering degrees tend to ask questions headed by “why”, whereas Technology degrees tend to ask questions headed by “how”.**

Even within Canada Bachelor of Technology degrees are not homogeneous, nor can they be assumed to adhere to the same design principles or to aim at the same educational outcomes nationally or internationally. In order to comply with the [Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework](#) (Appendix B) degree-level standards, Bachelor of Technology programs in Alberta must address the need for: i) depth and breadth of knowledge, ii) knowledge of methodologies and research, iii) application of knowledge, iv) communication skills, v) awareness of limits of knowledge, and vi) professional capacity/autonomy. The inclusion of these elements in a Bachelor of Technology degree program distinguishes it from a diploma program in a similar area.

Bachelor of Technology degrees offer differing levels of preparation for further study and may not always be accepted as a foundation for graduate work by receiving institutions. Students should be made aware of these differences so that, before embarking on a program of study leading to a BTech, they can assess both the nature of a particular program and the extent to which it will be recognized by employers and by other educational providers.

##### Program Design and Outcomes

These 4-year bachelor degree programs are intended to enable the reflective practice or management of several technologies and, in many cases, to provide an in-depth education in one or more of these technical specialties. In addition to providing personal and intellectual growth, Bachelor of Technology programs aim, in varying degrees, to prepare students for employment and in some instances for second-entry professional degree programs or graduate study.

##### Credits

Although the number of credits an institution accepts from a preceding diploma program may vary depending on the **program’s design, content, and learning outcomes, Bachelor of Technology programs normally require a minimum of 120 credits**, or the equivalent (typically eight semesters or equivalent of full-time study are required to complete this degree).

##### Admission Requirements<sup>19</sup>

While admission to a Bachelor of Technology program may be open to students entering directly from high school, admission to many Bachelor of Technology programs is enabled by successful completion of a diploma program in a pertinent area. Depending on how closely a diploma program articulates with the degree program, there may be program-specific admission requirements set by the institution that offers a Bachelor of Technology. At some institutions, applicants may be able to receive recognition for prior learning and workplace experience.

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<sup>19</sup> CAQC recognizes that some institutions have open admissions policies that may differ from the “normal” requirements set out above.

### Credential

A Bachelor of Technology degree is normally the credential awarded in programs of study where the majority of courses required for the degree focus on the management or the practice of a specific technology or technologies.

### Degree Structure

All degree proposals for a Bachelor of Technology degree in Alberta must have a structure that demonstrates breadth and depth, even though the number and type of courses included in the program may vary by the specific subject matter area.

### Components of the program's curriculum should be specified in these areas:

- technological specialty or specialties (e.g., majors)
- professional fundamentals (e.g., courses in information management, ethics, communication), AND/OR
- support for the technological specialty (e.g., mathematics, psychology, business, etc.).

Proposals should indicate clearly the professional and technical support components of the curriculum, and where in the program (i.e., the diploma or the degree-completion phase) these (and the elements required by the [Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework](#) (Appendix B)) will be treated.

A Bachelor of Technology will normally consist of the following:

- a. a minimum of 120 credits or the equivalent;
- b. a minimum of 18 credits in professional fundamentals or courses supporting the technological specialty;
- c. a minimum of 72 credits at the senior level;<sup>20</sup>
- d. a minimum of 42 credits in the technological specialty or specialties. Normally 30 of these 42 credits should be at the senior level. The relevance to the technological specialty or specialties of any cognate or prerequisite courses counted towards the 42 credits should be explained.

Any proposed modification or redistribution of the above should be explained by the applicant institution in light of the particular kind of Bachelor of Technology it wishes to offer.

*Revised to add 6 Bachelor of Technology Degrees, December 2007*

#### 4.3.3.7 APPLIED DEGREES AND PROGRAMS WITH AN APPLIED FOCUS

*Added December 2008  
With revisions to June 2021*

**The ACF retired the Applied Degree credential for new Bachelor's programs. However, as stated in Expectation 3 in s. 4.3.3, *Programs with an Applied Focus* is listed as one of the four general categories of Bachelor's degree types. Furthermore, the Knowledge and Skills Standards listed for Bachelor's programs in Expectation 4 capture all of those that would apply to the previous Applied Degree credential. Applied Degree programs created prior to 2018 will not be affected by this change.**

Consistent with the CDQF and ACF, programs with an Applied Focus are designed to require a level of conceptual sophistication, specialized knowledge, and intellectual autonomy similar to that of other baccalaureate programs, while focusing on learning outcomes oriented to an occupational field of practice.

### Credential

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<sup>20</sup> "Senior level" implies that the course transmits or articulates knowledge beyond the basic level and that it may require prerequisites, co-requisites, linguistic ability or quantitative skills.

The credential for a program with an Applied Focus may or may not include the word “applied”. The program may be a first-level specialization (e.g., Bachelor of Agriculture Technology) or be a specialization within an existing Bachelor’s credential (e.g., Bachelor of Applied Arts in Film, Theatre, and Live Entertainment (Acting)).

#### Work Integrated Learning

Typically, programs with an Applied Focus include a work integrated learning component. Although it may vary, it is normally comprised of a single placement of one or two four-month terms in duration or two placements, each of which is one four-month term in duration. Normally a student should be remunerated for his/her work integrated learning.

Work integrated learning activities or placements must be approved by the program head or designate. The employer, the faculty advisor and the student should collaborate to establish learning objectives of the work integrated learning component based on program outcomes. Learning gained in the workforce should be evaluated through a combination of strategies that are outcomes-based, incorporating the application and integration of theory as well as skills assessment. Where this occurs in the workplace, employer evaluations form an integral component of the evaluation. While employers supervise and evaluate the student in the workplace, the faculty advisor monitors and **evaluates the student’s progress in relation to learning outcomes.**

In order to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes in the work integrated learning component and the capacity for independent intellectual work at the baccalaureate level as described by the [Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework](#) (Appendix B), the student should complete, under supervision, a research-based or performance-based exercise, demonstrating methodological competence and capacity for independent and ethical intellectual/creative work. The nature of this project should be determined in consultation with the faculty advisor and should comply with research ethics guidelines.

Programs with an Applied Focus that include work integrated learning should have a program advisory committee with clearly defined roles and responsibilities and with representation from relevant sector(s) or industries.

#### 4.3.3.8 DEGREES INVOLVING DIPLOMAS IN CAMPUS ALBERTA

**NOTE:** Since CAQC’s jurisdiction is limited to consideration of new proposals for degree programs, following these guidelines is a list of questions and answers that should be read in conjunction with these guidelines for degrees involving diplomas.

##### Historical Background

Because of its strong transfer system, inter-institutional collaboration has been a prominent feature of Campus Alberta. It has provided an increasing number of lifelong learning opportunities for Albertans as well as people from other Canadian jurisdictions and countries. Such collaboration on the delivery of undergraduate education has traditionally taken one of several forms. Using the principles, policies and procedures of the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer (ACAT), the system has traditionally allowed for and encouraged the use of:

- *Transfer courses* - a college that offers a course designed for transfer to a degree program, negotiates a transfer agreement with a university or private degree-granting institution.
- *Transferable courses* - a college or technical institute that offers courses designed to fulfill certificate or diploma program requirements, negotiates a transfer agreement with a university or private degree-granting institution.
- *Blocks of courses* - a college or technical institute arranges for block transfer credit to a program at a degree-granting institution or a group of universities, of a set of credit-bearing university transfer courses [e.g., biology], or a completed certificate or diploma (e.g., early childhood development diploma).

- *2+2 arrangements* – two institutions, one a college or technical institute and the other a university or private degree-granting institution, agree to collaborate on the joint delivery of a degree, typically consisting of a two-year diploma and two years of degree-level work. This articulation of one post-secondary credential with another **is customarily known as a “2+2” program**. In some programs of this kind, a student has an option of exiting a degree program after completing two years of study and receiving a diploma credential for the work completed.<sup>21</sup>

### *Post-secondary Learning Act*

The [Post-secondary Learning Act](#) (Appendix A) provides colleges and technical institutes with the ability to offer their own undergraduate degrees, if approved by the Minister. The *Act* was amended in 2008 to indicate from which sectors and at which levels degree programs can be proposed. **Furthermore, it strengthens the Ministry’s continuing emphasis on the importance of collaboration among publicly funded institutions within and among the six sectors found within Campus Alberta and opens further opportunities for 2+2 arrangements. In particular, this legislation states that “an institution in the Comprehensive Community Colleges sector may provide an approved program of study that leads to the granting of a baccalaureate degree if the program is provided in collaboration with another institution that has approval to grant the degree.” [102.3(4)(d)(i)].**

### The Role of CAQC When Degrees Involve Diplomas

Since CAQC’s mandate pertains only to consideration of new degree proposals referred to it by the Minister, it has no role to play in the examination or the approval of diplomas offered by Alberta’s colleges and polytechnics, nor does it have a role to play in considering, as ACAT does, transfer arrangements *per se*. Consistent with its mandate, however, is its responsibility to consider the degree of affinity between the diploma and the degree, when proposed degrees are expressly designed to incorporate diplomas in the same or similar areas into the educational experience of students earning those degrees. **As well, it has a responsibility to consider the proposed model’s effect on the quality of those degrees.**

### Degree-level Standards

Because Alberta recognizes the [Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework](#) (Appendix B), for undergraduate degree-level programs, CAQC expects all degrees of which a diploma is a component to address the need for: i) depth and breadth of knowledge; ii) knowledge of methodologies and research; iii) application of knowledge; iv) communication skills; v) awareness of limits of knowledge; vi) professional capacity/autonomy. The inclusion of these elements in a degree program distinguishes it from a diploma program in a similar area.

As there is a large spectrum of collaborative arrangements among post-secondary institutions that offer degrees involving diplomas in Alberta, CAQC will consider proposals containing innovative methods of achieving its standards. The onus is on the institution submitting a degree proposal to show how the CAQC standards will be met over the four years of the degree program. For the diploma part of the program, therefore, a proposal must outline an acceptable *process* for determining how the degree-granting institution will ensure the ongoing quality of the diploma program. When a degree proposal is designed so that the only method of entering into the program is in the third year of a degree, CAQC evaluation teams will review all four years of the degree program including the contributions made to it by a diploma program.

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<sup>21</sup> Although CAQC treats “2+2” programs as the norm in degrees involving diplomas, it recognizes that currently within Alberta there are instances of four-year degrees configured as “1+3” (1-year certificate program plus 3 years of degree program). Furthermore, these variations on the standard “2+2” model lead to additional complexities when a program allows students to take the “diploma” part of a degree after the university part, or when programs embed a diploma offered by a college or polytechnic into a 4-year degree offered by another institution.



CAQC has adopted other standards (e.g., on academic freedom and scholarship, on academic staff) which will be applied to degree programs involving diplomas.

### Program Design and Outcomes

In addition to providing personal and intellectual growth, degrees involving diplomas aim to prepare students for employment and in some instances for second-entry professional degree programs or graduate study.

### Credits

Including any credits an institution accepts from a preceding diploma program, offered by another institution or by itself, these programs normally require a minimum of 120 credits, or the equivalent (typically eight semesters or equivalent of full-time study are required to complete this degree). It is the responsibility of an institution to assess the advanced standing of diploma program graduates entering its degree program. As part of its quality assurance process, CAQC will assess institutional policies on advanced standing.

### Admission Requirements

Admission to most degree programs involving a diploma is enabled by successful completion of a diploma program in a specified area. The educational design of the diploma program should enable students' **success in the senior level** courses that follow. Depending on the degree of affinity between a diploma program and a degree program, there may be diploma-specific or program-specific admission or bridging requirements set by the institution offering the degree. Degree-granting institutions have an obligation to ensure that students entering a diploma that is designed to be part of a degree program are aware of any bridging requirements so that they can assess the nature of the full degree program before embarking on the portion covered by the diploma.

In some cases, students may be able to enter the degree program in question directly in year one or indirectly, after successful completion of a diploma; in those instances where an option is available, an institution must ensure that, to the extent possible, all students entering third year of the degree program have similar levels of knowledge, skills and learning outcomes.

### Credential

A student will receive the appropriate degree-level credential (e.g., BA, BTech, BBA) after completing a degree involving a diploma. Normally, a student who had earlier completed a diploma as part of such a degree would have also received a diploma credential.

### Degree Structure

In Alberta, all proposals for degrees involving diplomas must present a structure that demonstrates breadth and depth, even though the number and type of courses included in the program may vary by the specific subject matter the degree addresses.

A degree involving a diploma will normally consist of the following:

- a. a minimum of 120 credits or the equivalent;
- b. a maximum of 60 credits or the equivalent in an appropriate diploma incorporated into the degree;<sup>22</sup>
- c. a minimum of 60 credits or the equivalent offered by the institution granting a degree;

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<sup>22</sup> An institution may at its discretion determine that not all courses taken in a diploma will receive credit, or that certain kinds of educational content are missing and will need to be made up, or that the diploma presented for credit within a degree program is no longer current or appropriate for the purpose.

- d. a minimum of 72 credits at the senior level;<sup>23</sup>
- e. a minimum of 42 credits in the subject area or areas on which the degree and the concomitant diploma focus.

An institution proposing a degree involving a diploma should specify where in the curriculum, as offered over both parts of the program, a student will encounter the six elements of an undergraduate degree enumerated by the [Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework](#) (Appendix B).

Council recognizes that the strength of Campus Alberta rests, in part, on its flexibility, diversity and innovation. Therefore, Council will consider variations to the norm as it recognizes that degrees that articulate with or embed diplomas can take different forms.<sup>24</sup>

#### Questions and answers with respect to CAQC's Guidelines for Degrees Involving Diplomas

NOTE: Council's primary statement on its interest in diplomas that contribute to degrees is its *Guidelines on Degrees Involving Diplomas*; the following Q&As provide clarification and interpretation of those guidelines.

Q: Are these guidelines prescriptive or descriptive?

A: These guidelines are meant to be descriptive. Council has been working on various guidelines for undergraduate degrees in order to assist both the applicant institution in preparing new degree proposals and Council's evaluators in assessing the quality of degree programs.

Q: **How do diploma programs fit into CAQC's mandate?**

A: Council is not involved in any way in the process of reviewing and/or approving diplomas, transfer courses, transfer of courses or blocks of courses. **Council's responsibility pertains only to those diploma programs that are integrated with or embedded into the design of new degree program proposals.** As well, Council recognizes that there are many free-standing quality diploma programs that do not and will not ladder into degree programs.

#### *Excerpt from draft Guidelines for Degrees Involving Diplomas*

*Since CAQC's mandate pertains only to consideration of new degree proposals referred to it by the Minister, it has no role to play in the examination or the approval of diplomas offered by Alberta's colleges and polytechnics, nor does it have a role to play in considering, as ACAT does, transfer arrangements per se. Consistent with its mandate, however, is its responsibility to consider the degree of affinity between the diploma and the degree, when proposed degrees are expressly designed to incorporate diplomas in the same or similar areas into the educational experience of students earning those degrees. As well, it has a responsibility to consider the proposed model's effect on the quality of those degrees.*

Q: **Do Council's guidelines with respect to degrees involving diplomas apply to all degree-granting institutions proposing to offer programs in Alberta?**

A: Yes. The new guidelines will apply to all resident and non-resident institutions applying to offer new degree programs in Alberta. **The process CAQC uses to review a proposal is based on the applicant institution's experience**

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<sup>23</sup> "Senior level" implies that the course transmits or articulates knowledge beyond the basic level and that it may require prerequisites, co-requisites, linguistic ability or quantitative skills.

<sup>24</sup> Institutions proposing new Applied Degree programs designed to incorporate diplomas should take into consideration Council's expectations for both Degrees Involving Diplomas and Applied Degrees.



in offering degree programs and may proceed in one of three ways including full review, partially expedited review and fully expedited review.

**Q: Will CAQC's guidelines for degrees involving diplomas alter the admission requirements of diploma programs?**

A: No. The proposed guidelines do not outline any entrance requirements with respect to the diploma program. As CAQC is interested in the degree of affinity between a diploma program and a degree program, it will look at the exit standards/learning outcomes in the diploma program to ensure that they contribute to the degree-level requirements, and that students are appropriately prepared to succeed in the senior years of the degree program.

*Excerpt from draft Guidelines for Degrees Involving Diplomas*

*Admission to most degree programs involving a diploma is enabled by successful completion of a diploma program in a specified area. **The educational design of the diploma program should enable students' success in the senior level courses that follow.** Depending on the degree of affinity between a diploma program and a degree program, there may be diploma-specific or program-specific admission or bridging requirements set by the institution offering the degree. Degree-granting institutions have an obligation to ensure that students entering a diploma that is designed to be part of a degree program are aware of any bridging requirements so that they can assess the nature of the full degree program before embarking on the portion covered by the diploma.*

*In some cases, students may be able to enter the degree program in question directly in year one or indirectly, after successful completion of a diploma; in those instances where an option is available, an institution must ensure that, to the extent possible, all students entering third year of the degree program have similar levels of knowledge, skills and learning outcomes.*

**Q: Who determines the advanced standing of diploma students entering the degree program?**

A: The degree-granting institution is responsible for determining the advanced standing diploma graduates will receive. It will also determine if any bridging requirements are necessary. Where a 4-year program is designed so that some students can proceed in the program from year one to graduation and other students can enter directly into year three or earlier on the basis of advanced credit, Council will not look at the diploma program *per se*; rather **it will look at the institution's mechanisms/policies** for awarding advanced credit.

**Q: Are there any situations when Council will look at the curriculum of diploma program?**

A: If a new 4-year degree program is designed so that its first two years are the two years of an existing diploma and students can only enter the degree program in third year after successful completion of a diploma, Council will have a role in reviewing the curriculum of the diploma when it reviews the new degree proposal.

**Q: Will the guidelines change transfer agreements among institutions, PLAR processes and residency requirements in the diploma programs?**

A: No. **CAQC's mandate does not pertain to the transfer agreements, PLAR processes and residency requirements in the diploma programs.** These remain matters with which institutions, using their internal processes and standards, share responsibility with ACAT.

Q: Who bears the primary responsibility with respect to ensuring quality standards in the diploma component when it is an integral part of the design of the degree program?

A: As the credentialing institution, this is the responsibility of the institution proposing the new degree program. As part of its evaluation process, CAQC will examine only how the degree-granting institution's internal quality assurance mechanisms are applied to assessing the quality of the diploma part of the program.

Excerpt from Guidelines for Degrees Involving Diplomas

*The onus is on the institution submitting a degree proposal to show how the CAQC standards will be met over the four years of the degree program. For the diploma part of the program, therefore, a proposal must outline an acceptable process for determining how the degree-granting institution will ensure the ongoing quality of the diploma program.*

Q: Does Council entertain innovative proposals for the design of degrees involving diplomas?

A: Yes. **Council recognizes the diversity of Alberta's post-secondary** system and supports innovative approaches to the design of new degree programs involving diplomas and to the achievement of degree level standards. The onus is on the degree-granting institution to assure Council that its program quality standards will be met in the new diploma/degree arrangement and that graduates of the degree program will meet the expectations of the [Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework](#) (Appendix B).

Excerpt from Guidelines for Degrees Involving Diplomas

*Council recognizes that the strength of Campus Alberta rests, in part, on its flexibility, diversity and innovation. Therefore, Council will consider variations to the norm, as it recognizes that degrees that articulate with or embed diplomas can take different forms.*

Q: Does CAQC treat applied degrees differently from baccalaureate degrees, including those that involve diplomas?

A: No. CAQC is responsible for evaluating both kinds of undergraduate degree and does so with reference to its standards and to its [Expectations for Design and Structure of Undergraduate Degrees](#) (Section 4.3.3), which contains a separate section on Applied Degrees.

*Revised to add 8. Degrees Involving Diplomas, December 2009*

#### 4.3.4 STANDARDS ON ACADEMIC STAFF FOR BACCALAUREATE PROGRAMS

*With revisions to June 2021*

**NOTE:** This statement on standards for academic staff should be read in the context of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC's) **quality assurance standards regarding faculty**, and in the context of the organizational and program standards already adopted by Council. The relevant texts follow:

*CMEC Organizational Standard: Faculty and Staff– The institution has policies with respect to the number and qualifications of the academic faculty and instructional staff, including provisions against fraudulent credentials, and policies with respect to appointment, evaluation (including student evaluations), employment conditions, which include workload, promotion, termination and professional development, and policies/practices with respect to research and/or scholarship. In addition, the institution has policies regarding appropriate human resource development and management.*

*CMEC Program Standard: Human Resources– The institution has sufficient and appropriately qualified resources, academic and otherwise, to deliver degree-level education, and satisfactory policies pertaining to faculty that address issues such as the protection of academic freedom; academic/professional credentials; the regular review of faculty performance; the means of ensuring that faculty knowledge in the field is current; teaching, supervision and student counseling loads; and professional development of faculty. Staff resources must be sufficient to ensure the coverage required within the discipline for the proposed program.*

*CMEC Organizational Standard #8: 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.*

*CAQC Program Standard #1: Human Resources – 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 programs with an applied or professional focus, faculty shall maintain continuing academic and professional competence and accreditation in their discipline or field, as appropriate.*

*With revisions to June 2021*

##### 4.3.4.1 PREAMBLE

The Council needs to be assured that institutions offering university-level baccalaureate degrees employ an adequate number of well-qualified academic staff members who are primarily responsible to the institution delivering the degree, and who will provide academic leadership, continuity and planning for each degree program.

The diversity of programs offered by institutions within Alberta, which range from mature research universities with large graduate programs, to technical institutes, to public and private colleges of various sizes, requires that standards on the number, qualifications and mix of academic staff be both clear and flexible. Variations of the standards and

norms set out below may be acceptable, provided that, in the judgment of Council, such variations are academically justifiable and do not impair the quality of the program offered.

These standards apply to undergraduate degree programs. Council will consider academic staff requirements for graduate programs on a case-by-case basis. (See Council's [Graduate Program Proposal Guidelines and Assessment Standards](#) in Section 4.4.1.)

#### 4.3.4.2 NUMBER OF ACADEMIC STAFF

The minimum number of academic staff required varies according to program type (e.g., Arts and Science programs versus professional programs), its length, and the number of students enrolled in it.

##### Three-year programs

- Two acceptably qualified full-time continuing academic staff<sup>25</sup> shall normally be the minimal staffing requirement for each concentration offered. This condition may not be sufficient or appropriate in all cases.
- Subject to the approval of Council, an institution may be able to justify the equivalent of two academic staff (2.0 FTE) by using 1.0 FTE drawn from part-time academic staff or from academic staff teaching in another discipline. In such cases, the other 1.0 FTE must be filled by one continuing academic staff member teaching full-time in the program.
- Where academic staff are assigned to teach in more than one discipline, the sum of their fractional contributions cannot normally exceed 1.0 FTE.

##### Four-year programs

- Three acceptably qualified full-time continuing academic staff shall normally be the minimal staffing requirement for each major offered. This condition may not be sufficient or appropriate in all cases.
- Subject to the approval of Council, an institution may be able to justify the use of part-time academic staff for up to 2.0 FTE, but at least one continuing academic staff member must be devoted full-time to a four-year program.
- Where academic staff are assigned to teach in more than one discipline, the sum of their fractional contributions cannot normally exceed 1.0 FTE.

##### Interdisciplinary programs

- Each interdisciplinary and thematic program shall be anchored by at least one appropriately-qualified full-time continuing faculty member whose responsibilities include coordination of the program.
- Council shall be informed if this faculty member is to be seconded from another program and, because of its interest in sustainability, Council needs to be informed as well about the duration of the secondment and the procedure for replacement, if any, of the person seconded.

##### Special Cases

- **The requirements for academic staff in “after-degree” programs and in “2+2” programs, in which a college-level diploma is a component of an undergraduate degree, will be considered by Council on a case-by-case basis.**

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<sup>25</sup> “Full-time continuing academic staff” refers to an academic staff member who holds tenure or is in a tenure-track appointment (or their equivalent in the case of institutions that make long-term appointments in the absence of a tenure system typical of universities).

#### 4.3.4.3 QUALIFICATIONS OF ACADEMIC STAFF

*With revisions to December 2019*

- The qualifications for both continuing and part-time academic staff should be in keeping with the mandate or mission statement and the educational objectives of the institution and be pertinent to the program or programs affected.
- Professional or technical degree programs may differ from other programs in the qualifications needed to ensure high quality.
- Institutions with an approved degree program based on minimum qualifications of academic staff should present plans outlining movement toward the employment of academic staff with desirable qualifications. Council may monitor progress in this domain.
- Institutions must have a mechanism for verifying the credibility of credentials and the accuracy of statements contained in the applications of academic staff.

##### Minimum Qualifications

- The minimum qualification for each academic staff member (continuing, part-time or contract) offering **instruction in an approved program shall normally be an acceptable Master's degree or equivalent in the discipline in which the staff member is assigned to teach.**

##### Desirable Qualifications

- The desirable qualification of an academic staff member offering instruction is an acceptable doctoral degree in the discipline in which the staff member is assigned to teach or in a cognate discipline.
- In disciplines where a doctoral degree is not the normal terminal degree, appropriate alternatives may be acceptable.
- For institutions and programs with a technical or applied emphasis, the desirable qualification of an academic staff member offering instruction is at least **a Master's degree (or equivalent), with the understanding that a background of personal experience in relevant employment is an alternative to the desirable qualification specified above.**
- For professional programs, academic staff members teaching professional courses must be eligible for professional certification as appropriate to the field of instruction.
- Learning facilitators, graduate students, or others who provide support for instructional programs must hold qualifications commensurate with their roles and must be appropriately supervised by members of academic staff who are primarily responsible for the quality and the sustainability of the program.
- Provided that their employment is consistent with commitment to high-quality undergraduate education and **with other standards articulated in this policy, graduate students may be appointed as "instructors of record,"** as permitted by institutional policies and if appropriately supervised by regular members of academic staff.

#### 4.3.4.4 BALANCE OF ACADEMIC STAFF

- Staffing policies should take into consideration the balance between academic staff members holding the minimum qualification and those holding the desirable qualifications. See Section 4.3.4.3 above.
- Normally, a majority of academic staff members offering instruction in each approved program, expressed on an FTE basis, must hold the desirable qualifications.
- Normally, full-time academic staff members will predominate in a given degree program. There should be a balance between full-time and part-time academic staff in order to ensure the stability and sustainability of each program.

- Where part-time academic staff are employed in instruction, an institution's contractual appointment policies must ensure that such staff members are available for student consultation beyond the formal instructional hours.
- **Notwithstanding an institution's compliance with the foregoing requirements, Council may judge the mix of qualifications of academic staff to be unsatisfactory on the basis of their distribution among the disciplines which comprise a degree program.**

#### 4.3.4.5 SCHOLARSHIP

- An institution offering a university-level undergraduate degree program must make adequate provision to ensure that, at a minimum, all academic staff teaching in the degree program engage in scholarship or professional activity sufficient to ensure that program and course content remains current.
- An institution may require scholarly productivity from some or all of its academic staff for on-going employment or career advancement, and if so, it must state this expectation in its published policies.
- A spectrum of scholarly activity will normally exist within the complement of academic staff, ranging from the scholarship of discovery, to the scholarship of teaching, integration, application, and engagement.
- An institution must have policies and procedures that enable and support scholarship intended to maintain currency in the discipline and or intended to produce other forms of scholarly output expected of academic staff.
- **For an elaboration of Council's views of scholarship and its relationship to academic freedom, see its complementary statement on [Academic Freedom and Scholarship](#) (Section 3.7). See also the [Research and Scholarship in Campus Alberta: CAQC Interpretation of the Roles and Mandates Policy Framework for Alberta's Publicly Funded Advanced Education System \(March, 2008\)](#) (Appendix K).**

#### 4.3.4.6 EMPLOYMENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR ACADEMIC STAFF

- The collective agreements, contracts, letters of appointment or similar documents pertaining to the employment of academic staff must clearly describe the terms and conditions of employment (including criteria and procedures for the granting of tenure, if applicable).
- An institution must have written policies governing criteria and procedures for appointment, employment conditions including employment equity, promotion, termination, and performance evaluation (including provision for student assessment of teaching). These policies must be distributed to all members.

*Revised to add "including employment equity," November 2008*

- Performance assessment of academic staff will include some form of peer review.
- An institution must have a written description of roles and responsibilities of academic staff, and explicit written expectations of academic staff in the realms of teaching, scholarship and professional activity, and service. These documents must be distributed to all members.
- An institution should have a policy with respect to the ongoing professional development of academic staff throughout their careers.

## 4.3.4.7 TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS

*Added February 2017  
With revisions to December 2019*

- An institution should support, improve and reward the teaching and learning effectiveness of its academic staff. Recognizing the highly complex and contextualized nature of assessing teaching effectiveness from a quality perspective, CAQC recommends a number of general evidence-based guiding principles with respect to assessing teaching effectiveness:
  1. Consistent with **CAQC's core operating principles**, the primary responsibility for program and institutional teaching effectiveness rests with degree granting institutions themselves.
  2. **The assessment of teaching effectiveness is a component of an institution's overall program quality.**
  3. Degree granting institutions will establish their own comprehensive, integrated approach to assessing teaching effectiveness that is relevant to their own institutional context.
  4. Well designed and developed curriculum plans, including clearly articulated course and program learning outcomes, are the foundation of supporting teaching effectiveness.
  5. The process of assessing teaching effectiveness should include multiple sources of evidence and be rigorously administered to foster confidence in the trustworthiness of assessment processes, of the results, and of how those results are used to recognize and reward the work of teaching.
  6. Institutional and program-level educational development and support mechanisms are essential to supporting faculty in developing their teaching effectiveness.
  7. Institutions should support individuals and committees who have responsibilities for interpreting teaching effectiveness data with evidenced-based resources to guide their work.
  8. Institutions should recognize and reward excellence in teaching to profile the importance of teaching in learning.

*Principles 1. to 8. added December 2019*

## 4.4 GRADUATE PROGRAMS

*June 2005  
With revisions to December 2011*

The Campus Alberta Quality Council is committed to assuring the quality of new graduate programs offered in Alberta. The assessment and evaluation of Graduate Programs is guided and supported by the assessment standards and processes contained in the CMEC document *Ministerial Statement on Quality Assurance of Degree Programs in Canada*, **including the learning outcomes for both master's and doctoral programs articulated in the Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework.**

Please note that degree programs delivered in whole or in part in blended, distributed or distance modes are expected to meet both these standards and **Council's** [Additional Quality Assessment Standards for Programs Delivered in Blended, Distributed or Distance Modes](#) in Section 4.5.

*Paragraph added April 2011*

**Alberta's Roles and Mandates Policy Framework** classifies all publicly funded Alberta institutions according to a six sector model (described in s. 102.2 of the *Post-secondary Learning Act*), which outlines the types of degree programming these institutions are allowed to offer. According to this Framework, graduate programs may be offered only by Comprehensive Academic and Research Universities, Independent Academic Institutions (in niche areas), and one institution in the Undergraduate Universities sector. In addition, non-resident institutions that meet certain criteria are eligible to offer graduate degrees in Alberta (please see s. 2.3.1, (9.) and 2.3.3 (9.) for the eligibility criteria).

*Added September 2009*



After the Minister has determined that an institution's mandate makes it eligible to offer a graduate degree, the Minister may refer the proposal to CAQC. **Council's expectation is that normally institutions will** be able to offer a high-quality graduate program only after they have established a satisfactory track record of offering approved undergraduate degree programs in the same academic domain and have satisfied Council that those programs are achieving the desired outcomes as evidenced by a comprehensive review or other documentation specified by Council.

An institution proposing to offer its first graduate degree program will normally be required to undergo an organizational evaluation, unless Council has already determined that the institution meets its organizational review assessment standards and can satisfactorily support the proposed graduate programs. In addition to its regular organizational assessment standards, Council has additional organizational assessment standards that assist it in **evaluating the institution's capacity to put in place the resources, personnel and organizational support to deliver and sustain graduate programs.**

**Institutions that have not previously offered graduate programs normally start with a proposal for a master's level program.** Applications for the approval of doctoral programs will be considered only from institutions that have **demonstrated the successful delivery of one or more master's programs in the same area, normally for a period of at least five years.** Please refer to s. 4.4.3 below for a description of graduate degree types.

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#### 4.4.1 GRADUATE PROGRAM ASSESSMENT STANDARDS

June 2005

With revisions to December 2011

##### 1. Faculty and staff

The program, whether disciplinary or interdisciplinary in nature, is supported by suitably qualified academic faculty and instructional staff to develop and deliver the graduate degree program and to supervise students. Faculty will have an appropriate level of scholarly output and/or research or creative activity for the graduate program involved. The institution will have a critical mass of scholars/researchers, not only in the program area but in related areas, with a range of expertise to allow for intellectual leadership and challenge. The program will be anchored by a designated complement of faculty who are primarily responsible for its delivery and continuity.

##### 2. Commitment to research and scholarship

The institution and the program being proposed have a research culture (the scholarly context within which graduate study will occur) which is fundamental to maintaining and enhancing high quality graduate programs. The institution is clearly committed to research which promotes the depth and breadth of knowledge, both within the field/discipline, and in a cognate field/discipline when necessary.

##### 3. Academic and program policies and procedures

The program is governed by academic policies appropriate to the administration of a full-time or part-time graduate program including, but not limited to, those dealing with admissions, placement, applicable residency requirements, maximum time limits for completion, assessment, progression and graduation requirements, supervisory committee requirements, comprehensive/candidacy examination requirements, thesis oral examination committee and procedures, credit transfer and prior learning assessment, appeals, academic dishonesty, intellectual property rights, and ethical guidelines for research.

##### 4. Graduate supervision plans

The institution has a detailed graduate supervision plan in place to organize the advising, supervision and monitoring of graduate students. The proposed program has criteria for the appointment of faculty who will supervise graduate students, and for the appointment of supporting or adjunct faculty and mentoring practices to enhance the supervisory skills of faculty. The proposed program specifies graduate supervisory loads for faculty, advising and monitoring



practices for graduate students, and procedures for the monitoring and evaluation of students that will provide adequate feedback to the program administrators and to the student.

#### 5. Quality of students

**Admission to master's or doctoral programs will normally require either a recognized undergraduate or graduate degree with an appropriate specialization or relevant bridging studies.** Institutions will expect those admitted to graduate programs to have achieved an academic standing in the previous degree (or equivalent) to enable success in the program and will require that students maintain standards appropriate to graduate study in order to progress and graduate from the program. The proposed program will have a systematic and effective process for recruiting high quality graduate students. The extent and nature of financial support available to students and the financial resources dedicated to support the proposed size, scope and nature of the program and a critical mass of students will be described.

#### 6. Resource capacity

The program is supported by the physical resources, both start-up and continuing, needed to assure its quality. These include, where applicable, space for graduate students, equipment, library and learning resources (physical and electronic), laboratories, computing facilities, shops, specialized equipment and work placements. There is an institutional commitment to maintaining and supplementing resources and equipment as needed to meet standards applicable to the field.

#### 7. Recognition of the degree

The credential should align with Canadian standards and be recognized and accepted by other post-secondary institutions, by employers, and by professional and licensing bodies, where applicable. The nomenclature of the degree should reflect its content. The program type and degree level should be consistent with Canadian practice in graduate education, as exemplified by the Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework (CDQF), and it should have learning outcomes as defined by the CDQF that are consistent with national and international standards of quality.

#### 8. Graduate program design, content, and delivery

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 graduate degree program and the field of study. **The program's** design and content structure assures that the student will achieve the objectives of the program. Its curriculum must be current and reflect the state of knowledge in the field, or fields in the case of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary programs. 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 have the expertise and resources to support the proposed method(s) of delivery and ensure its effectiveness.

#### 9. Graduate program evaluation

The institution must have a process to maintain the currency of the program and the quality of its learning outcomes. The program is subject to a formal, approved policy and procedure requiring a cyclical review and improvement process, and 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 must include the advice of independent academic experts.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> In engaging external experts, institutions should be guided by Council's guideline on Independent Academic Experts (Appendix G).

## 10. Credentialing

Learning outcomes and other requirements for graduation in programs leading to professions (such as entry to practice programs) are designed to prepare students to meet the requirements of the relevant regulatory, accrediting, quality assurance or professional body. If the proposed program is a professional or clinical practice program, it has sufficient empirical and theoretical foundations so that study can be integrated with and informed by original research in the unit.

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### 4.4.2 GRADUATE PROGRAM EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

*June 2005**With revisions to December 2011*

**This framework is designed to be used by the Campus Alberta Quality Council's graduate program evaluation teams** when conducting evaluations of proposed graduate degree programs. In addition, the evaluators will use the program proposal and any supporting documentation provided by the applicant institution. The graduate program evaluation team will address each item in its final report to Council.

The categories used for the graduate program evaluation are these:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| (1) Faculty and staff                            | (6) Resource capacity                              |
| (2) Commitment to research and scholarship       | (7) Recognition of the degree                      |
| (3) Academic and program policies and procedures | (8) Graduate program design, content, and delivery |
| (4) Graduate supervision plans                   | (9) Graduate program evaluation                    |
| (5) Quality of students                          | (10) Credentialing                                 |

Please see the [Graduate Program Evaluation Framework](#) in Appendix L.

The onus is on the applicant to satisfy Council that the level of learning to be achieved is consistent with that which is expected of graduate programs, and that the program is comparable in quality to similar programs (if any) offered in Alberta and elsewhere.

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### 4.4.3 CAQC EXPECTATIONS FOR DESIGN AND STRUCTURE OF GRADUATE DEGREES

*June 2005**With revisions to December 2011*

#### 4.4.3.1 GRADUATE DEGREE TYPES

**Graduate programs at the master's and doctoral levels may be structured in a variety of ways**, and may be highly individualized and customized to meet the needs of specific students. The typology which follows is not prescriptive, and while the types listed here are the major categories, not all of them are discrete. For example, a professional **master's degree in Education** may be thesis or course based. In addition, some graduate degrees may be categorized as interdisciplinary or collaborative degrees. It is the responsibility of the proposing institution to clearly indicate the characteristics of the proposed degree.

#### 4.4.3.2 MASTER'S DEGREES

Course Based

**Course based master's programs leading to Master of Arts (MA) or Master of Science (MSc) degrees have a limited** emphasis on research, exhibited by, e.g., the requirement to include one or more research courses in the program, with the final course grade based on a research paper, or by requiring the inclusion of a capstone course toward the end of

the program to focus on the integration and application of the knowledge acquired. These programs may culminate in a comprehensive examination or a major paper involving an examination committee.

*Paragraph revised July 2008 and December 2011*

#### Thesis Based

**Thesis based master's programs leading to Master of Arts (MA) or Master of Science (MSc) degrees require the student** to develop a research plan for a specific project, in consultation with the supervisor, which will enable the student to learn the accepted research methodology in the field and to apply it to the generation of new knowledge. A report on the research completed and its **results and conclusions are presented in a master's thesis, following which the student** must pass a final oral examination based on the thesis. A thesis oral examination committee is involved.

#### Professional/Practice Based

**Professional master's programs** [e.g., MSW (Social Work), MPH (Public Health), MEng (Engineering)] are practice oriented programs which, while providing instruction in research methods, are designed to prepare students for professional practice involving the application or transmission of existing knowledge, and lead to a professional degree designation. Institutions may require the student to engage in some independent research culminating in a capstone project or a thesis, examined by a committee. That independent work may involve original or applied research or a combination which supports the advancement of a profession. Programs which combine both research and professional objectives should use a degree designation which recognizes the priority given to these objectives.

*Paragraph revised January 2009*

#### 4.4.3.3 DOCTORAL DEGREES

##### Research Based

Doctoral programs leading to the PhD are research oriented [e.g., PhD (Psychology), PhD (Music)]. The student is required to develop an extensive research proposal, in consultation with the supervisor and a supervisory committee, which will enable the student to learn the accepted research methodology in the field and to apply it to the generation of new knowledge, initially through a dissertation. A dissertation oral examination committee is involved, and includes external appraisal. A dissertation may take the form of a single research project or a series of research projects that may be then written as a papers format dissertation.

*Paragraph revised December 2011*

##### Professional/Practice Based

Professional doctoral programs [e.g., EdD (Education), DMus (Music)] are practice oriented programs which, while providing instruction in research methods, are designed to prepare students for professional practice involving the application or transmission of existing knowledge, and may lead to a professional degree designation. They require the student to engage in some independent research culminating in a dissertation. This may be theoretical or empirical research, applied research or creative activity which supports the advancement of a profession, or a combination of the above.

*Paragraph revised December 2011*

## 4.5 ADDITIONAL QUALITY ASSESSMENT STANDARDS FOR PROGRAMS DELIVERED IN BLENDED, DISTRIBUTED OR DISTANCE MODES

*September 2006*

*With revisions to December 2021*

The Campus Alberta Quality Council, in its review of degree programs, is guided by the principle that while instructional methods may differ, expectations of high quality remain the same. The key considerations in assuring the quality of any

program are that they are learning-driven and that they are informed by excellent research and scholarship not only in the discipline or disciplines addressed in the program but also in teaching, learning and assessment.

Degree programs delivered in whole or in part in blended, distributed or distance modes, like degree programs offered exclusively in face-to-face mode, **are required to meet Council's existing quality assessment standards** for undergraduate and graduate programs. In addition, these programs will be assessed using the following standards for blended, distributed or distance learning.

## STANDARDS

Although some of the standards listed below may be applicable only to degrees using particular pedagogies or technologies, all degree programs will be consistent with leading practices in teaching and learning. Council has developed these additional standards with reference to national and international norms and benchmarks for blended, distributed and distance learning and expects those proposing such programs to do the same.

Council will use the following standards in its assessment of programs relying on blended, distributed or distance delivery modes.

### Institutional commitment

#### 1. Institutional commitment

The mandate or mission, the academic plan, the goals of the institution and its policies must be well matched to the programs offered, whatever their mode of delivery. The institution is obliged – administratively, financially and technically – to create and sustain a program for a period sufficient to enable all admitted learners to complete a degree in the published timeframe. That timeframe must be appropriate and relevant for the learners for whom the program is intended and for the specific area of study addressed by the program.

#### 2. Institutional ownership of the program

The institution in which the learner is enrolled, not its contractors or partners, has an obligation to and a relationship with the learner. Although important elements of a program may be supplied by individuals or groups outside the institution or outsourced to other organizations or contractors, the responsibility for program quality remains with the credentialing institution(s), that is, the institution(s) awarding the degree.

#### 3. Collaboration and joint delivery

Council recognizes that institutions may enter into agreements with partners or consortia for programs that rely on blended, distributed and distance modes of delivery. In instances where several institutions are delivering a program jointly, the responsibility for program quality will be shared jointly, even though the onus for quality rests ultimately with the credentialing institution(s). It is therefore important that when adopting materials supplied by other institutions or developed within a consortium, the credentialing institution(s) negotiate permission to amend materials if changes are necessary to meet institutional standards of quality. Where **collaboration or joint delivery of a program is contemplated, section 4.6 in Council's Handbook (collaborative delivery of degrees)** should be considered.

#### 4. Risk management and mitigation

An institution using blended, distributed or distance learning modes should demonstrate that it has in place appropriate risk management provisions, including those that ensure that technological infrastructure is stable, reliable, well maintained and secure, that a disaster recovery plan is available in the event that servers or other technologies fail, and that learners will not be adversely affected should an agreement with a partner or contractor be abrogated.

#### 5. Privacy, identity and confidentiality

The institution recognizes that appropriate safeguards must be in place to assure the authentication of learner identity and the integrity of learner work in blended, distributed and distance programs. The institution educates faculty and learners about effective practices to protect academic integrity in online learning environments, and maintains procedures designed to address breaches when they occur. Documented procedures and appropriate storage protocols assure that security of personal information is protected in conducting assessments and evaluations and in the dissemination of results. It is equally important to establish procedures and timelines by which personal data no longer needed for authentication purposes will be destroyed.

*Revised to add second sentence December 2021*

#### 6. Accessibility

Given that learners have diverse learning needs, the institution should assure that the diverse needs of learners are appropriately addressed, and when necessary, accommodated.

#### 7. Intellectual property

The institution has policies to deal with the requirements of copyright and intellectual property laws and to address issues pertaining to digital rights management and appropriate use of learning object repositories.

#### 8. Technology and renewal

The technology used to administer and deliver the program, both pedagogically and administratively, is adequate to facilitate program delivery, and institutions are committed to appropriate updating of any technologies employed, and the identification and evaluation of emerging technologies. Sufficient resources need to be available for development and sustainability. The support for the building and maintenance of the technology for learning activities is maintained and supported and is as failsafe and secure as possible.

## Program planning and design

## 9. Appropriate planning

There is a clear, well-understood process by which the program evolves from conception to approval to implementation to institutional review to continuous improvement. The instructional methods, modes of delivery and assessments of learning and feedback used should be aligned with articulated learning outcomes for the course or program.

## 10. Team/collaborative/networked learning

Due consideration should be given to the substantial amount of learning that comes from peers, and to the implications of cohort models and other team, collaborative and networked learning environments.

## 11. Course development and evaluation

Instructional and course materials should be reviewed regularly to ensure that they continue to meet the requirements and standards for the program. The intended learning outcomes should be reviewed regularly to ensure clarity and appropriateness, and their effectiveness evaluated through several appropriate methods.

## Learners

## 12. Advice to learners

Learners are fully advised about the competencies, the self-discipline and the equipment they will need to have in order to participate in the program, and are provided with information about the programs, courses, required texts and/or materials and other requirements in a timely manner to enable them to acquire the materials for their course as it begins. Learners should also be informed of the costs associated with the mode of delivery of their program.

## 13. Learner support

Learners are provided with training in how to use on-line tools and are updated when changes are planned or implemented.

## 14. Hardware and software

Procedures are in place to ensure that learners are supported in their use of the hardware and software required and have access to advice on these matters. In particular, before starting the program, learners are advised of the technical and time requirements (e.g., synchronous learning sessions).

**15. Learner services**

Learners are informed about what learner services (e.g., academic advising, counseling) are available, if any, to assist them and to address any complaints they have, or they are referred to the appropriate institutional documentation.

## Academic Staff

**16. Oversight of program curricula**

Program curricula, assessment and oversight are the responsibility of academically qualified persons. The presentation, management, assessment and evaluation of the program are the responsibility of staff with appropriate academic qualifications.

**17. Technology training**

All those involved in course design and delivery are adequately trained and assisted in the technology and pedagogy of on-line learning. Academic staff are assisted and supported in making the transition from classroom to online teaching or vice versa, and are assessed and mentored as they progress in their online teaching.

**18. Technical support**

Academic staff are provided with an orientation to, and sufficient ongoing training/technical support for any hardware and software resources required in the program, and are also updated in a timely manner about any impending or actual changes that could affect their access to or involvement in their online programs.

**4.6 COLLABORATIVE DELIVERY OF DEGREES**

*October 2008, with revisions to December 2019*

Before CAQC considers a collaborative arrangement that was NOT assessed in Council's review of the original program proposal, the credentialing institution must submit a notification of proposed change to CAQC. The credentialing institution should initiate communication with CAQC when a satisfactory draft agreement between the credentialing and host institution is reached. While Council is certainly hospitable to innovative approaches to collaboration, the onus is on the credentialing institution to satisfy Council that its quality standards will be maintained in the collaborative delivery version of the program. Institutions considering entering into a collaborative degree arrangement should refer to the ministry's *Collaborative Programs* guideline (January 2019), and consult with the Program Design and System Innovation branch.

Please refer to the following protocol components while preparing your information to CAQC:

- Rationale for collaborative delivery of a newly approved degree: When providing notification to Council, the credentialing institution must include the rationale for establishing a collaborative arrangement.

- Graduates: Normally, a first cohort of students will have graduated from the credentialing institution before a collaborative arrangement with another institution is implemented. (E.g., a CAQC-recommended four-year degree launched in fall 2008 with admission of first-year students only would not normally be eligible for **delivery in a collaborative format before fall 2012; similarly, a “2+2” degree for which a credentialing institution** admitted students into third year in fall 2008 would not normally be eligible for delivery in a collaborative format before fall 2010.) This protocol would assure Council that a credentialing institution has gained experience and has learned from the delivery of the complete program as approved.
- Original understandings and commitments: Any stipulations or expectations conveyed to the credentialing institution in Council’s “outcomes” letter announcing its recommendation, or any undertakings given by the credentialing institution either in its original proposal or in its response to the CAQC’s review team’s report, would apply to the program if it is subsequently delivered in a collaborative format with one or more partners. Changes to or adjustments of those stipulations, expectations and undertakings would be considered by Council to ensure that the quality of the program originally recommended would not be compromised as a result of the new collaborative arrangement.
- Staffing plan: When considering a staffing plan, Council will want to ensure that students at the host institution have learning experiences similar (though not necessarily identical) to those of students at the credentialing institution. A credentialing institution proposing to deliver a CAQC-recommended degree in a collaborative format should submit a staffing plan outlining the specifics of the academic staff who will be teaching in years 3 and 4 of the program at the host campus. In all cases, any original staffing conditions/requirements agreed to by the credentialing institution will be applicable to the delivery of the program in collaboration with a partner or partners. (E.g., Council will require details on credentials and experience of the academic staff teaching in the program at the host institution as well as how those staff will be engaged in scholarly activity appropriate to the level of program.)
- Facilities/information resources: Council needs assurance that access to program-specific facilities and information resources on the host campus is comparable to access on the campus of the credentialing institution. If specialized facilities (e.g., labs) were required on the campus of the credentialing institution, it would expect there to be comparable facilities on the campus of the host institution. (E.g., if an institution were to propose to deliver a BSc completion program with another institution in Alberta, CAQC would need to be assured that appropriate labs, equipment, etc. are available for students at the host campus.) Council acknowledges that access to information resources and facilities does not need to be identical on both campuses, since institutions may propose creative ways of providing facilities/information resources for the program.
- Program feedback: Council expects credentialing institutions to provide student and, when relevant, employer feedback on the original CAQC-recommended program before it launches that program in a collaborative format. If the program has already convoked its first graduates, Council would welcome their feedback.
- Monitoring: The monitoring role Council had in respect of the program originally approved on the recommendation of CAQC will be extended to apply to a new collaborative arrangement.



## SECTION 5 – MONITORING

June 2006  
With revisions to December 2014

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

In addition to its responsibility to assess the quality of all degree program applications referred to it by the Minister, Council is **also responsible for monitoring approved degree programs to ensure they continue to meet Council's** conditions and standards of institutional and program quality. In addition to degree programs approved on **recommendation of CAQC, Council's monitoring role also applies to degree programs approved by the Private Colleges Accreditation Board (PCAB)** and to any approved degree program referred to it by the Minister. (See section 8 of the [Programs of Study Regulation \(AR 91/2009\)](#).)

To fulfill its monitoring role, Council has adopted three main forms of periodic evaluation, the general purpose of which is to monitor the quality of approved degree programs on a continuing basis – comprehensive evaluations, annual reporting, and audits of quality assurance policies and processes. Not all of these forms of monitoring are applicable to all institutions.

**Council's monitoring activities** (defined at the broadest level as its oversight and assessment of Council's requirements with respect to the implementation of or changes to approved degree programs) are based on the notion of a 'spectrum': i.e., **the extent of Council's monitoring is tied proportionately to Council's appraisal of an institution's experience and capacity in offering degree programs, as well as Council's assessment of the development, rigour and application of an institution's own internal review processes.**

In order to ensure a program's compliance with its quality standards, CAQC may monitor, among other things, the achievement of a program's objectives and learning outcomes, the currency of its curriculum, the impact on quality of shifts in enrolments, the faculty complement, the availability of appropriate forms of support for students, and the role of research and scholarship in the educational experience of learners. The positioning of institutions along a **"spectrum" accounts for** the different modes of monitoring that Council may use, ranging from annual reporting, to comprehensive reviews, to periodic audits.

*Preceding two paragraphs added 2011*

In discharging its monitoring responsibilities, Council respects the following principles:

- 1) The primary responsibility for academic quality assurance rests with post-secondary institutions themselves.
- 2) CAQC supports institutions in establishing robust internal quality assurance mechanisms, and expects institutions to accept increasing **responsibility for monitoring, as they demonstrate to Council's satisfaction** their ability to assure the quality of their programming. A critical element of a respectable internal quality assurance process is the use of external peer reviews conducted by independent academic experts.
- 3) **It is the responsibility of the institution to continue to meet Council's standards, and to report when it no longer does so.**
- 4) CAQC situates its own monitoring responsibilities within the context of the *Campus Alberta Accountability Framework*.

- 5) An institution's experience and capacity in offering degree programs at the same level (i.e., undergraduate, master's, doctoral) and in the same or closely related fields of study will affect CAQC's positioning of an institution's new programs on the spectrum referred to above.<sup>27</sup>
- 6) Council strives to ensure that its monitoring activities will, to the extent possible, avoid unnecessary duplication of effort and will be cost-effective for the institution, the Ministry and CAQC. To this end, the nature and extent of Council's monitoring will take into account availability of Government of Alberta and other sources of information.
- 7) The monitoring role Council has in respect of a program originally approved on the recommendation of CAQC will be extended to apply to a new collaborative or brokering arrangement.

*Monitoring principles added 2011*

## 5.2 COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATIONS

*With revisions to December 2020*

Council normally conducts at least one comprehensive evaluation of an institution and its approved degree programs in Alberta. The first evaluation will occur no sooner than in the sixth academic year after the institution begins offering its first approved degree program, **and will normally include the results of the institution's review of its approved degree program(s) using external evaluators.** A subsequent comprehensive evaluation may be conducted at Council's discretion.

Alberta's Comprehensive Academic and Research Universities (CARUs) will not be required to undergo a comprehensive evaluation. Stemming from a recommendation made by the Audit Pilot Project Task Force (see s. 5.3.5.1), the CARUs and Council have agreed that an audit process be established through which each CARU's quality assurance processes would be reviewed every 5-7 years.

Non-resident institutions will not be required to undergo a comprehensive evaluation. However, Council may request that institutions offering approved degree programs in Alberta **submit the report of the institution's self-evaluation of the program(s)** (which must include an external evaluation).

### 5.2.1 PURPOSE OF COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATIONS

*With revisions to June 2013*

The purposes of the comprehensive evaluations by Council include the following:

- to determine whether an institution and its approved degree programs, including those offered collaboratively and/or off-campus, continue to meet organizational and program quality standards;
- to determine whether an institution has met or has made satisfactory progress towards meeting any commitments it made to Council regarding degree programs, staff, libraries, facilities or any other matter;
- to determine whether an institution has
  - (a) considered fully the comments, suggestions and recommendations of reports by evaluation teams, insofar as they have been supported by Council, and have responded satisfactorily to them;
  - (b) developed suitable mechanisms to undertake its own self-evaluation, including monitoring and improving program quality; and

<sup>27</sup> e.g., A newly approved major in an area such as History in an institution with approved BA programs in other areas of the Humanities might receive less monitoring than in an institution without previously approved humanities programs. On the other hand, the addition of a graduate program in an institution that has little or no experience in offering degrees at the graduate level would likely precipitate more intensive monitoring by CAQC.

- (c) developed effective policies and processes for new degree proposal development and internal approval.; and
- to provide a basis for judgments regarding
  - (a) the continuation of an approved degree program, including any Council requirements, if any; or
  - (b) the withdrawal of approval of a degree program or programs.

Council's **comprehensive evaluation** of each institution primarily consists of the following components:

1. **the institution's self-study**,
2. the report of the external evaluation team following a site visit, and
3. the response by the institution to the report of the external evaluation team.

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## 5.2.2 INSTITUTIONAL SELF-STUDY GUIDELINES FOR COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATIONS

March 2010

With revisions to February 2017

### 5.2.2.1 PURPOSES

The institutional self-study for comprehensive evaluations serves several purposes:

1. For the institution, the self-study:
  - provides an opportunity for self-monitoring and evaluation;
  - provides a very useful analysis of its objectives, resources, students and achievements, and of the **relationships between and among them that are valuable for the institution's strategic planning and improvement**;
  - provides input into, and an opportunity to report on, future plans and directions to strengthen program(s) and processes, and to provide information that is not normally evident; and
  - enables self-identification of weaknesses, areas for improvement gaps and its plan for the development of associated strategies.
2. For the Council and its evaluators, the self-study:
  - provides the detailed information by which they are able to enhance their understanding of the **institution's organizational processes and outcomes**;
  - provides insight into how the institutional culture has changed as a result of degree granting status;
  - **helps to determine if the institution and its approved programs continue to meet Council's** organizational and program standards;
  - helps to assess whether the institution has met or made progress towards meeting the commitments it made to Council when programs were first approved; and
  - **reveals the institution's commitment to ongoing periodic review and continuous improvement.**
3. The aim of a comprehensive self-study **is to understand, evaluate, and enhance an institution's educational offerings** and not only to monitor and document its existing degree programs. It should, therefore, give evidence of an ongoing effort by the institution to improve and enhance its educational offerings and to document its potential for excellence in the achievement of its purposes and objectives. It reveals the strengths, weaknesses and potential of an institution with respect to the achievement of its purposes and objectives. Thus, the self-study indicates to both Council and the institution the areas that require change or improvement in relation to its degree granting operations, and promotes open communication.

### 5.2.2.2 HALLMARKS OF AN EFFECTIVE SELF-STUDY

Council believes that certain attributes are essential to a successful self-study. An effective self-study:

- **produces evidence to show that Council’s organizational and program standards are met.** An evaluative self-study should connect and interpret data to demonstrate the institution’s compliance with Council’s standards. It should be attentive to the institution’s current place in the broader Alberta educational context and should address any concerns identified in previous reviews.
- **demonstrates the institution’s ability to think holistically.** The success of an institution is dependent on the work of many and, ideally, the self-study’s contents should reflect this by incorporating a broad range of sources.
- **culminates in a report that meets Council’s needs.** A well-designed self-study should allow the comprehensive evaluation team to conduct a thorough site visit (for which the institution needs to be well prepared) and positively contribute to the team’s decision-making process. Honest evaluation rather than always presenting the institution in a positive manner should characterize the tone and content of the report.
- is analytical, comparative, reflective, outcome-oriented, and forward-looking in nature. The self-study should not be merely descriptive, contain assertions without evidence, or be defensive. It should be rigorous, honest and forthright and be of value both to the institution and to Council. It should foster a climate of pride and a commitment to continuous improvement.
- uses information/data to create evidence to support the analysis. Where possible, the self-study should include feedback from students, alumni, transfer institutions, employers, and graduates.
- is succinct and coherent.

### 5.2.2.3 ESSENTIAL CONTENTS OF THE SELF-STUDY

While acknowledging the institution’s freedom to create its own self-study design, the following is intended to guide the format and contents of the self-study. Please note these preliminary requirements for the self-study:

- The self-study itself and the appendices must be submitted in both paper and electronic formats.
- Material should be cross-referenced rather than repeated (i.e., avoid redundancy).
- The self-study should be double-side, paginated throughout, and should make use of tables, figures and appendices where appropriate.

#### A. Executive Summary

- Describe the purpose and intended audience of the self-study exercise.
- Present major findings and recommendations (including areas of strength and weakness) of the self-study.

#### B. Table of Contents

- Include a list of tables, figures and appendices.

#### C. Introduction

- Provide a brief overview of the institution and its programs, e.g.:
  - brief history of the institution
  - size (number of students and academic staff)
  - proportion of students and academic staff that are involved in degree programming
  - type and number of credit programs
  - proportion of degrees
  - description of academic governance
  - other characteristics
- Provide a description of the self-review process undertaken.

- Summarize the organization's understanding of, and the institution's commitment to, major issues previously identified by Council (such as those emanating from the organizational evaluation or from the last comprehensive evaluation, from each program evaluation, and from any annual report issues), and outline any resulting actions and/or results. An example template is:

| CAQC Issue | Actions Taken and Outcome | Comments |
|------------|---------------------------|----------|
|            |                           |          |
|            |                           |          |

- Summarize the significant changes that have occurred since the organizational evaluation and each program review by CAQC. **Where appropriate, describe the institution's evolution to a degree granting culture.**
- Provide an overview of the monitoring and implementation processes to be adopted for recommendations arising from the current comprehensive evaluation. An example action plan template is:

| Recommendation / Finding | Response | Action(s) Proposed | Responsibility | Timeframe for Completion | Expected Outcome |
|--------------------------|----------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------------|------------------|
|                          |          |                    |                |                          |                  |
|                          |          |                    |                |                          |                  |

#### D. Main body

- The main body of the self-study should address each of the 10 categories noted below. These will be used by Council and its evaluators to examine the extent to which the systems and processes of the institution are in place in order to achieve excellence in learning outcomes. The following are the essential contents to be included for each category:
  - Description of the standard(s) under review
  - Related issues previously identified by Council and progress made towards these issues so far
  - Analysis of relevant strengths and challenges
  - Overview of the evidence considered, including any triangulation of information where applicable:
    - Relevant institutional objectives / plans / policies
    - Implementation processes and evidence of effectiveness
    - Outcomes and results
    - Improvements
  - A chart, table or figure to illustrate the findings
  - Cross-references to other relevant materials in the report (or in an appendix)
  - Actions and monitoring processes to be adopted

#### E. Conclusions

- Provide a summary of the major conclusions that were reached and any recommendations (i.e., areas in which action is required) that are offered in the report.
  - In developing recommendations, it is best to ensure they are achievable (e.g., according to resource availability).

#### 5.2.2.4 SELF-STUDY CATEGORIES

*With revisions to December 2019*

The following identifies the categories to be addressed in the self-study, each with a specific set of questions, the relevant standard(s), and suggestions for the use of information/data to create evidence to support the

**organization's self-evaluation.** Please note that a standard may apply to more than one category. Visual representations (e.g., tables and figures) are recommended, where appropriate.

#### Category 1: Mission/Mandate, Educational Objectives and Academic Freedom

Does the institution have clearly-articulated and published mandate/mission and academic goal statements, and do its academic policies support these? Does the institution maintain an atmosphere in which academic freedom exists?

##### Relevant 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.

###### 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. Student 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.

The institution should include information on the following items:

- official mandate/mission statement and specific educational objectives
- statement of educational philosophy
- academic freedom and academic honesty policies, procedures and practices as they pertain to faculty and students
- analysis of strengths and challenges

#### Category 2: Organization and Administration

Does the institution have appropriate governance and organizational structures to support and promote a high quality degree-granting institution?

##### Relevant Assessment Standards:

###### 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.

**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.

**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.

The institution should include information on the following items:

- ownership of the institution
- relationship to other organizations (academic institutions, government, church, business, etc.)
- composition and responsibilities of the institution's governing bodies
- organizational and decision-making flow charts of the institution
- CEO or other officer with overall responsibility for degree programs and other key administrative staff, their abbreviated vitae and position descriptions
- provision for continuity of leadership
- policies regarding hiring, employment conditions and benefits, dismissal of administrative officers, codes of staff and student behaviour and dispute resolution policies
- procedures for the evaluation and improvement of administrative effectiveness
- effectiveness of the methods used to communicate with faculty: do faculty perceive themselves to be well informed about important issues at the institution? Do faculty believe that they have sufficient opportunities to make themselves heard?
- information systems that support the administrative structure and plans to meet future needs
- analysis of strengths and challenges

**Category 3: Financial Structure**

Does the institution have the financial management procedures and resources, and the appropriate planning mechanisms to provide a stable learning environment and to ensure that students can complete their degree programs?

Relevant Assessment Standard:

**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.

The institution should include information on the following items:

- financial resources and sources of revenue
- financial obligations and expenditures
- 3 or 4 year business plan



| Consolidated Statement of Operations        |                  |                    |                    |                    |
|---|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
|   | Budget<br>Year X | Plan<br>Year X + 1 | Plan<br>Year X + 2 | Plan<br>Year X + 3 |
| <b>Revenue:</b>                             |                  |                    |                    |                    |
| Grants                                      | \$               | \$                 | \$                 | \$                 |
| Earned revenue programs                     | \$               | \$                 | \$                 | \$                 |
| Tuition and related fees                    | \$               | \$                 | \$                 | \$                 |
| Commercial services                         | \$               | \$                 | \$                 | \$                 |
| Sales, rentals and services                 | \$               | \$                 | \$                 | \$                 |
| Investment income                           | \$               | \$                 | \$                 | \$                 |
| Donations and contributions                 | \$               | \$                 | \$                 | \$                 |
| Earned capital contributions                | \$               | \$                 | \$                 | \$                 |
| <b>Total revenue</b>                        | <b>\$</b>        | <b>\$</b>          | <b>\$</b>          | <b>\$</b>          |
| <b>Expense:</b>                             |                  |                    |                    |                    |
| Sales, wages and benefits                   | \$               | \$                 | \$                 | \$                 |
| Supplies and services                       | \$               | \$                 | \$                 | \$                 |
| Other expenses                              | \$               | \$                 | \$                 | \$                 |
| Utilities                                   | \$               | \$                 | \$                 | \$                 |
| Scholarships and projects                   | \$               | \$                 | \$                 | \$                 |
| <b>Operating expense</b>                    | <b>\$</b>        | <b>\$</b>          | <b>\$</b>          | <b>\$</b>          |
| <b>Net before interest and amortization</b> |                  |                    |                    |                    |
| Interest expense                            | \$               | \$                 | \$                 | \$                 |
| Amortization of capital assets              | \$               | \$                 | \$                 | \$                 |
| Loss on disposal of capital assets          | \$               | \$                 | \$                 | \$                 |
| <b>Excess of revenue over expense</b>       | <b>\$</b>        | <b>\$</b>          | <b>\$</b>          | <b>\$</b>          |
| <b>Unrestricted net assets</b>              | <b>\$</b>        | <b>\$</b>          | <b>\$</b>          | <b>\$</b>          |

- financial ratios (cost per student per course completion, cost per student per credit hour, cost per graduate, ratio of teaching costs to overhead costs per year, % of budget allocated to learning resources and library each year, % of budget allocated to student support services, % of expenditures on contracts for teaching staff who are not full-time employees of the organization per year, net of earned revenue minus costs per year, information technology expenditure per student per year, information technology expenditure per graduate per year)
- organization and staffing of the business office
- budget preparation, financial control, and audit
- recent audited financial statements
- fund-raising policies and procedures
- policies and procedures regarding student fees
- future fiscal priorities
- budget allocation for addressing institutional strategic priorities
- process of costing new programs and assessing risks
- analysis of strengths and challenges

#### Category 4: Curricula and Instruction

**Are the institution's curricula, program delivery, and quality assurance mechanisms** appropriate to achieve desired learning outcomes? Are graduates meeting the expectations of the degree-level standards as expressed in the [Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework](#) (Appendix B)? Are

procedures in place to assess the effectiveness and continuous improvement of academic programs (including any offered collaboratively and/or off-campus)? Are policies and procedures in place which address curriculum development and ensure the ongoing quality of programs and learning outcomes?

Relevant Assessment Standard:

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, assessment and improvement of teaching effectiveness, and periodic program review to ensure the ongoing quality of its programs and learning outcomes. Such assessments normally include the advice of external experts\*.

\* CAQC's guidelines with respect to selection and use of [Independent Academic Experts](#) are available in Appendix G.

The institution should include information and analysis on the following items:

- summary information for each degree program (by major or concentration) currently offered since implementation (headcounts, FLEs, number of graduates, student retention, etc.)
- grade distributions
- class-size analysis and student-instructor ratio
- An external assessment for each degree program approved on recommendation of either the CAQC or the Private Colleges Accreditation Board (PCAB) must be provided. The full report(s) of the independent academic expert(s) engaged by the institution must be included, along with the institution's response (outcomes or resulting action plans), short résumés of the academic experts involved and a rationale as to why they were selected. Please refer to Appendix G, **which outlines CAQC's guidelines with respect to the selection and use of independent academic experts.**
- transfer into approved degree programs from other institutions
- transferability of course credits to other educational institutions and arrangements, if any, with respect to acceptance of approved degree programs for admission to graduate programs or professional programs
- historical performance of graduates (i.e., number going on to further post-secondary studies, number going on to employment, awards received, pass rates on licensing or professional exams, etc.)
- procedures for curricular development, approval, implementation and change
- instructional methods and procedures, including the application of technology in the teaching/learning process, and how CAQC's [Quality Assessment Standards for Programs Delivered in Blended, Distributed or Distance](#) Modes (Section 4.5) have been met
- procedures for the assessment and improvement of teaching effectiveness and delivery, including the use of learning outcomes and their assessment
- summary of activities to reward or enhance instruction and/or supervisory effectiveness
- policies and procedures with respect to program termination
- how implementation plans for each degree program have been met, or how they have changed; program accomplishments; future plans and priorities regarding curricula and instruction
- feedback from students and alumni, including (where appropriate), any provincial graduate satisfaction surveys
- historical performance of the institution in providing learning and support to students in degree programs (outcomes) – provide performance indicators and targets
- information on any advisory bodies (composition and purpose)
- analysis of strengths and challenges

### Category 5: Academic Staff

Does the institution have appropriate faculty and staff necessary to achieve its mission and academic goals and programs? Does the organization have policies and procedures with respect to appointment, promotion, termination and professional development for faculty and staff?

#### Relevant Assessment Standards:

#### 8. Faculty and staff

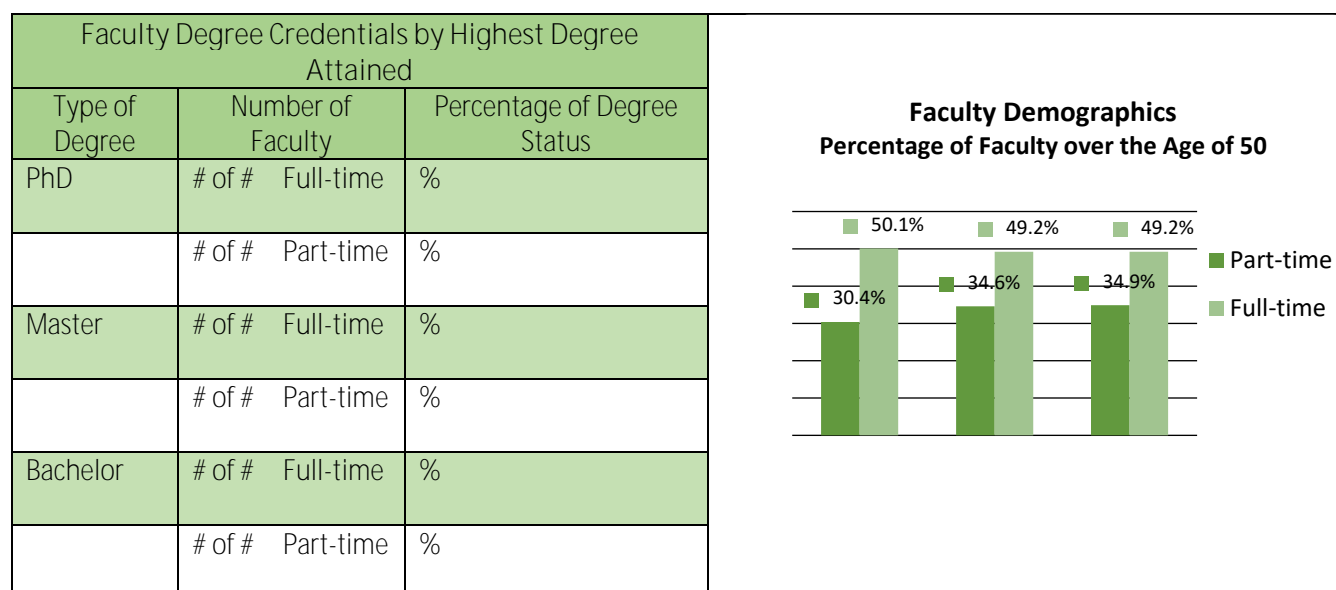
The organization has the human resources, including appropriately qualified faculty and instructional staff, necessary to achieve its mission and academic goals. The organization has policies and procedures with respect to appointment, evaluation, employment conditions including employment equity, promotion,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

#### 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.

The institution should include information on the following items:

- key academic administration staff and academic staff teaching in the approved degree programs and their abbreviated vitae (include only those key academic administrators not already included under category 1)
- profile of academic staff teaching in each degree program with respect to number, discipline, degrees, rank, tenure, full or part-time status, teaching experience, age, gender, and salary (refer to Council's [Standards on Academic Staff for Baccalaureate Programs](#) in Section 4.3.4). For example:



- original faculty plan for each program and whether and how it has changed since program implementation
- academic staff organization and administration
- policies with respect to the employment of full-time and part-time academic staff
- brief explanations of faculty categories (e.g., continuing, sessional, term).

- teaching and supervisory loads, student advising, committee work, and administrative duties of academic staff members
- policies and practices regarding academic staff involvement in scholarship and/or research in the context **of the institution's mission statement, and evidence of institutional support for scholarly activity**
- for each degree, a summary of scholarly activity of faculty, and an analysis of growth since degrees were first approved
- policies and practices regarding assessment of, support for, and rewarding of academic staff teaching effectiveness
- policies regarding hiring (including how the institution ensures that faculty have appropriate credentials), evaluation, promotion, tenure, employment conditions including employment equity, benefits, and dismissal of academic staff members (include a copy of any collective agreements and a copy of the Faculty Handbook)
- adequacy of institutional and departmental conflict of interest policies relating to faculty members' performance of their academic responsibilities
- communication of academic staff responsibilities, obligations, employment conditions, and benefits
- provisions for academic staff participation in governance
- description and analysis of opportunities and support for professional development and improvement of instruction (i.e., include information on the proportion of faculty who are utilizing these opportunities)
- future plans and priorities regarding academic staff
- analysis of strengths and challenges

*Tenth bullet added December 2019*

#### Category 6: Strategic Planning

Does the institution have in place an integrated and comprehensive planning process that links the **institution's various planning initiatives (program, staffing, facilities, marketing, etc.)**? Are procedures that assess the effectiveness and continuous improvement of academic programs part of the planning process such that the ongoing quality of programs and learning outcomes can be achieved?

#### Relevant Assessment Standard:

##### 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, assessment and improvement of teaching effectiveness, and periodic program review to ensure the ongoing quality of its programs and learning outcomes. Such assessments normally include the advice of external experts.

The institution should include information on the following items:

- **strategic plan or planning document that outlines the institution's major directions**
- executive summary highlighting the main priorities
- statement regarding how the planning process reflects and supports the **institution's mission, and how it** relates to continuous improvement of programs and quality of learning outcomes
- explanation of how the strategic plan guides decision-making at the institution, e.g.:



- **description of the institution's overall planning process that links and coordinates the institution's different planning activities.** The description might include the following:
  - who at the institution has major responsibility for coordinating institution-wide planning
  - who else participates and how various stakeholders are involved in the process
  - timeframe or length of the planning cycle
  - how academic, financial, facilities, etc. planning is integrated into an overall comprehensive planning process
  - **how students' feedback and experiences are incorporated** into the planning process
- information about how the planning process is disseminated and understood throughout the institution
- description of the systems which are in place to gather and analyze data for planning and decision making, and a description of any performance indicators and benchmarks by which programs and academic units are assessed
- explanation of environmental scanning or similar mechanism used to update the strategic plan/ensure that the plan remains current
- analysis of strengths and challenges

#### Category 7: Information Services

Does the institution have the information services and systems appropriate to support the degree programs offered (including resource centres and libraries, convenient access to information held in other depositories, and information available through electronic means)? Are there methods for establishing priorities for the acquisition of new resources and the maintenance of existing resources?

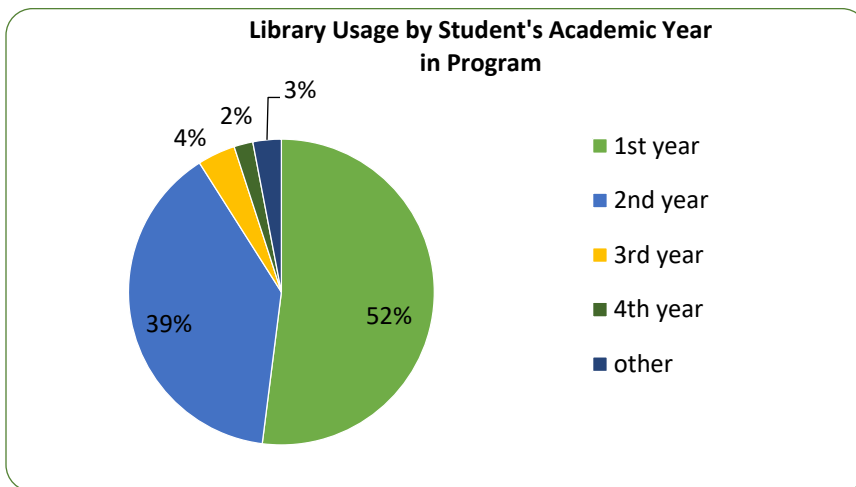
Relevant Assessment Standard:

#### 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.

The institution should include information and analysis on the following items:

- resources available on site for students and faculty members to support degree programs
- summary of holdings in various subject areas
- collection policies
- policies regarding ordering and budget allocations
- accessibility and usage of information services
- ways of ensuring the currency of information and resources to support academic programs



- space analysis (including student study space)
- resource staff and their vitae and job descriptions
- agreements regarding student access to other conveniently located libraries
- provisions for student access to information by electronic means (e.g., CD-ROM, internet)
- future plans and priorities regarding resource centres, libraries and other information services
- analysis of strengths and challenges

#### Category 8: Academic Policies and Records

Does the institution have published admissions, continuation and graduation policies that are consistent with the objectives of the degree programs? Does the institution have policies concerning the requirements for admission, progression, and graduation that are consistent with both the educational objectives of the institution and the practice of Canadian degree granting post-secondary institutions? Are students' academic files accurately and securely maintained? If any programs are offered collaboratively and/or off-campus, do applicable academic policies and records include **consideration of this situation (refer to Council's checklist in its *Toolkit for Off-site and Cross-border Delivery of Programs* document)?**

#### Relevant Assessment Standards:

##### 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.

#### 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.

#### 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.

The institution should include information and analysis on the following items:

- policies and procedures regarding student recruitment, including financial aid
- policies and procedures regarding admissions and registration
- policies and procedures regarding evaluation and awarding of transfer credit and PLAR
- policies and procedures regarding class schedules and length of academic terms
- policies and procedures regarding student and alumni records, including the security and confidentiality of these records
- demographic profile of the student body, e.g., student profiles by credentials offered:

| Bachelor of Arts degree   | Bachelor of Science degree  |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 25 years old (average)</li> <li>• 54% female</li> <li>• 85% from Alberta</li> <li>• % international students</li> <li>• 28% previous post-secondary</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 24 years old (average)</li> <li>• 63% male</li> <li>• 82% from Alberta</li> <li>• % international students</li> <li>• 21% previous post-secondary</li> </ul> |

- policies and procedures regarding academic behavior (attendance, completion of assignments, plagiarism, etc.)
- policies and practice regarding evaluation of students (methods, grading system and grading distribution, examination policy, appeal process, etc.)
- policies and procedures regarding academic probation and academic honours
- graduation requirements
- communication of academic policies to students and academic staff
- future plans regarding academic policies and records
- residence requirements
- analysis of strengths and challenges

#### Category 9: Student Services

Are student services effective and do they support the quality of the degree programs? Does the institution demonstrate integrity and ethical conduct in its relations with students? Is the provision of student services, such as counselling, extracurricular activities, and residential accommodations, appropriate to the institution's mission and educational objectives? Does the institution have policies



and resources in place to produce relevant and objective publications? Do the institutional publications and promotional materials accurately describe the institution and its programs, and how students can access them?

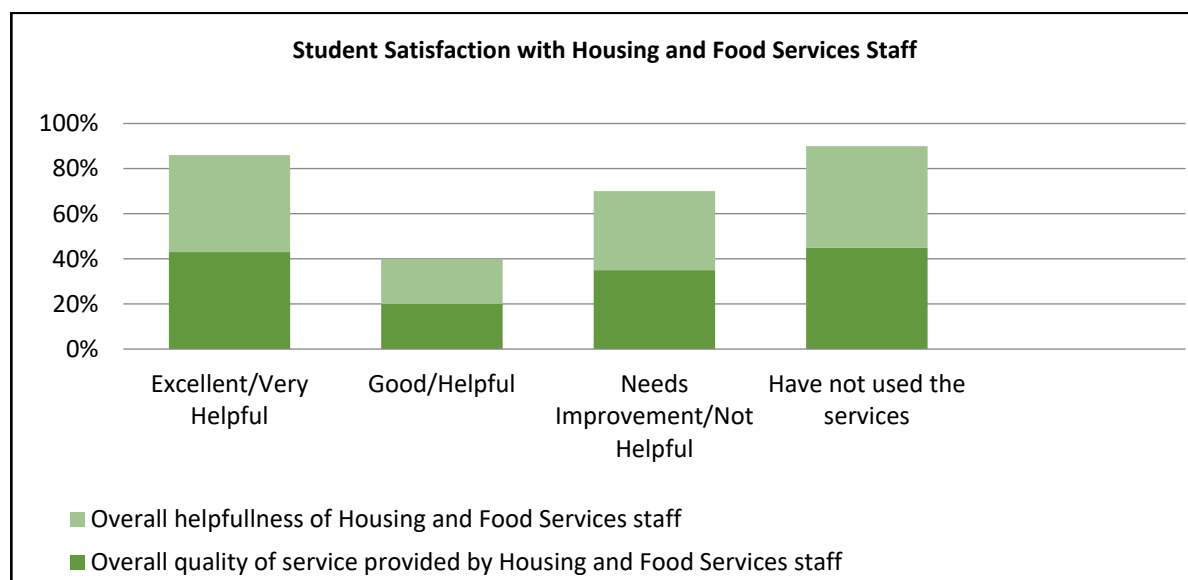
Relevant Assessment Standard:

#### 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.

The institution should include information on the following items:

- policies and practices regarding each service provided (counselling, academic advising, residence, athletics, recreation, student government, clubs and other extracurricular activities, food, health services, financial aid, etc.)
- results of any student satisfaction surveys pertaining to institutional services, e.g.:



- policies relating to such matters as equality and diversity, anti-bullying, disability, gender, race, sexual orientation, etc.
- future plans and priorities regarding student services
- statement of policies regarding production of institution publications, including future plans
- current academic calendar
- samples of institution publications (brochures, newsletters, handbooks for internal use, etc.), or alternately an institution may wish to provide samples of publications for review at the site visit
- policies/practices relating to how faculty and administrator credentials are made public (e.g., are they listed on the institutional website?)
- analysis of strengths and challenges

## Category 10: Physical Plant and Facilities

Are the physical resources, including laboratories, classrooms and specialized equipment, appropriate to support the attainment of desired learning outcomes? Are there plans and methods in place for managing health and safety issues?

Relevant Assessment Standard:

## 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.

The institution should include information on the following items:

- facilities available
- list of policies and practices regarding accessibility, utilization and maintenance of facilities (do not include the actual policies)
- future plans and priorities regarding physical plant facilities
- computer and related equipment to support information services and technology used in the teaching/learning process, including policies relating to ever greening of technology
- adequacy of security systems on campus and at affiliated sites, including any relating to health security (such as pandemic plans) and emergency response plans
- analysis of strengths and challenges

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### 5.2.3 COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION PROCESS

The following procedures will apply:

1. Approximately one year before Council intends to conduct a comprehensive evaluation, it will notify an institution of the pending evaluation and ask it to conduct an institutional self-study.
2. The institution will conduct an institutional self-study. It must contain an analysis and evaluation relating to all degree programs that were approved on recommendation of Council or the Private Colleges Accreditation Board. The self-study, **which is a key document used by Council's evaluation team, must** include information on the 10 categories outlined in Council's [Institutional Self-study Guidelines for Comprehensive Evaluations](#) (Section 5.2.2).
3. The institutional self-study is to be submitted to Council by a date determined in consultation with the institution (normally within one year after notification).
4. As part of the evaluation, Council will appoint an evaluation team to review the self-study and supporting information and visit the institution.
5. Using the self-study and insights gained from the site visit, the evaluation team will write a report which will provide Council with information about the continuing academic merits of the approved degree programs offered by the institution and the adequacy of the systems and processes of the institution to support excellence in learning and program enhancement. **Prior to its consideration by Council, the team's report will** be provided by the Secretariat to the institution for a written response.

6. Council will then consider the self-study, the report of the evaluation team and the institution's response to the report.
7. During the entire process, **Council's Secretariat will maintain suitable contact with the institution regarding matters relating to the evaluation, including**
  - a. organization and planning;
  - b. the tentative and the finalized dates of visitations;
  - c. the nature of the evaluation team and the names of its members; and
  - d. the nature of any materials required of the institution and any activity it may be required to undertake.

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#### 5.2.4 THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION TEAM FOR COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATIONS

As peer evaluation is an essential **component of Council's** reviews, Council appoints an external evaluation team to assist it with the comprehensive evaluation. **Using the institution's self-study** and insights gained from a site visit to the applicant institution, the external evaluation team provides a thoughtful assessment of how successful the institution has been in implementing and maintaining quality degree programs **and meeting Council's** organizational and program standards. Although this information will help Council decide on whether or not it recommends that the program be cancelled as per the applicable provisions of the [Programs of Study Regulation \(AR 91/2009\)](#), **the primary use of the external evaluation team's assessment** is to enable Council to offer recommendations to the institution for modifications and enhancements, and to determine whether further specific monitoring, including a subsequent comprehensive evaluation, may be required.

Although typically a three-person team, Council may vary the number of evaluators and their characteristics on a comprehensive evaluation team depending on the nature of the institution and the program(s) under review. The following criteria will be employed in selecting evaluation team members to ensure an appropriate breadth of knowledge and expertise:

- personal stature in the post-secondary academic community;
- relevant academic qualifications and achievements;
- experience in evaluating academic programs and/or degree-granting institutions, especially in the type of institution being evaluated;
- significant experience in post-secondary educational management and financing;
- experience in organizational design and behaviour; and
- training and experience in assessment and evaluation.

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#### 5.2.5 FOLLOW-UP

At the meeting at which Council considers the self-study, **report of the evaluation team and the institution's** response to it, the Chair of the evaluation team and senior institution representatives may be invited to a teleconference to discuss the review. Subsequently, Council will hold an in-camera discussion to make its decision on the matter.

In the case of a favourable judgment, Council will notify the institution and the Minister. Where Council has concerns, Council may make suggestions about changes or enhancements that should be made or may specify its requirements about measures that need to be taken **by an institution to ensure that it continues to meet Council's** standards. This procedure may be accompanied by one or more meetings as requested by the institution or Council.

In the case of an unfavourable judgement, Council may:

- recommend that the Minister cancel the approval of one or more degree programs offered by the institution, and that the program(s) be terminated; and
- if the institution is a resident private college, and Council has recommended that all degree programs be cancelled, also recommend that the Minister recommend to the Lieutenant Governor in Council that the order designating the resident private college as a private college that may grant approved degrees be rescinded.

Should it recommend cancellation of approval for a degree program Council will notify the institution and make recommendations to the Minister regarding such matters as:

- the cessation of admissions to the program(s) at any level;
- the notification of applicants and students of the status of the program(s); and
- arrangements whereby students in the program(s) may complete the program(s).

These procedures may be accompanied by one or more meetings as requested by the institution or Council.

## 5.3 OTHER ONGOING AND PERIODIC EVALUATIONS

### 5.3.1 PURPOSE

The general purpose of periodic evaluation is to monitor the quality of approved degree programs on a continuing basis. To achieve this purpose Council will take various measures:

1. To determine whether an institution and its approved programs continue to meet organizational and program quality standards.
2. To determine whether an institution has met or has made satisfactory progress towards meeting any commitments it made to Council regarding programs, staff, libraries, facilities or any other matter.
3. To determine whether an institution has
  - a. satisfied conditions specified by Council;
  - b. considered fully the comments, suggestions and recommendations of reports by evaluation teams, insofar as they have been supported by Council, and have responded satisfactorily to them; and
  - c. developed suitable mechanisms to undertake its own self-evaluation.
4. To provide a basis for judgments regarding
  - a. the continuation of an approved degree program, including any Council requirements or;
  - b. the withdrawal of approval of a degree program.

### 5.3.2 MONITORING REPORT

*With revisions to December 2020*

**As part of the Government of Alberta's accountability process, institutions must submit** their reporting as determined by Alberta Advanced Education (i.e., annual submission of enrolment data). Where appropriate to fulfill its monitoring mandate, Council may consider institutional reporting submitted to the Ministry.

An institution may also be required to submit directly to Council a separate monitoring update on their approved degree programs consisting of specific information identified by Council. This requirement is in addition to the institutional reporting required by the Ministry, but it will not duplicate the information that is reported to the Ministry. Institutions will submit their updates to CAQC on annual, biennial or triennial cycles as determined by

Council and based on institutional maturity in offering degree programming and/or issues that need follow-up by Council. The monitoring update will be due to Council by 1 November of the applicable year, and prior to its submission, Council will write to institutions to remind them of its monitoring requirements/expectations. This timeline will allow Council to review the updates at its winter meetings and provide timely and useful feedback to the institutions. An institution will not be required to provide monitoring reporting on a program if Council is **satisfied with the results of the institution's cyclical review of the program.**

*Last sentence added June 2013 and revised December 2020*

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### 5.3.3 INSTITUTIONAL CYCLICAL PROGRAM EVALUATIONS

*With revisions to June 2021*

One of CAQC's core principles is that Council recognizes that the primary responsibility for academic and institutional quality assurance rests with degree granting institutions themselves. Council expects an institution to accept responsibility for a self-evaluation of its organization and programs. All institutions are expected to have a cyclical program review policy and procedures. The following guidelines represent best practice:

- a. Each approved degree program is expected to be reviewed every 5-7 years. Some institutions may wish to organize their cyclical reviews so that all programs within that unit or faculty are reviewed at the same time. For example, the institution will determine whether all concentrations within a 3-year program should be reviewed together or whether a concentration should be reviewed at the time the like major in a 4-year program is being reviewed (e.g., music concentration in a 3-year BA might be reviewed at the same time as the music major in a 4-year BA program).
- b. The first step in a cyclical review is a review of the action plan resulting from the last cyclical review. This is followed by the preparation of a self-study that includes input from students, graduates, academic staff, administration, advisory committees and other relevant stakeholders involved in the unit and/or degree program under review. An important aspect of the self-study is a critical self-reflection of all the elements of the program.
- c. The development of the self-study is guided by a steering committee composed of faculty and administrators from the unit responsible for the program. Depending on the program(s) under review, institutions may choose to include an academic staff member from the institution who teach in a program that is not being reviewed, as well as an academic staff member who teach service courses for that program.
- d. The self-study will focus on the degree **program's design, how the learning outcomes are mapped** throughout the curriculum and how they are assessed, and other outcomes (including student and graduate satisfaction, enrolment flow, completion rates, employment rates of graduates, numbers of graduates who go on to further education, etc.). The self-study shall include program specific information as opposed to primarily institution wide information, where applicable (e.g., program specific student satisfaction vs. institution wide survey results). Including common data sets from a central data repository is a high priority for all program reviews.
- e. One element of the self-study is a self-reflective and evidence-based assessment of the teaching effectiveness by faculty teaching in the program. This can include the professional development **undertaken by the faculty to strengthen their teaching. For CAQC's evidence-based** guiding principles with respect to assessing teaching effectiveness, see s. 4.3.4.7.

*Added December 2019  
With revisions to June 2021*

- f. Another element of a self-study is a review of the scholarly activity of each academic staff in the program who has an expectation to engage in scholarship as part of their work. This includes the currency, quality and amount, and an overall self-reflective narrative on the scholarship within the program. Internal and external grants, and engagement of students in scholarly activity should also be reported.
  - g. To inform the changes and improvements in the program, provide a summary of the state of the discipline and current knowledge of effective teaching and learning practices in the discipline. This could include a review of the literature, reports from appropriate educational bodies, and an environmental scan/discussion of leading programs in the discipline.
- Added June 2021*
- h. A minimum of two qualified external reviewers ([Independent Academic Experts](#), Appendix G) are expected to evaluate the self-study, visit the campus and conduct on-site interviews, and prepare a single report identifying program strengths and weaknesses, and make recommendations for enhancing program quality.
  - i. As currency of documentation and information contribute to the quality of the review and its outcome, it is important that program reviews be completed as expeditiously as possible so that the data remain current and the review does not detract from other important work taking place in the unit. In many cases it may be possible to complete the full review in 12 months but in some institutions, additional time will be required to complete the full program review cycle.
  - j. An essential element of the review is an action plan outlining the steps and processes proposed by the **institution to improve the program and to respond to the reviewers’ suggestions** and recommendations. Timelines and persons accountable for each step shall be included. As a best practice, the action plan is monitored and reported on an annual basis to ensure that the unit is meeting its commitments.
  - k. The final results of cyclical reviews shall move through the appropriate governance processes of the **institution, which is normally to the institution’s** academic governing body.

#### Submission of cyclical review results

*The following does not apply to institutions for which Council’s monitoring mechanism is a QA process audit (see s. 5.3.5).*

For institutions required to submit results of cyclical reviews to Council, the results of the review shall be submitted to Council, together with the steps to be taken to improve the delivery and outcomes of the program. Institutions are expected to provide the following information:

- overview of the review process (components and timelines);
- information regarding the last cyclical review (including an assessment of the implementation of that **review’s action plan**);
- the membership of the steering committee including their role in relation to the program;
- the cyclical review policy and procedures (as an appendix);
- the program self-study (including who was involved in its preparation and their role in relation to the program);
  - program learning outcomes and their assessment as well as a curriculum map showing how the program learning outcomes are achieved in each course;

- student flow and completion rate data;
- student and graduate satisfaction data;
- alumni employment and further education outcomes;
- stakeholder input;
- academic staff CVs, preferably in a common institutional format;
- assessment of teaching and learning effectiveness, including PD opportunities completed by the teaching staff;
- review of the status of the field and teaching of the discipline;
- scholarly activity data as well as a critical narrative analysis (e.g., completed CAQC Table 2: Scholarly Activity by Approved Degree Program/Major for the data, accompanied by a reflective narrative analysis);
- the rationale for the selection of the external reviewers, as well as their CVs;
- the site visit schedule;
- **the external reviewers' report;**
- **the institutional response to the reviewers' report including an action plan** as noted in guideline (j) above; and
- how the results have moved through the governance processes.

Council will review the results of the program review and provide feedback to the institution regarding both the process and the outcome.

In some cases, program professional accreditation reviews can align and complement the institutions' cyclical review processes. It is important to recognize that the two review outcomes have different purposes. Professional accreditation reviews are conducted to ensure graduate outcomes are aligned with professional industry practices and cyclical reviews are conducted to ensure program academic quality and an effective student learning experience. However, it is recognized that there may be some overlap in the information needed for both reviews.

To minimize duplication of work, and with written approval of the CAQC Secretariat, an accreditation review could be used as the basis for a cyclical review if a supplementary document is provided that clearly indicates where each of the required elements **from the guideline's best practices (5.3.3 bullets a through k) and the components** required for a complete program review (indicated as a bulleted list above) are found in the report. Where the expected information is not covered in the accreditation review, supplementary documents must provide the required information.

For transparency, institutions are encouraged to provide information on their website regarding the timing and outcome of such reviews, such as an appropriately constructed public report, an **action plan, and the institution's** cyclical review policy and procedures.

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#### 5.3.4 PERIODIC REPORTING

On Council's request, an institution may be required to report at a specified interval on issues relating to an approved degree program. Such issues may emanate, for example, from the reports of external evaluators, from commitments made by the institution, or from annual reporting information.

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#### 5.3.5 QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS AUDITS

*With revisions to June 2021*

A quality assurance (QA) process audit, as noted in the [Glossary](#), is a monitoring mechanism used by Council to determine whether an Alberta-based institution has a quality assurance process for the internal review of its degree



programs that meets the Minister's and Council's expectations, and whether the institution rigorously applies its quality assurance process for its degree programs and addresses review findings with an appropriate response. It provides Council with confidence that criteria and processes for the systematic and self-critical examination of programs are in place at an institution, and that those criteria and processes are being rigorously applied.

The audit process is guided by the following principles:

1. Visible and credible evidence of robust quality assurance criteria and processes is vital to each of the institutions in Campus Alberta, to Council and the Ministry, and to the national and international reputation of Alberta degrees.
2. The primary responsibility and accountability for academic and institutional quality assurance rests with post-secondary institutions themselves.
3. The on-going monitoring of quality assurance criteria and processes should be carried out so as to maximize the opportunity for affirming, and adding value to, the internal quality assurance processes at each institution through peer evaluation and sharing of best practices from other institutions in Alberta and elsewhere.
4. Credible quality assurance should be dynamic, responsive, and have peer evaluation as a central feature.
5. Monitoring of QA processes should be streamlined, avoid unnecessary duplication of effort, and the benefits should be commensurate with the costs and effort.
6. The audit process may be used as a mechanism to monitor policies and processes for the development and recommendation to the Minister of new degree programs for institutions that have been granted delegated new program approval status (see 5.3.6).

Once audit status is achieved for an institution, the audit process will be ongoing.

#### 5.3.5.1 CAQC-CARU QA PROCESS AUDIT

A QA process audit is the main monitoring mechanism Council, in cooperation with the four CARUs, uses

- to ensure that criteria and processes are in place at each institution for the rigorous examination of programs, and
- to provide external assurance that those criteria and processes are being rigorously applied.

The QA audit process, which is an outcome of the Quality Assurance Audit Pilot Project Task Force, was agreed to by the CARUs, Council, and the Ministry and is more fully described on Council's website. **The key recommendation in the December 2013 Task Force report (also available on Council's website) was that an audit process be established to review CARU quality assurance processes every 5-7 years and that it be a joint initiative between CARU universities and CAQC with a similar oversight group. The CAQC, the four CARU provosts, and the Ministry subsequently endorsed the Report's recommendations. Although the initial process audit was conducted with the CARUs, the process has subsequently been extended to other eligible institutions that are able to meet the criteria for moving to QA Audit status (see below).**

For institutions that have been granted delegated new program approval status (see 5.3.6), the QA process audit may be extended to also serve as the main monitoring mechanism Council uses

- to ensure that appropriate policies and processes are in place for the development and quality assurance of new degree programs submitted to the Ministry for approval, and
- to provide external assurance that internal policies and processes are being applied, that rigorous governance approval processes are in place, and that the criteria established under 5.3.6 are consistently met.

## 5.3.5.2 AUDIT STATUS

*With revisions to June 2022*

In 2016, Council began considering how and under what circumstances it might extend the audit process to degree-granting institutions beyond the CARU sector, and began developing a process and criteria whereby a non-CARU institution could be moved to an audit status as its main monitoring mechanism. An audit status is a status granted by CAQC to an institution after it is able to rigorously demonstrate its ownership and responsibility for quality assurance in offering degree programs (see above).

Council views implementation of an audit status process as a way to operationalize its third Core Principle – the primary responsibility for academic and institutional quality assurance rests with degree granting institutions themselves. Moving an institution to an audit status is a recognition by CAQC that it has confidence the institution:

- has accepted this responsibility,
- has a track record of demonstrating critical self-assessment of quality assurance of its degree programs, and
- is thus ready for a different level and type of monitoring by CAQC.

Institutions that have been moved to audit status no longer have to annually report to Council on any approved degree program, nor do they need to report the results of program cyclical reviews. Institutions may still need to report on any specific issues noted in existing CAQC outcomes letters following approval of a new program.

Criteria for moving to QA audit status

An institution wishing to move to a QA audit status shall:

1. Demonstrate that it has robust internal program development and quality assurance processes in place including:
  - a) Sound and appropriate policies and/or procedures for developing and approving high quality degree programs, which include rigorous governance approval processes, a mechanism for internal and external peer review, a record of submitting to CAQC quality program proposals and successful implementation of new degree programs.
  - b) A record of cyclical reviews with results having been found satisfactory by Council based on an institutionally appropriate degree program cyclical review policy and procedures. This will include demonstrated capacity to produce a reflective self-study, select appropriate external expert reviewers, respond effectively to the external review, and develop and implement and monitor a sound and accountable action plan.
  - c) In addition to cyclical reviews, other ongoing program review processes (e.g., annual reviews, curricular reviews) resulting in a record of continuous improvement in curriculum, pedagogy, scholarly activity and other aspects of degree programs.
  - d) Rigorous evaluation policies and procedures for faculty and instructional staff that support a culture of a robust commitment to teaching and learning effectiveness and scholarly activity.
  - e) A forward looking strategic process for program and organizational assessment, informed by appropriate self-studies and advice offered by external expert reviewers.

*Criterion 1(e) added, June 2022*

2. Have a record of CAQC or PCAB comprehensive evaluations having been found satisfactory by Council.

#### Process for moving to QA audit status

1. An institution wishing to move to QA audit status shall prepare an application which demonstrates that it meets the specified criteria. Normally, an application should be accompanied by the report of one or more external expert reviewers **that will assess the institution's readiness to move toward its ownership of quality** assurance in monitoring degree programs, guided by the criteria for moving to QA audit status, along with the institutional response. An institution should use the CAQC guidelines for selection of external reviewers, and may wish to consult CAQC before making the selection.
2. The application will be reviewed by a CAQC QA Audit Status Application Review Committee composed of one member from each of the CARU, UU, PI and IAI sectors (selected by those sectors) and four members from CAQC, plus the CAQC Chair, who will chair the Committee.
3. The Committee will make a recommendation to Council, with rationale, on the application.
4. CAQC will then make a decision on the application **based on the Committee's recommendation and** communicate the outcome, with its rationale, to the institution and the Committee.
5. CAQC will inform the Minister when an institution has moved to QA audit status and communicate this on **CAQC's website**.
6. For those institutions that have successfully moved to a QA audit status, CAQC will determine with the institution its place in the QA audit cycle.

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#### 5.3.6 DELEGATED NEW PROGRAM APPROVAL STATUS

*Added June 2021*

Institutions that have been granted QA Audit Status may also request and be granted delegated new program approval status. This status enables an institution to conduct independent institutional reviews of proposals for new degree programs, based on which CAQC would recommend a program for approval by the Ministry. Institutions holding delegated new program approval status are not required to submit to CAQC, in advance, the usual full documentation on which a CAQC recommendation for program approval is based.

For institutions holding delegated new program approval status, CAQC will forward a request for Ministry approval of a new program immediately, upon review of a document of attestation from the institution.

It is understood that an institution with delegated new program approval status may choose to follow this procedure for all program proposals or only for some. It is an internal decision whether to use the standard route (perhaps for proposals from a new faculty or with new academic administrators), or to employ the delegated new program approval process (where faculties have a strong record of program development, for instance).

Institutions with delegated new program approval status are subject to a review of their program development and approval processes. This review may take place as part of the QA Audit process every 5-7 years (see 5.3.5.1).

### Criteria

Once QA audit status is granted, an institution must satisfy fundamental criteria in conducting its independent **institutional reviews of proposals for new degree programs**. **These criteria meet CAQC's Core Principles 2, 3, 5, and 6** about recognized standards, institutional responsibility, peer review, and stakeholder consultation:

1. The institution has fully-developed and reliable quality assurance policies and procedures, as recognized in a record of successful new program proposals and in successful institutional audits.
2. The program has been developed in consultation with relevant stakeholders, including faculty, students, applicable accreditation and professional bodies, and appropriate communities of interest.
3. The institution agrees to use the CAQC Review (Part B) template as the standard format for presenting evidence to support assessment of the quality of proposed programs across the Campus Alberta system.
4. **The institution's policies** and practices require independent external expert reviews of program proposals, including an overall positive recommendation on the proposal, with specific attention paid to program learning outcomes and curriculum, academic staffing and resources, degree requirements including admission standards, student support, and other relevant conditions.
5. The recommendations of the external review have been accepted or satisfactorily addressed.
6. The program proposal has been approved according to institutional governance processes.
7. The institution agrees to retain all documentation as agreed to with the institution and to make it available to CAQC for audit on request.
8. The provost/academic vice-president attests that the above conditions have been fulfilled.
9. The institution agrees that, if substantial weaknesses in its processes are disclosed in an audit, this status may be suspended for a period of time or revoked.

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#### **5.3.7 SPECIAL EVALUATIONS**

Where, in the judgment of Council, circumstances warrant it, or if directed to do so by the Minister, Council may arrange a special evaluation of an institution, or of any of its approved programs, or of the proposed re-activation of a suspended approved degree program. The institution will be notified of:

- a. the reason for the special evaluation;
- b. the purpose of the evaluation;
- c. the time of the evaluation;
- d. any preparation required of the institution; and
- e. the size and composition of any evaluation team that may be used.

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#### **5.3.8 OTHER EVALUATIONS**

In the event that any academic agency reviews and reports in writing upon any institutional matter relating to **Council's responsibilities**, the institution will make available to Council such a report.

## GLOSSARY

With revisions to December 2021

This glossary contains some of the frequently used terms in this *Handbook*.<sup>28</sup> Although it reflects the usage of the Campus Alberta Quality Council, it is recognized that usage of the term may vary among the post-secondary institutions in Alberta.

Academic Integrity – “Academic integrity is defined, broadly, as the ‘moral code of academia’ (Monash University, 2020) and is underpinned by the principles of honesty, trust, respect, integrity, fairness, responsibility and courage (International Centre for Academic Integrity, 2014). Academic integrity is ‘fundamental to the success and credibility of higher education globally’ (TEQSA, 2019), and as such higher education (HE) providers have a responsibility to ensure that the principles of academic integrity are communicated to, and upheld by, their entire community of staff and students. All breaches to academic integrity constitute forms of academic misconduct.” (INQAAHE Toolkit, 2020, p. 5)

Academic Integrity breaches include:

- **Plagiarism** – a threat to academic integrity that involves “(r)eproducing the work of someone else without attribution. When a student submits their own work on multiple occasions this is known as self-plagiarism.” (INQAAHE Toolkit, 2020, p. 6)
- **Collusion** – a threat to academic integrity that involves “(w)orking with one or more other individuals to complete an assignment, in a way that is not authorised.” (INQAAHE Toolkit, 2020, p. 6)
- **Copying** – a threat to academic integrity that involves “(r)eproducing and submitting the work of another student, with or without their knowledge. If a student fails to take reasonable precautions to prevent their own original work from being copied, this may also be considered an offence.” (INQAAHE Toolkit, 2020, p. 6)
- **Impersonation** – a threat to academic integrity that involves “(f)alsely presenting oneself, or engaging someone else to present as oneself, in an in-person examination.” (INQAAHE Toolkit, 2020, p. 6)
- **Contract cheating** – a threat to academic integrity that “(i)nvolve[s] contracting a third party to complete an assessment task, generally in exchange for money or other manner of payment.” (INQAAHE Toolkit, 2020, p. 6)

<sup>28</sup> The following sources were used in the preparation of this *Glossary*: *Post-secondary Learning Act*, Programs of Study Regulation (AR 91/2009); *Types of Degrees and Nomenclature*, University of Calgary, 2003; *2008-2009 University of Alberta Calendar*, <http://www.registrar.ualberta.ca/calendar/Glossary/Information/240.html>; *University of Lethbridge: Calendar 2008/2009*, <http://www.uleth.ca/ross/calendar/glossary.pdf>; *Accreditation Handbook*, Private Colleges Accreditation Board (PCAB), 4th Edition, February 1998 (with revisions to January 2004); *Glossary of Transfer Terms*, Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer, [http://www.acat.gov.ab.ca/glossary\\_of\\_terms/definitions\\_new.htm](http://www.acat.gov.ab.ca/glossary_of_terms/definitions_new.htm); *Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework*, Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, <http://www.cmec.ca/Publications/Lists/Publications/Attachments/95/OA-Statement-2007.en.pdf>; *Guide to Terminology Usage in the Field of Credentials Recognition and Mobility in English in Canada*, Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials, <http://www.cicic.ca/en/Guide.aspx?sortcode=2.17.17>; *NEPAB: Standards for Alberta Nursing Education Programs Leading to Initial Entry to Practice as a Registered Nurse*, September 2005; *Toolkit to support quality assurance agencies to address academic integrity and contract cheating – June 2020*, International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education, <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/sites/default/files/inqaahe-teqsa-qbbg-academic-integrity-toolkit-v1-0.pdf?v=1594958272>; *University of Calgary Intellectual Property Policy* (with revisions to January 2020), <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/sites/default/files/teams/1/Policies-Intellectual-Property-Policy.pdf>.

- Data fabrication and falsification – a threat to academic integrity that involves “(m)anipulating or inventing data with the intent of supporting false conclusions, including manipulating images.” (INQAAHE Toolkit, 2020, p. 6)
- Failure to acknowledge co-creators of intellectual property – a threat to academic integrity that involves not recognizing one or more individuals who make critical intellectual contributions as a creator of intellectual property. (UC 2020)
- Any other form of academic misconduct.

*Added December 2021*

Accommodation – post-secondary institutions in Alberta have a legal and moral duty to accommodate, up to the point of undue hardship, individuals or groups of individuals in order to eliminate or reduce the adverse impact on them of discrimination based on characteristics such as gender, physical or mental disability and other Prohibited Grounds, as defined in Section 15 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and in the Protected Grounds **section of Alberta’s Human Rights legislation**. Accommodation is the process of adjusting, in a reasonable way, institutional policies, procedures, practices, conditions of employment or the delivery of services (including teaching and the assessment of student learning) for groups or individuals belonging to groups identified in the Charter.

*Added April 2011*

Accreditation – a quality assurance process conducted by legislated authorities or professional regulatory bodies to determine whether educational institutions and/or programs meet the required standards of quality. In a positive outcome of the review process, an institution and/or program is granted an accredited status. There is no legislated accreditation process for institutions and/or programs in Alberta. The quality of the new degree proposals in Alberta is assured through the review process and monitoring procedures as defined by Campus Alberta Quality Council in accordance with the [Post-secondary Learning Act](#) (Appendix A). See also a definition for “professional accreditation.”

Admission requirements – a set of criteria for determining a student’s eligibility to enter an educational program. Admission requirements normally include completion of specific high school and/or post-secondary courses or programs at specified levels of academic achievement. Requirements often differ across institutions and within various disciplines in the same institution. As well, institutions may set special admission requirements for particular groups of applicants including high school graduates, mature applicants, individuals applying on the basis of completion of other post-secondary programs, such as a relevant diploma, and those applying, in part, on the basis of prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR) or the submission of a portfolio.

Applied degree – by definition in the [Post-secondary Learning Act](#) (Appendix A), an applied degree in Alberta “means a degree that may be granted by a public college or a technical institute on the completion of a program of study that includes (i) course work, and (ii) work-related experience.” Normally, an applied degree consists of six semesters of academic studies and at least two semesters of related work experience. In some cases, graduates of applied degree programs may be ineligible to enter graduate programs or second-entry degree programs, or may be required to complete a bridging program prior to beginning further study.

Asynchronous learning – group based learning where interactions are intermittent allowing participants to interact on their own time scale. Asynchronous learning is usually supported through use of computer conferencing, voice mail or e-mail.

*Added April 2011*

Audit – A quality assurance process used by Council to determine whether an institution has a quality assurance process for internal review of its degree programs that meets the Minister’s and Council’s expectations, and



whether the institution rigorously applies its quality assurance process for its degree programs and addresses review findings with an appropriate response.

*Added December 2014*

Authentication (of learners) – the process of verifying the identity of online/distance learners throughout the cycle of an online/distance course, including registration, participation, assessment, academic credit, so that it can be determined with certainty that the learner turning in the work is the one who is registered for the course.

*Added April 2011*

**Bachelor's degree** – an undergraduate degree offered by universities and other authorized post-secondary institutions. There are various types of undergraduate degree programs which may differ in length, including 3-year and 4-year degrees, normally requiring completion of at least 90, and 120 credits, respectively. Two-year post-baccalaureate degrees (also known as “after” or “second-entry” degrees) normally require prior completion of a bachelor's degree in another discipline.

Benchmarks and benchmarking – the practice of systematically comparing measures on a key variable (e.g., cost per graduate) with the same variable in another institution or similar practice in a different kind of organization. For example, an organization can compare the costs of recruitment for a degree program with other organizations or with the costs of recruitment for a professional organization.

Blended learning – also known as hybrid delivery, an education delivery model that integrates distance/distributed learning techniques and technologies such as online delivery and interaction through web pages, wikis, discussion boards and/or e-mail with campus based teaching activities such as lectures, in-person discussions, seminars, or tutorials.

*Added April 2011*

Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework – a framework, developed by the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada and endorsed by all Canadian provinces and territories. It provides a general description of qualifications expected of graduates at the **bachelor's, master's and doctoral levels, and clarifies the purposes, aims and relationships among these different degree levels**. As degree level standards are included in Part B of the framework, it can be used when designing and assessing new degrees to determine learning outcomes appropriate to the level of the degree.

Capstone project – a culminating project designed as a thesis, paper, portfolio or applied research study that is **relevant to the student's main area of specialization and is normally undertaken in the final year of studies**. The project may involve the synthesis of work done previously in the program and may involve elements of independent research; it is overseen and evaluated by a faculty supervisor and/or committee.

Clinical placement – a mandatory work term(s) that is integrated into the curriculum of a health-related program. **For other forms of students' work experience see such terms as “co-operative education,” “practicum” and “internship.”**

Certificate – a ministerially approved credential that normally is granted for the completion of one year or less of full-time study in a specific program.

Cognates – courses from a related discipline that complement the area of specialization and support the development of desired qualifications/skills.

Collaborative/joint degree – a degree offered by two or more faculties (e.g., BSc with major in Earth Science offered by the Faculties of Science and Social Sciences at the UofC). Although usually only one faculty provides



administrative control over the program, the names of both faculties appear on the parchment. A collaborative degree can also be offered by two or more institutions some of which do not have faculties.

Combined degree – a degree for which students are simultaneously or sequentially registered in two degree programs [e.g., BSc (Specialization in Science and Education)/BEd (Secondary) Combined Degrees Program]. A combined degree may have higher credit course requirements as well as a condition that students must graduate in both degree programs simultaneously.

Competencies – Describe the specific or detailed knowledge, skills and attitudes achieved as a result of a learning experience.

*Added September 2017*

Complementary studies – courses that are not within the specific area of specialization but in some way complement the main course of studies. Complementary courses may or may not be required.

Concentration – a focus on a specific topic within a discipline and normally associated with the delivery of a three-year degree. Where it is used in relation to a four-year degree proposal, it might represent a second level of specialization in which case it would not require approval by the Minister of Advanced Education. The number of credits required for a concentration is normally below the number of credits required for a major; however, it cannot be lower than 15 credits in a 4-year program and 12 credits in a 3-year program. A concentration is normally referred to on the transcript, but not on the parchment. As it is currently practiced in the post-secondary institutions in Alberta, a concentration is sometimes synonymous with such terms as minor, emphasis, stream, route, focus and track, which are also used to represent the second level of specialization (e.g., see definition of a “minor” in this glossary).

Co-operative education – **a program that formally integrates students’ academic studies with work experience, which is often comprised of several terms dispersed throughout the program’s curriculum.** The indication of a co-operative education program may appear both on the parchment and transcript. Students normally receive remuneration provided by the employer organizations. **For other forms of students’ work experience see such terms as “practicum,” “internship” and “clinical placement.”**

Core course – **a course that is designed and listed as part of the principal requirements in the program’s curriculum.**

Co-requisite – a course that normally is taken concurrently with another course in the program. A pre-requisite is a course that must be taken prior to the taking of a subsequent course in the program.

Course level: Junior/senior – **“junior level” implies that the course is focused on building introductory or foundational knowledge or basic skills; “senior level” implies that the course transmits or articulates knowledge beyond the basic level and that it may require prerequisites, co-requisites, linguistic ability or quantitative skills.**

Credential – certificate, diploma, degree or another type of official recognition awarded to students by a post-secondary institution in accordance with its published graduation requirements and with provincial legislation.

Credits – a method of weighting units assigned to a course and/or program of study. Credits may be related to the number of hours of instruction or to learning outcomes (e.g., a course having three hours of instruction per week through one semester would equal three credits).

Cross-listed course – a course developed or offered within two or more departments/faculties/schools within an institution. It may be accepted as a degree completion requirement in both areas or disciplines.

Depth and breadth of knowledge – a requirement for program curriculum to assure that students undertake an in-depth study of the area of their specialization and acquire basic knowledge in some other areas to broaden their academic perspective. The depth and breadth course requirements must be specified in the program curriculum.

Digital rights management – a variety of technologies and techniques such as passwords and encryption that are used by copyright owners to control the use (copying, distributing, viewing, watching, etc.) of digital content.

*Added April 2011*

Diploma program – a ministerially approved, non-degree post-secondary academic and/or vocational program of studies which can be offered by a university, college or technical institute. The length of a diploma program is normally shorter than a degree program and consists of two years or less of full-time studies. There exists a broad spectrum of degree programs involving diplomas in Alberta. All degree programs involving diplomas must meet the [Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework](#) (Appendix B) requirements for undergraduate degree-level programs.

Distance/distributed education – formal learning activities which occur when students and instructors are separated by geographic distance or by time for all or the majority of interaction. The instruction is supported by communications technology such as web, television, video, e-mail, mail, or interactive conferencing.

*Added April 2011*

Divinity degree – a degree that, in the judgment of the Minister of Advanced Education, primarily prepares students for service in the work of a religious group. According to the [Post-secondary Learning Act](#) (Appendix A) and the [Programs of Study Regulation \(AR 91/2009\)](#) (Appendix A), a degree in divinity does not require approval of the Minister and must be given a name that distinguishes it from an academic degree that has been approved by the Minister under the provisions of the *Act* and *Regulation*. Therefore, a divinity degree in Alberta has not been assessed to the degree-level standards of the [Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework](#) (Appendix B).

Drivers – the key motivating or initiating factors that lead to the creation of a new program or area of activity or a new organization.

Elective – an optional course in a program of study. The program curriculum may include electives within the chosen specialization as well as outside of it.

Empowerment – the practice of delegating authority lower down the organization, while holding the individual or team that is empowered accountable for their performance.

Engaged and Active Learning – Learning processes in which students actively and meaningfully participate in their own learning and instructors employ a diverse range of pedagogical methods (including but not restricted to traditional lectures) that by design **seek to support students' thinking**. Instructors use, as appropriate, the important pedagogical roles of coaching, advising, mentoring, modeling, discussion, argument, etc. Engaged and active learning is a thread running through the comprehensive student learning experience and is evident in pedagogy, curriculum, physical and virtual spaces, learning communities inside and outside the classroom, and through involvement in research and scholarship. Ultimately, engaged and active learning should lead to reflection on and the owning of learning outcomes by students.

*Added December 2011*

**Equivalency** – two or more courses that can be used as substitutes to fulfill a specified program course requirement. As well, course equivalent is a course taken at a sending institution for which credit is given to a transfer student by the receiving institution.

**Excellence** – the focus and commitment to being a high performing institution when compared with others. Excellence is not a "soft" statement, but a measurable statement. Excellent organizations are those which are admired and acknowledged by others for their leadership and performance, and succeed in meeting their own goals and objectives.

**Full-load Equivalent (FLE) Enrolment** – a measure of enrolment in which one FLE represents one student for a standard year of study taking a full load in a specific program. A full load, in this context, normally refers to a student taking five 3-credit courses per semester.

**Full-time Equivalent (FTE) Staff** – a staff member carrying a normal full-time teaching load for at least eight months of a reporting period has a full-time equivalence of 1.00. **The definition of "full-time" load varies among institutions and among disciplines within institutions.**

**General Studies** – a broadly based 3-year or 4-year general Bachelor of Arts and/or Bachelor of Science degree program. Normally these programs do not have a major and are drawn from more than one area of study in the Humanities, Social Sciences and Sciences.

**Goals** – specific, measurable plans for achieving specific outcomes within a specific time scale. Such goals can relate to outcome (number of graduates per year, cost per graduate, employment rates of graduates, etc.) or to process (reducing cycle time, decreasing drop-out and deferral).

**Grade Point Average (GPA)** – **a measure of a student's weighted average grade, obtained by dividing the total number of grade points earned by the total units of course weight attempted.** It can be calculated on the basis of all graded courses in one term or in the whole program of study (Cumulative GPA). An Admission GPA normally indicates the lowest GPA to be considered by the institution for enrolment purposes. It is calculated on the basis of specified post-secondary courses.

**Honours degrees/programs** – 4-year undergraduate programs designed to provide in-depth and rigorous study in academic disciplines (e.g., BA and BSc honours degrees). These programs normally prepare students for graduate study in the area of specialization and for employment in a variety of fields. The academic requirements for admission to, continuation in, and graduation from the honours degree are normally higher than those for the general program.

**Independent study** – independent coursework undertaken by a student under the supervision of a faculty member. The coursework is assigned a course credit and may involve readings, independent research, field work and a term paper.

**Indicators** – measures of performance linked to goals. If the goal is to sustain an enrollment of (say) 500, the number of inquiries is an indicator of the extent to which this measure is likely to be achieved. The best indicators are those relating directly to a goal (e.g., how many students are enrolled), but other indicators can help identify the likelihood of a goal being achieved (e.g., inquiry rates and conversion rates).

**Interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary and thematic programs** – a program of study based on the integration of disciplines and sometimes on staffing from two or more academic areas. Such programs are sometimes identified **by the term "studies" (e.g., BSc in Environmental Studies).**

Internship – a **work experience that is integrated into a program’s curriculum** and ranges in duration from several months to more than a year depending on the program. Normally, internship students receive remuneration for their work experience. **For other forms of students’ work experience see such terms as “practicum,” “co-operative education” and “clinical placement.”**

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) – agreed measures of performance. These are the measures required of an organization by the Council and/or the Government of Alberta. These will change from time to time.

Learning object – a resource (usually digital) that is used to support teaching and learning. Learning objects may be combined and re-used in a variety of lessons, units or courses.

*Added April 2011*

Learning object repository – a collection of learning objects or links to learning objects that allows users to search for, retrieve, assess, recommend and upload new learning objects.

*Added April 2011*

Learning (or course or program) objectives – Describe goals, intentions and expectations for the learning experience.

*Added September 2017*

Learning outcomes – Describe what learners should know, do, and value as a result of their learning experience.

*Added September 2017*

Major – a primary area of specialization and a first level of differentiation in a baccalaureate program. New majors must be approved by the Minister of Advanced Education. The credit requirement for a major in a 4-year degree program in Arts or Science is normally a minimum of 42 credits, with 30 credits to be taken at the senior level. Definition of the major and its credit course requirements may differ in professional programs. Some degree programs offer only general degrees and therefore do not have majors.

Major: Combined/joint – a major program of study where two departments or disciplines establish the academic requirements. The course sequence and credit requirement are predetermined interdepartmentally.

Mandate – resident public post-secondary institutions in Alberta operate according to a mandate, which defines **the institution’s purpose** and range of programming and activities. According to the [Post-secondary Learning Act](#) (Appendix A), “the Board of each public post-secondary institution must prepare a statement in the form established by the Minister setting out the mandate of the public post-secondary institution and must submit that **statement to the Minister for approval.**” **To be approved by the Minister of Advanced Education**, the mandate of a public post-secondary institution must be consistent with the role of the sector to which an institution is assigned by the legislation.

Minor – a supporting specialization or concentration in a degree program. A minor may be chosen to support and complement the major in a program of study. An institution must specify the minimum number of courses required for a minor. Sometimes students can declare more than one minor. Minors are not recorded on the parchment but on the transcript. They do not require approval by the Minister of Advanced Education.

Mission – A set of statements which translate the values of the institution into more concrete strategic tasks. For example, if a value is respect for people, the mission could be to become recognized as a model for the way in which all within the institution are empowered and are able to share their views openly and directly without fear of consequence (academic freedom).

Mission statement – resident private post-secondary institutions in Alberta operate according to mission statements, which are comparable to **mandates in public institutions, since they define the institution's purpose** and range of programming and activities. Mission statements do not require ministerial approval.

Networked learning – the process of developing and sustaining connections and interactions with people and information as a means to enhance learning.

*Added April 2011*

Non-resident institution – an institution that is resident outside Alberta. Non-resident post-secondary institutions seeking to offer degree programs in Alberta are subject to provincial legislation.

Objectives – ways of translating outcomes into specific tasks for individuals, teams or the institution as a whole. For example, if the outcome required is 500 new students each year, individual objectives for marketing staff and management personnel might be set with the intent of achieving this goal.

Option – an elective course or series of courses in a program of study. **See also a definition for "elective."**

Outcomes – specific, measurable and tangible performance. Outcomes are not vague statements, but are measurable (by both "hard" and "soft" measures) indicators of performance. If an intended outcome is "social conscientiousness of students", the question is "as indicated by ...".

Parchment – official document issued by a post-secondary institution confirming that a graduate has successfully completed all program requirements and has been awarded the relevant credential.

Performance Planning – the extent to which job design and competency development within the organization are systematic and aimed at improving outcomes.

Practicum – this term is often associated with the required fieldwork and clinical experiences in Education, Nursing, Social Work and other degrees with a professional focus.

Preceptorship – a teaching and learning method involving a formal one-to-one, relationship between the preceptor (e.g., expert nurse) and a student (e.g., nursing student, or preceptee). According to Nursing Education Program Approval Board (NEPAB), the learning occurs as the student works alongside the expert. The preceptor assists the student to consolidate theory with roles, functions, and competencies.

Professional accreditation – is the process of quality assurance through which it is ascertained that a program of study complies with standards of education established by professional authorities, with the goal of ensuring that graduates from such programs meet the academic and registration requirements established by the profession. For example, undergraduate engineering programs in Canada need to obtain accreditation through the Canadian Engineering Accreditation Board (CEAB). For program proposals from disciplines that require approval by the **professional bodies, such approval compliments CAQC's review but CAQC's review** is not limited to the requirements of professional bodies.

Professional programs – programs designed to educate practitioners in a profession and to develop competencies to qualify for admission requirements for entry to the profession. Professionally oriented undergraduate degrees are offered in Business, Law, Education, Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, Engineering, Music, Nursing, Forestry, etc. Some professional programs are first-entry programs, whereas others are second-entry programs requiring some prior degree-level study or even a degree. **Though considered to be bachelor's programs**

in academic standing, some professional programs yield degrees with other nomenclature [e.g., DDS (Dental Surgery), MD (Medicine), LLB (Law)]. Professional programs normally require periods of practical experience (internships, clinical work, or practicums). They are often strongly influenced by specific provincial or federal legislation or by regulations of licensing or accrediting bodies.

Risk – an honest evaluation of the extent to which a plan or proposal is vulnerable to internal or external pressures.

Semester – a period of instruction at a post-secondary institution, which normally consists of 13 weeks of courses and is usually associated with the Fall (September to December) and Winter (January to April) teaching sessions, and sometimes to Spring and Summer sessions, in which the instructional period is typically condensed. Normally, institutions offer a full range of courses in the Fall and Winter semesters and a limited number of courses during the condensed Spring and Summer semesters. A trimester program provides an opportunity for year-round study.

Skills – the individual and collective set of competencies brought to bear in the work of the institution.

Specialization – represents the first level or second level of differentiation in a baccalaureate program. As a first **level of differentiation, it is often synonymous with “major” in a 4-year program and “concentration” in a 3-year program.** As a second level of differentiation, a specialization can be represented by a minor or a concentration in a 4-year program. **In professional programs “specialization” may also mean route, stream or another form of focus in a subject area.**

Strategy – the generic strategy of an institution concerns the way in which the organization determines who it is to serve (stakeholders) and what it will provide them. This basic set of decisions represents the strategic intent of the institution and has a degree of permanence that goes beyond specific tactics for recruitment or specific refinements to programs.

Synchronous learning – group based learning that takes place at the same time including class based learning, audio, video and web conferencing.

*Added April 2011*

Transcript – an **official record that includes a student’s grades, course by course, issued by the institution during and at the completion of a student’s program.** An excellent reference document containing recommendations of what to include on a transcript is contained in the 2003 Association of Registrars of the Universities and Colleges of Canada (ARUCC) National Transcript Guide.

Transfer credit – credits received for courses, blocks of courses or programs (e.g., diploma programs) taken at another institution. Normally, the receiving institution establishes the maximum limit of credits that can be transferred from another institution and incorporated into its degree program. The Alberta Transfer Guide, produced by the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer, contains a comprehensive description of transfer agreements in the province.

Values – **an institution’s central and enduring tenets** - a small set of guiding principles, not to be compromised for financial gain or short-term expediency.

Vision – a short (25-30 word) statement of the core values and strategic intent of the institution. For example, "Empowerment through Knowledge and Understanding" is a vision statement.





## APPENDICES

### A. EXCERPTS FROM THE *POST-SECONDARY LEARNING ACT* & THE PROGRAMS OF STUDY REGULATION (AR 91/2009)

Excerpt from the [\*Post-secondary Learning Act\*](#)

#### Campus Alberta Quality Council

##### Establishment of Campus Alberta Quality Council

108(1) The Minister may establish the Campus Alberta Quality Council to provide advice and recommendations to the Minister in accordance with section 109 and the regulations.

- (2) The Minister may, with respect to the Campus Alberta Quality Council,
- (a) appoint or provide for the manner of the appointment of its members,
  - (b) prescribe the term of office of any member,
  - (c) designate a chair, and
  - (d) authorize, fix or provide for the payment of remuneration and expenses to its members.

##### Powers and duties

109(1) The Campus Alberta Quality Council may make rules governing the calling of its meetings, the procedure to be used at its meetings, the conduct of business at its meetings, reporting and any other matters as required.

- (2) The Campus Alberta Quality Council may inquire into and review any matter relating to a proposal to offer a **program of study leading to the granting of an applied, baccalaureate, master's or doctoral degree other than a degree in divinity.**
- (3) Without restricting the generality of subsection (2), the Campus Alberta Quality Council may consider
- (a) the identified and demonstrated need for the program,
  - (b) the capacity of the post-secondary institution to deliver and sustain a high quality program,
  - (c) the impact of the program on the ability of the post-secondary institution to fulfill its approved mandate,
  - (d) course and program transferability and portability within and outside the Alberta post-secondary system, and
  - (e) integration of the program within the existing array of similar programs and services across the post-secondary system.
- (4) The Campus Alberta Quality Council may exercise the powers and shall perform the duties and functions prescribed in the regulations.

#### [Programs of Study Regulation \(AR 91/2009\)](#)

##### Definitions

- 1 In this Regulation,
- (a) **"Act"** means the *Post-secondary Learning Act*;
  - (b) **"Council"** means the Campus Alberta Quality Council established under the Act;
  - (c) **"degree program"** means a program of study that leads to the granting of a degree;
  - (d) **"diploma or certificate program"** means a program of study that leads to the granting of a diploma or certificate;

- (e) **“institution” means a public post-secondary institution, a resident private post-secondary institution or a non-resident institution.**
- 2 For the **purposes of the Act, “foundational learning program” means**
  - (a) an academic upgrading program,
  - (b) a career entry program with a duration of one year or less,
  - (c) an English as a second language program, or
  - (d) an adult basic education program.

### Programs of Study

#### Application for approval

- 2 (1) The following must apply for approval, in the form required by the Minister:
  - (a) A public post-secondary institution that proposes to establish, change, extend, suspend, terminate, reactivate or transfer a degree program or a diploma or certificate program offered or to be offered in Alberta;
  - (b) A resident private post-secondary institution or non-resident institution that proposes to establish, change, extend, suspend, terminate, reactivate or transfer a degree program offered or to be offered in Alberta.
- (2) A post-secondary institution assigned to the Independent Academic Institutions sector that proposes to offer a diploma or certificate program in Alberta may apply for approval in the form required by the Minister.

#### **Minister’s approval of diploma or certificate program**

- 3 On receiving an application made under section 2 respecting a program of study that is a diploma or certificate program, the Minister may approve that diploma or certificate program if the Minister is satisfied that the **program meets the Minister’s criteria for post-secondary system co-ordination.**

#### **Minister’s referral of degree program**

- 4 On receiving an application made under section 2 respecting a program of study that is a degree program, the Minister may, if the Minister is **satisfied that the degree program meets the Minister’s criteria for post-secondary system co-ordination**, refer the application to the Council for review.

#### **Council’s review of degree program**

- 5 (1) The Council must review an application respecting a degree program referred to it by the Minister under section 4 to determine if the applicant institution and the proposed degree program meet the minimum standards and conditions established by the Council.
- (2) If the Council determines that all the conditions and standards referred to in subsection (1) are met, the Council must recommend to the Minister that the degree program be approved.
- (3) If the Council determines that all the conditions and standards referred to in subsection (1) are not met, the Council may recommend to the Minister that the degree program not be approved.

#### **Minister’s approval of degree program after review**

- 6 (1) **After receiving the Council’s recommendation under section 5(2) or (3) with respect to a degree program**, the Minister
  - (a) may approve the degree program if the application was made by
    - (i) a public post-secondary institution,
    - (ii) a non-resident institution, or

- (iii) a resident private post-secondary institution that already offers an approved degree program in Alberta,
  - or
  - (b) if the application was made by a resident private post-secondary institution that does not already offer an approved degree program in Alberta, may
    - (i) recommend to the Lieutenant Governor in Council that an order be made under section 12(1), and
    - (ii) after an order under section 12(1) is made, approve the degree program.
- (2) The Minister may make a recommendation to the Lieutenant Governor in Council or approve a degree program under subsection (1) only if the Minister is satisfied, after the Council's recommendation under section 5(2), that the program continues to meet the Minister's criteria for post-secondary system co-ordination.

#### Powers of Minister to monitor

- 6.1 The Minister may monitor a program approved under section 3 or 6 to ensure that the program continues to meet the Minister's criteria for post-secondary system co-ordination.

#### Council's duty to establish standards and conditions

- 7 In order to carry out its functions under this Regulation, the Council shall establish the minimum standards and conditions referred to in section 5(1) for institutions and for degree programs.

#### Powers of Council to ensure compliance

- 8 The Council may, on the referral to it of a matter by the Minister relating to an approved or proposed degree program,
- (a) review and monitor a degree program to ensure compliance with the standards and conditions established under section 7,
  - (b) require a report from the governing body of an institution on any matter relating to an approved or proposed degree program that the institution offers or proposes to offer, and
  - (c) appoint persons to provide advice and recommendations relating to the review and evaluation by the Council of a degree program under clause (a) or section 5.

#### Recommendation of Council if standards or conditions not met

- 9 If the Council determines that any of the standards or conditions established under section 7 are no longer being met with respect to an institution or a degree program offered by an institution, the Council
- (a) may recommend to the Minister that the Minister cancel the approval of one or more degree programs offered by the institution, and
  - (b) may, if the institution is a resident private post-secondary institution, also recommend to the Minister that the Minister recommend to the Lieutenant Governor in Council that the order designating the resident private post-secondary institution as a private post-secondary institution that may grant approved degrees be rescinded.

#### Minister's cancellation of approved degree program

- 10 The Minister may cancel the approval of a degree program
- (a) on receiving a recommendation of the Council under section 9(a),
  - (b) if the Minister has reason to believe that an institution has suspended or terminated the approved degree program, or
  - (c) if, in the opinion of the Minister, it is necessary to cancel the approval for any other reason.

**Minister's cancellation of approval of diploma or certificate program**

- 10.1 The Minister may cancel the approval of a diploma or certificate program
- (a) if the Minister has reason to believe that the institution has suspended or terminated the approved diploma or certificate program, or
  - (b) if, in the opinion of the Minister, it is necessary to cancel the approval for any other reason.

**Minister's recommendation to Lieutenant Governor in Council**

- 11 The Minister may recommend to the Lieutenant Governor in Council that an order designating a resident private post-secondary institution as a private post-secondary institution that may grant approved degrees be rescinded
- (a) on receiving a recommendation of the Council under section 9(b),
  - (b) if the Minister has reason to believe that a resident private post-secondary institution has discontinued all of the approved degree programs offered by the post-secondary institution, or
  - (c) if, in the opinion of the Minister, it is necessary to rescind an order designating a resident private post-secondary institution as a private post-secondary institution that may grant approved degrees for any other reason.

**Order of Lieutenant Governor in Council**

- 12 (1) On the recommendation of the Minister under section 6(b)(i), the Lieutenant Governor in Council may by order designate a resident private post-secondary institution as a private post-secondary institution that may grant approved degrees.
- (2) On the recommendation of the Minister under section 11, the Lieutenant Governor in Council may by order rescind an order designating a resident private post-secondary institution as a private post-secondary institution that may grant approved degrees.

**Other Programs**

- 13 Repealed AR 227/2018 s9.

**Degree in divinity**

- 14 (1) Section 106(1) of the Act does not apply in respect of a degree in divinity that, in the opinion of the Minister, primarily prepares students for service in the work of a religious group.
- (2) A degree in divinity must be given a name that distinguishes it from an academic degree that is granted by an institution and has been approved under the Act.

**Repeal and Expiry****Repeal**

- 15 The *Approval of Programs of Study Regulation* (AR 51/2004) is repealed.

- 16 Repealed AR 251/2017 s2.

## B. CANADIAN DEGREE QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

| A. Descriptions of Degree Categories  |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|---|
| <p>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 for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education.</p> |  | <p>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/territory 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 postgraduate study will need to be articulated at the provincial/territorial level.</p>   |   |
| Description   | Bachelor’s Degree  | Master’s Degree  | Doctoral Degree   |
| Program Design and Outcome Emphasis   | <p>The credential awarded for the bachelor’s 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.</p> <p>All bachelor’s 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.</p> | <p>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’s-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.</p> <p>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</p> | <p>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.</p> <p>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 an 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.</p> |

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|  | <p>Some bachelor's-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 <b>diversity, each bachelor's-degree program must meet a substantial and common set of competency outcomes, as outlined below, to justify use of the bachelor's-degree label. The range of bachelor's programs includes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Programs designed to provide a broad education as an end in itself.</i> They may also prepare graduates for employment in a variety of fields and/or for admission to second-entry professional programs.<br/>Examples: BHum (Humanities), General BA and General BSc degrees</li> <li>• <i>Programs designed to provide in-depth study in academic disciplines.</i> They normally prepare students for graduate study in the discipline(s) and for employment in a variety of fields.</li> <li>• <i>Programs with an applied focus.</i> 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 preparation for 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.</li> <li>• <i>Programs with a professional focus.</i> 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</li> </ul> | <p>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.</p> <p>Examples: MA programs in the humanities and social sciences, MSc programs</p> <p><b>Profession-oriented master's programs</b> 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.<br/>Example: MSW (Social Work)</p> | <p>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 PhD.</p> <p>Examples: PhD (Psychology), PhD (Education), PhD (Music)</p> <p>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.<br/>Examples: EdD (Education), MusDoc (Music), PsyD (Psychology).</p> |
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|  | <p>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 <b>profession. Though considered to be bachelor's</b> programs in academic standing, some professional programs yield degrees with other nomenclature. Examples: DDS (Dental Surgery), MD (Medicine), LLB, or JD (Juris Doctor)</p> |   |   |
| Preparation for Employment and Further Study | <p>In addition to providing personal and intellectual growth, <b>bachelor's</b> 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.</p>  | <p>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.</p> | <p>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.</p> |
| Length of Program                            | <p>Owing primarily to variations in pre-university studies among the provinces/territories, 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).</p>  | <p><b>Master's programs vary typically from two to six semesters</b> in duration, depending on the field and the speed at which individuals progress through requirements.</p>  | <p>A doctoral program is typically three to six years in length, depending on the field and the speed at which individuals progress through requirements.</p>   |
| Admission Requirements                       | <p>Admission normally requires, at a minimum, a secondary school or CEGEP diploma and/or university preparatory courses, a minimum gradepoint 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.</p>  | <p>Normally, an undergraduate degree with an appropriate specialization or an undergraduate degree with relevant bridging studies.</p>  | <p><b>Normally, a master's degree with an appropriate specialization or a master's degree with appropriate bridging studies.</b></p>  |



| B. Degree-Level Standards  |  |   |   |
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| <p>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, and 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.</p> |  |   |   |
| EXPECTATIONS   | Bachelor's Degree  | Master's Degree   | Doctoral Degree   |
|  | <i>This degree is awarded to students who have demonstrated</i>  | <i>This degree is awarded to students who have demonstrated</i>   | <i>This degree is awarded to students who have demonstrated</i>   |
| B. Depth and Breadth of Knowledge  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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</li> <li>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</li> <li>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</li> <li>d) The capacity to engage in independent research or practice in a supervised context</li> <li>e) Critical thinking and analytical skills inside and outside the discipline</li> <li>f) The ability to apply learning from one or more areas outside the discipline</li> </ul> | 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. |

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| C. Knowledge of Methodologies and Research | <p>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 on their relevance to the evolution of the discipline</p> <p>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</p> | <p>A conceptual understanding and methodological competence that enables the graduate to</p> <p>a) Have a working comprehension of how established techniques of research and inquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline</p> <p>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, have 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.</p> | <p>A conceptual understanding and methodological competence that provides the graduate with the ability to</p> <p>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</p> <p>b) Make informed judgments on complex issues in specialist fields, sometimes requiring new methods</p> <p>c) Produce original research, or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, and to merit publication</p> |
| D. Application of Knowledge                | <p>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</p> <p>b) The ability to make critical use of scholarly reviews and primary sources.</p>   | <p>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.</p>  | <p>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.</p>  |
| E. Communication Skills                    | <p>The ability to communicate information, arguments, and analyses accurately and reliably, orally and in writing, to specialist and non-specialist audiences, using structured and coherent arguments, and, where appropriate, informed by key concepts and techniques of the discipline.</p>   | <p>The ability to communicate ideas, issues, and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences.</p>   | <p>The ability to communicate complex and/or ambiguous ideas, issues, and conclusions clearly and effectively.</p>   |

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| F. Awareness of Limits of Knowledge | An understanding of the limits to their own knowledge and ability; an appreciation of the uncertainty and ambiguity of and limits to knowledge, and an appreciation of 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 <b>one's</b> own work and discipline, of the complexity of knowledge, and of the potential contributions of other interpretations, methods, and disciplines.  |
| G. 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. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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</li> <li>b) The intellectual independence required for continuing professional development</li> <li>c) The ability to appreciate the broader implications of applying knowledge to particular contexts</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex situations</li> <li>b) The intellectual independence to be academically and professionally engaged and current</li> <li>c) The ability to evaluate the broader implications of applying knowledge to particular contexts</li> </ul> |

## C. RESIDENT INSTITUTIONS – DEGREE PROGRAM PROPOSAL TEMPLATE FOR UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE PROGRAMS

*With revisions to June 2022*

All proposals for new degree programs are to be submitted to the Ministry's Program and Provider Registry System (PAPRS). Initially, the proposal will undergo a system coordination review by the Program Design and System Innovation branch. Once that review is completed, the Minister may forward the proposal to the Campus Alberta Quality Council for its review.

The submission template includes two parts:

- Part A identifies the elements which should be included in the program proposal submitted for System Coordination Review (there are separate templates for Bachelor's programs and for Master's and Doctoral Degree programs). Part A template can be accessed through the Ministry's PAPRS system or by contacting Paul Gaudette, Director of the Program Design and System Innovation branch of Alberta Advanced Education, by e-mail at [paul.gaudette@gov.ab.ca](mailto:paul.gaudette@gov.ab.ca).
- Part B itemizes the additional information needed for a quality assurance review by Council. It can be accessed through the Ministry's PAPRS system or by downloading from the CAQC website at [Proposal Template: New Degree Programs and Specializations \(Part B: Campus Alberta Quality Council review\)](#).

It is not necessary to upload Part B when submitting the proposal for system coordination review.

## D. STATEMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY

*With revisions to October 2008*

*A signed Statement of Institutional Integrity must accompany each application (self-study and program proposal), as well as each revised program proposal, to the Campus Alberta Quality Council from institutions that are not authorized to offer government-approved degree programs. This requirement also applies to program proposals from any institutions already authorized by the province to offer degrees.*

### Statement of Institutional Integrity

In the institutional integrity section of the Campus Alberta Quality Council's *Academic Freedom and Scholarship Policy*, the following statements are made:

- The institution must present itself accurately and truthfully in all of its written documents. This includes the manner in which it describes its qualities and programs and compares them with other institutions.
- Full compliance with legal matters such as copyright law is expected.

On behalf of (name of applicant institution) I/we attest that, to the best of my/our knowledge, the information presented in this application is complete and accurate and reflects the highest standards of institutional integrity.

Signed by

\_\_\_\_\_ President of institution

\_\_\_\_\_ Board Chair of institution

(for applications from institutions not authorized to offer a government-approved degree program)

OR

\_\_\_\_\_ Senior academic officer

(for subsequent program proposals from institutions authorized to offer at least one government-approved degree program)

## E. ORGANIZATIONAL EVALUATION FRAMEWORK – UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

*With revisions to March 2020*

### Introduction

Institutions wishing to offer a first undergraduate degree must be evaluated for their ability to implement and sustain degree programs at that level. The organizational evaluation is intended to examine the extent to which the systems and processes of the institution are clearly established to achieve excellence in learning. That is, the evaluation will establish the extent to which the institution has created sustainable processes, the extent to which its financial and operational resources are adequate to sustain the learning processes students will experience, and the link between students' **experiences and demonstrable needs**.

The organizational evaluation and its accompanying self-study serves three purposes:

1. For an institution, it provides a very useful analysis of its objectives, resources, students and achievements and of the **relationships among them that is valuable for the institution's strategic planning and improvement**.
2. For the Council and its evaluators, it provides the detailed information whereby they become familiar with the institution and can assess whether the institution **meets Council's organizational standards**.
3. It reveals the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities of an institution in relation to the achievement of its purposes and objectives. Thus, the self-study indicates to both the Council and the institution the areas with respect to which the institution must change and improve.

This Framework has been developed by CAQC to be used as resource for institutions to support their preparation of high-quality self-studies. The elements of the Framework are based on accumulated wisdom of **practice drawn from the organizational evaluations of Alberta institutions that have taken place since CAQC's creation in 2004**. CAQC recognizes that Alberta institutions are diverse, and that, reflecting that diversity, there will be variation in the way that institutions respond to the elements of the Framework.

CAQC recommends that the 11 evaluation categories used in the Framework be utilized to structure the self-study. For each of these categories, the evaluation team will be looking for the approach taken by the organization, the way in which the approach is deployed within the organization, and the results of such deployment.

### *Category 1: Mission/Mandate, Educational Objectives and Academic Freedom*

**Do the institution's academic policies** support the published mandate/mission and academic goal statements? Does the institution maintain an atmosphere in which academic freedom exists?

*Relevant organizational assessment standards:*

- #1 – Mandate and mission
- #3 – Academic freedom and integrity

Criteria:

- Does the organization have a clearly articulated and published mandate or mission and academic goals statement, approved by the governing board and appropriate for a degree-granting institution?

- Will the academic policies and standards supporting the institution's mandate/mission and educational objectives ensure degree quality and relevance?
- Does the mission include a commitment to the dissemination of knowledge through teaching and scholarship, where applicable, the creation of knowledge, and service to the community or related professions? How is this made manifest?
- Does the institution have an academic freedom policy and procedures, and how does it demonstrate that it fosters an environment where students and academic staff can display a high degree of intellectual independence?
- Is there evidence that academic activity is supported by policies, procedures and practices that encourage academic honesty and integrity?

### *Category 2: Organization and Administration*

**Will the institution's governance and organizational structures support and promote a high quality degree-granting institution?**

*Relevant organizational assessment standards:*

- #2 – Governance and administrative capacity
- #7 – Ethical conduct
- #11 – Dispute resolution

*Criteria:*

- Does the institution have administrative capacity, through its leadership and governance structure, capable of organizing and managing a reputable, effective and high quality degree-granting institution?
- Does the institution have a governing board with the authority to carry out the mandate/mission of the institution, and does it operate as an independent policy-making body? Are a majority of its members without any contractual, employment or ownership interest in the institution?
- Does the institution's governing board have adequate provisions for appropriate academic staff participation in academic decision making, and for faculty, staff, students and administrators to be involved in the development of institutional policies?
- Has the institution designated an individual as having fiduciary or legal responsibility for the educational activities of the institution and who has the status of a corporate officer (or its equivalent) as defined in the *Companies Act*?
- Does the institution have effective policies for dealing with disputes between the organization and its students, between the organization and its faculty, and between faculty and students?
- How well are complaints, grievances, and/or disputes of students, faculty, staff and administration dealt with? Is there evidence that the principles of natural justice apply?
- Does the institution demonstrate that it values and upholds integrity and ethical conduct by having and following the relevant policies and practices by which it conducts its business?

### *Category 3: Financial Structure*

**Will the institution's financial management procedures and resources provide a stable learning environment to ensure that students can complete their degree program? Do the institution's planning mechanisms assist in this endeavour?**

*Relevant organizational assessment standard:*

- #6 – Financial planning and resources



## Criteria:

- Does the institution have the appropriate financial management procedures, resources and appropriate planning to provide a stable learning environment and to ensure that students can complete the degree program(s)?
- Does the institution have the appropriate resources and data to forecast revenue, enrolments, expenditures, and capital needs?

*Category 4: Curricula and Instruction*

Will the curricula, program delivery, and quality assurance mechanisms achieve the desired learning outcomes? Will the procedures assessing the effectiveness and continuous improvement of academic programs, as well as curriculum development policies and procedures, achieve the ongoing quality of programs and learning outcomes? Does the institution have robust mechanisms for promoting and supporting effective teaching and learning practices? Is it apparent that program decisions are made with quality in mind?

*Relevant organizational assessment standard:*

- #5 – *Organizational policies, strategic planning and periodic review*

## Criteria:

- Is the internal program approval process transparent and does it have mechanisms to ensure that modifications and improvements in program design can be made?
- Has the **institution's strategic planning process (both for short and long range plans)** enabled the organization to respond in a focused, effective and innovative way to the challenges of its environment and constituents?
- Has the institution provided evidence that it will be able to use its policies and processes to assess the effectiveness, growth and improvement of its degree programs and services?
- What evidence is there that the policies and procedures designed to address internal curriculum development and periodic program review will ensure the ongoing quality of programs and learning outcomes?
- Does the institution have a systematic mechanism to develop and assess learning outcomes, and to use that assessment for program development, review and quality improvement purposes?
- Does the institution have a systematic mechanism to develop, nurture, assess, and reward effective practices of teaching and learning?
- **Do the institution's periodic program review policies and procedures normally include the advice of external experts?**

*Category 5: Academic Staff*

Does the institution have appropriate faculty and staff to assist the institution in achieving its mission **and academic goals and programs? Do the institution's policies and procedures with respect to** appointment, promotion, termination and professional development for faculty and staff serve to **achieve the institution's mission and academic goals?**

*Relevant organizational assessment standards:*

- #8 (Faculty and staff)
- #12 (Scholarly and research support)

Criteria:

- Does the institution have the necessary human resources, including appropriately qualified faculty and instructional staff, to achieve its mission and academic goals?
- Does the institution have policies and procedures to deal effectively with appointment, evaluation, employment conditions including employment equity, promotion, termination and professional development for faculty and staff? In the case of the latter, how does the institution determine the professional development needs of its staff?
- Is there evidence that the institution will be able to develop a culture of scholarship appropriate for a degree granting institution?
- Does the institution provide academic staff with clear expectations regarding what constitutes scholarship?
- How well do the **institution's policies and procedures support and facilitate engagement by academic staff** in scholarship and/or research or creative activity?

*Category 6: Strategic Planning*

**Are the institution's planning processes integrated and comprehensive and do they** effectively link the various planning initiatives (program, staffing, facilities, marketing, etc.)?

*Relevant organizational assessment standard:*

- #5 – *Organizational policies, strategic planning and periodic review*

Criteria:

- Does the institution use the systems it has in place to gather and analyze data to effectively plan and make decisions?
- Has the institution established sufficient and appropriate performance indicators and benchmarks to assess its programs and academic units, and to act on its assessments?
- Does the institution have a formal approved policy and procedure requiring the periodic review of all units and/or operations to occur on a cyclical basis, and does it include assessment by external experts?
- Does the institution have a strategic plan **or planning document that outlines the institution's major** directions, and does it include an executive summary highlighting the main priorities?
- Does the institutional strategic plan support quality teaching and learning?
- Is there evidence that the **planning process reflects and supports the institution's mission, and does the** institution explain how the strategic plan guides decision-making at the institution?
- Is there evidence that the institution integrates academic, financial and facilities planning into its overall comprehensive planning process?

- Is it known who at the institution has major responsibility for coordinating institution-wide planning, who else participates, and how various stakeholders are involved in the process?
- Is the timeframe or length of the planning cycle specified?
- Is there information about how the planning process is disseminated and understood throughout the institution?
- Does the institution explain how environmental scanning or a similar mechanism is used to update the strategic plan, and to ensure that the plan remains current?

#### *Category 7: Learning Resources and Services*

**How well will the institution's information services and systems support the proposed degree programming?** Are the methods for establishing priorities for the acquisition of new resources and the maintenance of existing resources appropriate?

*Relevant organizational assessment standard:*

- #9 (Information services and systems)

Criteria:

- **Do the institution's information services and learning resources effectively support the academic programs for students and faculty?**
- Is there an established method of setting priorities with respect to the acquisition of these services and resources, and are staff and students satisfied with how these priorities are set?
- Is there a demonstrated commitment on the part of the institution to maintaining and supplementing its information services and learning resources as needed?

#### *Category 8: Academic Policies and Records*

**How consistent are the institution's admissions, continuation and graduation policies with the objectives of the proposed degree programming, and are these consistent with the practice of other Canadian degree granting post-secondary institutions?** Are student academic files accurately and securely maintained? How well do any applicable academic policies and records include consideration of any programs delivered collaboratively and/or off-campus?

*Relevant organizational assessment standards:*

- #4 – Academic policies
- #7 – Ethical conduct
- #10 – Student services and student protection

Criteria:

- **Are the institution's published recruitment, admission, continuation and graduation policies consistent with its programming objectives?**
- Does the institution ensure that student academic records and alumni records are secure?
- Does the institution demonstrate that it values and upholds integrity and ethical conduct as it relates with students through the availability of full, accurate and truthful material regarding the following:
  - mission and goals;
  - history;

- governance and academic structure;
- program and subject descriptions;
- faculty and administrator credentials;
- admissions requirements including credit transfer and prior learning assessment policies;
- residence requirements;
- systematic method for evaluation and awarding academic credit;
- clear and informative student enrollment agreements verifying student awareness of relevant policies;
- academic behavior (attendance, completion of assignments, plagiarism, etc.);
- evaluation of students (methods, grading system and grading distribution, examination policy, appeal process, etc.);
- academic probation and academic honours;
- communication of academic policies to students and academic staff, and future plans regarding academic policies and records;
- support services;
- payment requirements and refund policies;
- financial assistance; and
- transcript protection.

#### *Category 9: Student Services and the Student Experience*

Is the provision of student services appropriate to the institution's mission and educational objectives, guided by appropriate **policies and practices related to students' security, rights and responsibilities**, and are the supports for student services adequately communicated to students? Will these provisions effectively support the quality of the proposed degree programming?

*Relevant organizational assessment standard:*

- #10 – Student services and student protection

Criteria:

- Does the institution maintain sound policies and practices relating to the services it provides, such as supports for indigenous students, counselling, residences, athletics, recreation, student government, clubs and other extracurricular activities, food, health services, and financial aid. Does it adequately inform students about these policies and practices?
- Does the institution offer appropriate supports for student mental health and well-being?
- Does the institution include key elements or outcomes on student transcripts to create a comprehensive record of the student experience?
- Does the institution have appropriate policies and practices for supporting and protecting students concerning such matters as equality and diversity, anti-bullying, disability, gender, race, sexual orientation, and the handling of complaints regarding sexual harassment and assault?
- Does the institution have future plans and priorities regarding student services, and does it have a process for periodic review of student services for continuous improvement?
- To what extent does the institution view the quality of the student experience as being very important?

*Category 10: Physical Plant and General Facilities*

**Do the institution's physical resources, including laboratories, classrooms and specialized equipment, support the degree programming it proposes to offer? Do the institution's plans and methods adequately manage health and safety issues?**

*Relevant organizational assessment standard:*

- #13 – Physical plant

Criteria:

- **Are the institution's** facilities, including laboratories, classrooms, technology and specialized equipment, appropriate to support the degree programming it proposes to offer?
- Do the physical spaces appropriately support the learning environment?
- Does the institution have policies and practices regarding utilization and maintenance of its physical plant?
- Does the institution have future plans and priorities regarding the physical plant?
- Does the institution have plans and methods for managing health and safety issues appropriate to support degree programming in the program(s) it offers or proposes to offer?

*Category 11: Institutional Communications*

Do the institutional communications and promotional material accurately describe the institution and **its programs, and how students can access them? Are the institution's communications relevant and objective** and do they effectively promote the institution and its programs?

*Relevant organizational assessment standard:*

- #10 (Student services and student protection)

Criteria:

- Do the institutional communications and promotional material accurately describe the institution and its programs, and how students can access them?
- **Are the institution's communications relevant and objective and do they effectively promote the institution and its programs?**
- Does the institution have policies regarding the production of institutional communications?

## F. UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

*With revisions to March 2020*

This Framework has been developed by CAQC to be used as a resource for institutions to support their preparation of high-quality program proposals. The elements of the Framework are based on accumulated wisdom of practice drawn from the review of degree proposals from Alberta institutions that have taken place **since CAQC's creation in 2004**. CAQC recommends that the 14 criteria and their subpoints be carefully considered in the development of program proposals. CAQC recognizes that Alberta institutions are diverse, and that, reflecting that diversity, there will be variation in the way that institutions respond to the elements of the Framework.

Criterion 1: Program has an appropriate fit between name, program content, and nomenclature for credential.

**See CAQC's Program Assessment Standard #4** (Section 4.3.1).

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.

**See CAQC's Program Assessment Standard #4** (Section 4.3.1).

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** (Section 4.3.1) and the Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework (Appendix B).

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.
- Incorporated appropriate strategies to identify and meet the needs of learners, including support for engaged and active learning.
- Specified learning outcomes 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 Standards #6 and #7 (Section 4.3.1).**

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 Standards #2 and #6 (Section 4.3.1).**

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 (Section 4.3.1).**

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, Access 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** (Section 4.3.1).

The applicant has:

- Provided policies and procedures with respect to appointment, evaluation, employment conditions, including employment equity, promotion, termination and professional development for faculty and staff.
- 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.
- Demonstrated policies and programs that promote and support teaching and learning effectiveness.

Criterion 9: Interdisciplinary programs are well designed and integrated (if such programs are proposed).

**See CAQC's Program Assessment Standard #6** (Section 4.3.1).

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** (Section 4.3.1).

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** (Section 4.3.1).

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** (Section 4.3.1).

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** (Section 4.3.1).

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).**

Criterion 14 is not applicable for non-resident institutions.

The applicant has:

- Provided independent academic expert reports and a description of each expert's qualifications for each 4-year program proposals.
- Provided evidence of thoughtful responses to the issues and recommendations raised in the reports of the independent academic experts.

## G. INDEPENDENT ACADEMIC EXPERTS

March 2008

With revisions to December 2012

Council's Degree Program Proposal Templates ([Appendix C](#) for Resident institutions and [Appendix H](#) for Non-resident institutions) normally require institutions, including those requesting fully expedited reviews, to include with the submission of new degree program proposals the full report(s) of an independent academic expert (or experts) **engaged by the institution, along with the institution's response**. The applicant institution should provide short resumes of the academic experts involved and a rationale as to why they were selected. Note that these academic experts, engaged by an institution when it is developing a proposal, are not to be **confused with CAQC's peer evaluators, who are invited by Council to join review teams established later in the program approval process by Council**.

Independent academic experts also play a pivotal role in **the cyclical review of an institution's programs**, the general purpose of which is to monitor the quality of approved degree programs on a continuing basis. As noted in Section 5.2.3, after a first successful comprehensive evaluation, Council expects the institution to accept responsibility for a self-evaluation of its organization and programs. All institutions are expected to develop a systematic program evaluation plan which should be based on certain guidelines, one of which is that qualified independent academic experts should participate in the evaluation by reviewing the self-study, visiting the campus and conducting on-site interviews, and preparing a report.

The guidelines below with respect to the selection and use of independent academic experts and the sample terms of reference are provided to institutions for their benefit as they prepare new degree program proposals and/or prepare for a cyclical review of an approved degree program.

### NEW PROGRAM PROPOSALS

The following are guidelines with respect to the selection and use of independent academic experts when institutions are seeking to engage experts to review new program proposals:

- Academic experts must have doctoral degrees (or terminal degrees in the discipline) and hold (or have held) academic appointments at the senior level.
- Academic experts should have experience in the design, delivery or administration of a similar program offered at a degree-granting institution.
- In order to avoid conflict of interest and to ensure objective assessments, any connection between an academic expert and the applicant institution must be disclosed. Institutions are wise to avoid potential and perceived conflicts by selecting experts who have no connection with the institution or faculty/administrators of the proposed program, or who are from institutions that are not affiliated with the applicant institution.
- Given *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* considerations, the institution should seek permission from the expert for submission to Council **of the expert's resume**.
- Academic experts should be provided with terms of reference, including specific issues/areas to be addressed in the review (see below for a sample that can be adapted to suit the particular institution and program being proposed).
- For some program proposals, the institution should consider the merits of having academic experts visit the campus to assess the student experience and learning environment (including the face-to-face experience and virtual environment) and support system, the **institution's infrastructure, including**

library holdings and information access arrangements pertaining to the program area, as well as other physical resources such as laboratories.

- If the experts' report fails to address critical elements of the proposed program, the institution should consider engaging another expert to assist it in the development of a strong proposal.

#### SAMPLE TERMS OF REFERENCE

The following exemplifies terms of reference that an institution might give to independent academic experts commenting on program proposals. They may be adapted to suit the institution and program being evaluated.

1. Does the proposed program meet or have the potential to meet national and international quality standards for degree programs?
2. Does the proposed program demonstrate an understanding of the needs of learners in the program (including the quality of the student experience and learning environment (including the face-to-face experience and virtual environment) and support system) and provide the appropriate academic breadth and depth of knowledge as outlined in the expectations for degree level standards in the [Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework](#) (Appendix B)?
3. Will the proposed program offer similar learning outcomes and opportunities for advancement as those offered to graduates of similar programs at Canadian post-secondary institutions?
4. Have institutional administrators and faculty made a realistic assessment of demands that will be created by the proposed program (e.g., finances, adequacy of current and proposed faculty resources, workloads, support for scholarship of faculty, etc.)?
5. Does the institution have both the academic resources (e.g., supporting disciplines) and the infrastructure (e.g., classrooms, information resources, labs, offices, equipment, etc.) to implement the proposed program?
6. Given the over-**all quality of the institution's operations**, does the expansion of programs, as proposed, seem to be a viable and realistic proposition?
7. Do you endorse the proposal without conditions? If yes, for what reasons? Do you endorse the proposal subject to stated conditions? If yes, with which conditions and for what reasons? If you do not support the proposal, what are your reasons?
8. Has the institution adequately assessed demand for the program? Has it provided realistic enrolment projections?

In order to assist academic experts with their assessments, it is recommended that they be provided with information about the degree approval process (Section 2), the [Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework](#) (Appendix B) and Council's program assessment standards (Section 4.3.1). In the case of undergraduate degrees, the applicable guidelines with respect to staffing, degree structure and curriculum content, etc. should also be provided.

## CYCLICAL REVIEW OF PROGRAMS

The following are guidelines with respect to the selection and use of independent academic experts as part of an institution's **cyclical review of approved degree programs**:

- Academic experts must have doctoral degrees (or terminal degrees in the discipline) and hold (or have held) academic appointments at the senior level.
- Academic experts should have experience in the design, delivery or administration of a similar program offered at a degree-granting institution.
- In order to avoid conflict of interest and to ensure objective assessments, any connection between an academic expert and the institution must be disclosed. Except in situations noted below, institutions are wise to avoid potential and perceived conflicts by selecting experts who have no connection with the institution or its faculty/administrators, or who are from institutions that are not affiliated with the institution.
- Council acknowledges in certain cases the value to institutions of selecting as a reviewer an expert who was involved in the original review of the program (either one selected by the institution during the development of the proposal or one appointed **as one of CAQC's reviewers**). However, Council advises institutions not to use the same reviewer more than twice.
- Given *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* considerations, the institution should seek permission from the expert for **submission to Council of the expert's resume**.
- Academic experts should be provided with terms of reference, including specific issues/areas to be addressed in the review (see below for a sample that can be adapted to suit the particular institution and program being reviewed).
- Cyclical reviews for graduate programs should include a site visit to the institution by the academic experts to conduct on-site interviews and assess the student experience and learning environment (including the face-to-face experience and virtual environment) and support system, the **institution's** infrastructure, including library holdings and information access arrangements pertaining to the program area, as well as other physical resources such as laboratories. For cyclical reviews for undergraduate programs, a site visit is strongly encouraged.
- **If an expert's cyclical review report fails to address critical elements of the program, the institution should consider engaging another expert to assist it in arriving at a rigorous program review.**

## SAMPLE TERMS OF REFERENCE

The following exemplifies terms of reference that an institution might give to independent academic experts who are engaged as part of a cyclical review of approved degree programs. They may be adapted to suit the institution and program being evaluated.

1. Does the program continue to meet national and international quality standards for degree programs, **including Council's program assessment standards**?
2. Does the program demonstrate an understanding of the needs of learners in the program (including the quality of the student experience and learning environment (including the face-to-face experience and virtual environment) and support system), and provide the appropriate academic breadth and depth of knowledge as outlined in the expectations for degree level standards in the [Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework](#) (Appendix B)?

3. Does the program continue to offer similar learning outcomes and opportunities for vocational and educational advancement as those offered to graduates of similar programs at Canadian post-secondary institutions?
4. Does the institution have a sufficient number of appropriately qualified faculty who demonstrate evidence of scholarly activity as outlined in **Council's Standards on academic staff for baccalaureate programs**, its *Academic freedom and scholarship* policy, and its protocol on *Research and scholarship in Campus Alberta*? Has the institution maintained a culture of scholarship commensurate with its status as a Canadian degree-granting institution?
5. Does the institution have both the academic resources (e.g., supporting disciplines) and the infrastructure (e.g., classrooms, information resources, labs, offices, equipment, etc.) to sustain the program?
6. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the program? What recommendations, if any, should be made to improve the program?
7. What is the nature of the administrative support for the program (e.g., academic counseling, academic leadership)?

In order to assist academic experts with their assessments, it is recommended that they be provided with information about the monitoring of approved degree programs (in particular, sections 5.2.3 and 5.2.4 in **Council's Handbook**), the [Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework](#) (Appendix B), and **Council's** program assessment standards (Section 4.3.1 and 4.4.1). In the case of undergraduate degrees, the applicable guidelines with respect to staffing, degree structure and curriculum content, etc. should also be provided.

## H. NON-RESIDENT INSTITUTIONS – DEGREE PROGRAM PROPOSAL TEMPLATE FOR UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE PROGRAMS

*With revisions to September 2013*

### Part A

#### System Coordination Review

The following template outlines the information required by Advanced Education to support System Coordination Review, the first of the two stages in the review process for new degree programs and new specializations in existing degree programs.

The guiding premise of System Coordination Review is to ensure that the program adds value to Campus Alberta. **This stage of review will focus on the institution's assessment of student and employer demand; the situation of the program in the context of Campus Alberta; and the financial viability of the program, including implications for students and taxpayers.**

Given a positive outcome from System Coordination Review, the proposed program will be recommended to the Minister for referral to Campus Alberta Quality Council for quality assessment, the second stage of review. **Please refer to the council's publication, *CAQC Handbook: Quality Assessment and Assurance*, for further information. This publication is available on the Council's website [caqc.alberta.ca](http://caqc.alberta.ca).**

#### SECTION 1: PROGRAM OVERVIEW

##### 1.1 Program Name

*Provide the name to be used in the calendar and on the parchment.*

##### 1.2 Institution(s)

##### 1.3 Contact Person

*Name:*

*Telephone:*

*Email:*

##### 1.4 Type of Initiative

*New degree program; or new specialization(s) in existing program.*

##### 1.5 Program Length

*Define the length of the proposed program using measures appropriate to the schedule and delivery format. This will include total course credits and may include hours, weeks and semesters of instruction.*

##### 1.6 Program Description

*Provide a brief (1-2 paragraphs) description of the program, summarizing its intended purpose, curriculum design, and methods of delivery and highlighting distinctive attributes. Attach as an Appendix a complete list of courses, including credit values, instructional hours and brief (calendar style) course descriptions. For elective options, specify course selection parameters. Identify new courses to be developed for this program.*



## 1.7 Proposed Implementation Date

## 1.8 Enrolment Plan

*Include assumptions and explanatory notes (e.g., attrition, part-time enrolment). Also:*

- *If program implementation will occur over a number of years, provide data for each year to full implementation.*
- *If internal reallocation of existing resources is proposed, describe any anticipated decrease in enrolment in other programs that would result.*

| Proposed Enrolment           | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Annual Ongoing |
|------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|----------------|
| Total F/T head count         | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0              |
| • Full-Time Year 1           | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0              |
| • Full-Time Year 2           | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0              |
| • Full-Time Year 3           | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0              |
| • Full-Time Year 4           | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0              |
| Total P/T head count         | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0              |
| • Part-Time Year 1           | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0              |
| • Part-Time Year 2           | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0              |
| • Part-Time Year 3           | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0              |
| • Part-Time Year 4           | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0              |
| Anticipated No. of Graduates | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0      | 0              |

## SECTION 2: DEMAND

### 2.1 Student Demand Analysis

*Analysis should be supported by relevant data for the region and for Campus Alberta, as might be derived from: systematic questionnaire surveys of target audiences; application and enrolment summaries and trends for similar programs currently offered by other institutions; tabulations of unsolicited student inquiries and/or expressions of interest obtained at student recruitment events; demographic projections for relevant sub-populations.*

### 2.2 Labour Market Analysis

*Analysis should be supported by relevant data and placed in the context of the target occupational/regional labour market(s). Relevant data sources include systematic surveys of prospective employers; occupational supply/demand projections from government or industry sources; **tabulations of job postings/'help wanted' advertising; surveys of recruitment and graduate employment rates of similar programs; and demographic projections (i.e., for relevant regions and sub-populations.)** Describe anticipated employment outcomes.*

### 2.3 Support

*Provide evidence of consultation with and approval/support from relevant professional organizations, regulatory bodies, advisory committees, employers, and/or industry.*

## 2.4 Clinical or Work Experience

*If clinical or work experience is an essential part of program delivery:*

- 2.4.1 *Provide evidence that the placements will be available when needed.*
- 2.4.2 ***Describe the student's role in securing placements.***
- 2.4.3 *Explain how the institution will supervise/monitor the learning experience of students in off-site settings?*
- 2.4.4 *Identify potential employer/employee liability related to this aspect of the program, and how the institution intends to manage this liability.*

## SECTION 3: INSTITUTIONAL AND SYSTEM CONTEXT

### 3.1 Internal Review and Approval

*Provide a brief description of the internal review and approval process followed in developing the proposal.*

### 3.2 Campus Alberta Programs/Initiatives

*Discuss the relationships (similarity, complementarity, transfer, competition) of the proposed program to other programs or initiatives in Campus Alberta and explain what the proposed program would add to the system. If the proposed program would duplicate existing programs, explain why that duplication is warranted.*

### 3.3 Consultation

*Summarize the type and outcomes of consultations with other institutions in Alberta offering related programs. Attach copies of relevant documents (e.g. letters, meeting summaries). Discuss the potential for inter-institutional collaboration.*

### 3.4 Learner Pathways

- 3.4.1 *Identify potential pathways from work to school (where applicable).*
- 3.4.2 *Identify potential opportunities for transfer/laddering into the proposed program from other institutions or other programs within the institution; and for transfer/laddering from the proposed program to other programs within the institution or at other institutions. List any formal agreements for internal or inter-institutional transfer/laddering that have been negotiated to this point.*
- 3.4.3 *Estimate the portion of graduates who can be expected to proceed to further education directly. At a later stage in their careers. What types of programs/credentials would they be most likely to pursue?*

## SECTION 4: FINANCIAL VIABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

### 4.1 Annual Budget and Funding Sources

*Identify annual and one-time expenditures and annual revenue for the program in the budget tables below. If program implementation will take place over more than one year, provide estimates for each year until full implementation. Provide explanatory notes for all budget assumptions, such as inflation and per student tuition.*

|   | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Annual Ongoing |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|----------------|
| Revenue                                     |        |        |        |        |        |                |
| Tuition and Related Fees                    | \$0    | \$0    | \$0    | \$0    | \$0    | \$0            |
| Internal Sources <sup>2</sup>               | \$0    | \$0    | \$0    | \$0    | \$0    | \$0            |
| External (Third Party) Sources <sup>3</sup> | \$0    | \$0    | \$0    | \$0    | \$0    | \$0            |
| Other (specify)                             | \$0    | \$0    | \$0    | \$0    | \$0    | \$0            |
| Total Revenue                               | \$0    | \$0    | \$0    | \$0    | \$0    | \$0            |
| Operational Costs                           |        |        |        |        |        |                |
| Salaries, Wages and Benefits                | \$0    | \$0    | \$0    | \$0    | \$0    | \$0            |
| Materials and Contracted Services           | \$0    | \$0    | \$0    | \$0    | \$0    | \$0            |
| Other Direct Costs                          | \$0    | \$0    | \$0    | \$0    | \$0    | \$0            |
| Indirect Costs                              | \$0    | \$0    | \$0    | \$0    | \$0    | \$0            |
| Total Operational Costs                     | \$0    | \$0    | \$0    | \$0    | \$0    | \$0            |

Notes:

2. Identify the source and duration of internal funding.
3. Identify the source and duration of external funding and outline any terms, conditions, and deliverables associated with the funding. External (Third Party) Sources might include support from other levels of government.

| One-time expenditures                 | Amount | Revenue Source | Details |
|---------------------------------------|--------|----------------|---------|
| Facilities                            | \$     |                |         |
| Equipment and IT                      | \$     |                |         |
| Curriculum Development                | \$     |                |         |
| Marketing and Promotion               | \$     |                |         |
| Faculty Recruitment and Establishment | \$     |                |         |
| Library Enhancements                  | \$     |                |         |
| Other                                 | \$     |                |         |

## 4.2 Impact

- 4.2.1 Compare the proposed tuition rate with that of similar programs in Campus Alberta.
- 4.2.2 Discuss the financial impact on students and the learner funding system, taking into account the costs of education and the potential debt burden relative to post-graduation earning capacity.

## Part B

### Campus Alberta Quality Council Review

As noted at the beginning of Part A, given a positive outcome from the System Coordination Review, the Minister may refer the proposed program to the Campus Alberta Quality Council for quality assessment, the second stage of review.

The onus is on the applicant institution to satisfy Council that the level of learning to be achieved is consistent with that which is expected at the proposed degree level, that the program has sufficient breadth and rigour to meet national and international standards as outlined in, for example, the Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework (CDQF), and that the program is comparable in quality to similar programs (if any) offered in Alberta and elsewhere. The program proposal should demonstrate how **Council's program quality standards** and any applicable guidelines have been addressed and describe any unique dimensions that set the program apart from similar programs thus providing new educational opportunities for students.

NOTE: Part A of the program proposal may undergo changes as a result of the System Coordination Review. It is important that Part A be up-to-date and complete before it is forwarded to Council. Building on the information provided in Part A, the program proposal that is sent to Council should contain the following additional information. When possible, links to existing policy documents and institutional policies should be provided, rather than recopying them in response to questions.

#### SECTION 5: PROGRAM SPECIFICS

##### 5.1 Program Structure and Learning Outcomes

- 5.1.1 *Describe the **program's learning outcomes and how they were established**. How will the achievement of the learning outcomes be evaluated? Providing a mapping of the courses to the learning outcomes, particularly in professional programs, is helpful.*
- 5.1.2 *Students are expected to demonstrate independent scholarly activity applicable to the degree level and expectations of its graduates (see the CDQF). Describe the academic culture that will nurture and support student scholarly and creative activity.*
- 5.1.3 *For undergraduate degrees, demonstrate (in a table, if possible) how the program meets the relevant section of **CAQC's Expectations for Design and Structure of Undergraduate Degrees**.*
- 5.1.4 *Provide an outline of the program structure and requirements (major, minor, cognates, core, general education, etc.) including credits in each category, and a summary description of the curriculum. Note any new courses. Course outlines must be available for reviewers but are NOT to be included with the proposal. (See sample table below - note that this is provided as a guideline only for a typical baccalaureate program, and will be different for other baccalaureate and graduate programs).*

## Program structure

| Component <sup>1</sup>                   |                   | Junior courses (maximum) | Credits    | Senior courses (minimum) | Credits    |
|--|-------------------|--------------------------|------------|--------------------------|------------|
| Major requirements                       | Specified courses | 3 courses                | 9 credits  | 15 courses               | 45 credits |
|  | Electives         | 2 courses                | 6 credits  | 4 courses                | 12 credits |
| Required courses outside major           |                   | 5 courses                | 15 credits | 3 courses                | 9 credits  |
| Additional requirements (please specify) |                   | xx courses               | xx credits | xx courses               | xx credits |
| Other electives                          |                   | 1 course                 | 3 credits  | 3 courses                | 9 credits  |
| Total                                    |                   | xx courses               | xx credits | xx courses               | xx credits |

<sup>1</sup> The names of the components in this column are only applicable to some programs at some institutions, and should be modified accordingly for the proposed program.

*To assist in demonstrating that the program curriculum is clear and well integrated with the objectives and outcomes, provide one or more typical student programs by year of program (see sample table below).*

## Typical student program

|                      | FALL          |  |              |                            |         |
|----------------------|---------------|--|--------------|----------------------------|---------|
|                      | Course number | Course title                                   | Course level | Role in program            | Credits |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> YEAR | ENGL 201      | Introduction to Language and Literature        | j            | Major                      | 3       |
|                      | HIST 200      | The Pre-Modern World                           | j            | Humanities Requirement     | 3       |
|                      | PSYC 201      | Individual and Social Behaviour                | j            | Social Science Requirement | 3       |
|                      | XXX           | Language elective                              | j            | Elective                   | 3       |
|                      | EAS 150       | Introduction to Earth and Atmospheric Sciences | j            | Science Requirement        | 3       |
|                      | WINTER        |  |              |                            |         |
|                      | ENGL 202      | Reading Histories: Histories in Texts          | j            | Major                      | 3       |
|                      | HIST 202      | Introduction to the History of Women in Europe | j            | Elective                   | 3       |
|                      | PSYC 203      | Personality                                    | j            | Elective                   | 3       |
|                      | XXX           | Language elective                              | j            | Elective                   | 3       |
|                      | SOC 205       | Introduction to Social Statistics              | j            | Social Science Requirement | 3       |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> YEAR | FALL          |  |              |                            |         |
|                      | POLI 201      | History of Political Thought                   | j            | Elective                   | 3       |
|                      | GEOL 201      | Principles of Geology                          | j            | Science Requirement        | 3       |
|                      | ...           | ...  | s            |                            | 3       |
|                      | ...           | ...  | j            |                            | 3       |
|                      | ...           | ...  | s            |                            | 3       |

## 5.2 Criteria / Requirements for Admission and Academic Progression

*State the admission criteria (including any provision for prior learning assessment), residency requirements, academic performance progression requirements, and graduation requirements applicable to the program, along with the grading scheme. Note any program specific regulations (e.g., for doctoral programs, note any candidacy or dissertation requirements, examination requirements, time to completion requirements, etc.).*

## 5.3 Engaged and Active Learning / Delivery Methods

5.3.1 *Demonstrate the ways in which the institution identifies and attends to the learning of students in the program and what pedagogies will be used to encourage their engaged and active learning, as per Council's program quality assessment standard #5 (Program delivery).*

5.3.2 *Include a description of the teaching/learning approaches to be used, a description of the rationale for using the approach and evidence of adequate support for the approach. Where applicable, demonstrate how CAQC's Additional Quality Assessment Standards for Programs Delivered in Blended, Distributed or Distance Modes will be met.*

## 5.4 Program Comparison

5.4.1 *Provide a comparative analysis of the proposed program (curriculum, structure, admission requirements, etc.) with similar programs offered elsewhere (if any), especially in Alberta and Canada (see sample table below). What process was used to determine which programs were deemed to be the most comparable? Illustrate the similarities and differences.*

| Program component           | Applicant institution | Institution A | Institution B | Institution C |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Name of credential          | X                     | X             | X             | X             |
| Entrance requirements       | X                     | X             | X             | X             |
| Areas of study / Curriculum | X                     | X             | X             | X             |
| Graduation requirements     | X                     | X             | X             | X             |
| Total credits               | X                     | X             | X             | X             |

5.4.2 *If a similar program is currently offered at the institution, compare the structure, admission requirements and learning outcomes to the proposed program. If this is a conversion of an existing program (e.g., conversion of an applied degree to a new degree program), provide a table similar to the sample shown below.*

### Comparison by course – existing program to new program

| Courses in existing program (NAME) | Type of change (if any)                           | Courses in new program (NAME) | Comment (e.g., indicate if new course) |
|------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|--|
| ABC xxx – title                    | Some content and outcomes added/deleted/alterd    | ABC xxx – title               |  |
| ABC xxx – title                    | Change to number and title and prerequisite added | DEF xxx – title               |  |
| ABC xxx – title                    | New course  | DEF xxx – title               | New course                             |

### 5.5 Other elements affecting quality

*Note any other relevant aspects of the proposed program that might affect quality (e.g., fast-tracking, individual study, parts of the program to be offered in cooperation with another institution, etc.).*

## SECTION 6: IMPLEMENTATION AND RESOURCES

### 6.1 Program Implementation Plan

*Provide a program implementation plan by academic year (start to maturity) that includes any elements to be phased in (e.g., new academic staff hires, courses, minors, co-op option). If introduction of this program is dependent on a similar program being phased out, the implementation plan should include how both programs are being supported until the phase out and start up are completed.*

### 6.2 Staffing Plan

**6.2.1** *Show how the number (head count and FTE), distribution **and qualifications of teaching staff meet Council's requirements and the objectives of the program as a whole (as described in s. 1.6 above). Include the academic staff expertise to be recruited, if new staff are contemplated. Provide summary information of current academic staff and new hires who will be teaching in the proposed program in the following format (see sample table below).***

### Courses taught by academic staff by credential and specialization

| Courses        | NAME             | Earned credentials and specialization <sup>1</sup> | Professional designation (if applicable) | Academic staff status    |
|----------------|------------------|--|--|--------------------------|
| ACCT xxx title | Last, First      | BCom, MBA, PhD (Accounting)                        | CA                                       | Tenured (full-time)      |
| ECON xxx title | Last, First      | BSc (Economics), MBA*                              | ...                                      | Sessional (part-time)    |
| MGMT xxx title | Summer 20xx hire | Doctoral degree in business discipline             | CMA                                      | Tenure track (full-time) |

<sup>1</sup> Include only highest *earned* credential; if faculty member is enrolled in a graduate program, indicate in a footnote. For new hires, indicate the desired credential and specialization.

\* Currently enrolled in a [Name of Program] at [Institution]. Expected to graduate in [Date].

**6.2.2** *Include brief explanations of academic staff categories (e.g., continuing, sessional, term) and workload expectations.*



- 6.2.3 Provide a proposed teaching rotation that outlines the academic staff at launch and to maturity of the program (see sample table below) and shows clearly the plan for any cycling of courses. List also any non-academic staff who will teach in the program.

Proposed four year teaching rotation for required courses in the major/specialization

| Fall Year 1 | Instructor     | Winter Year 1 | Instructor     |
|-------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| PSYC 202    | Dr. J. Watson  | PSYC 202      | Dr. C. Jung    |
| PSYC 202    | Sessional TBA  | PSYC 204      | Dr. A. Adler   |
| PSYC 202    | Sessional TBA  | PSYC 204      | Sessional TBA  |
| PSYC 204    | Sessional TBA  | PSYC 204      | Dr. C. Jung    |
| PSYC 306    | Dr. A. Adler   | PSYC 313      | Dr. J. Watson  |
| PSYC 313    | Dr. J. Watson  | PSYC 354      | Dr. J. Watson  |
| PSYC 338    | Sessional TBA  | PSYC 394      | Dr. A. Adler   |
| PSYC 356    | Dr. A. Adler   | PSYC 358      | Dr. C. Jung    |
| PSYC 376    | Dr. B. Skinner | PSYC 378      | Dr. J. Watson  |
| PSYC 400    | Dr. B. Skinner | PSYC 400      | Dr. B. Skinner |
| Fall Year 2 | Instructor     | Winter Year 2 | Instructor     |
| PSYC 202    | Dr. J. Watson  | PSYC 202      | Sessional TBA  |
| PSYC 202    | Sessional TBA  | PSYC 204      | Dr. A. Adler   |
| ...         | ...            | ...           | ...            |
| ...         | ...            | ...           | ...            |

- 6.2.4 For graduate programs, provide a detailed plan to organize the academic advising, supervision and **monitoring of graduate students**, and state the **credentials, graduate teaching experience, master's committee work/supervision and PhD supervision experience** of academic staff. For doctoral programs, a summary table such as the following would be helpful.

Academic Credentials, Graduate Teaching and Research Supervision of Full Time Faculty

| Name        | Earned Credential <sup>1</sup> | Supervision of undergraduate research projects | Graduate teaching experience | Master's committee work / supervision |        | PhD supervision |
|-------------|--------------------------------|--|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------|-----------------|
|             |                                |  |                              | Project                               | Thesis |                 |
| Last, First | EdD                            | √  | √                            | Com                                   | Sup    | Com / Ext       |
| Last, First | PhD                            | √  | √                            |                                       | Com    | Com / Ext / Sup |
| Last, First | DMA                            |  |                              | Sup                                   | Sup    |                 |
| Last, First | PhD                            |  | √                            | Sup                                   | Sup    |                 |
| Last, First | PhD                            | √  | √                            | Com                                   |        | Ext             |
| Last, First | PhD                            | √  | √                            | Com                                   | Com    | Ext             |
| Last, First | PhD                            | √  | √                            | Sup                                   |        |                 |
| Last, First | EdD                            |  | √                            |                                       | Sup    | Ext             |
| Last, First | PhD                            |  | √                            |                                       | Com    | Com / Ext       |

<sup>1</sup> Include only highest *earned* credential; if faculty member is enrolled in a graduate program, indicate in a footnote along with expected completion date.

Key

PhD = Doctor of Philosophy Com = Committee Member

DMA = Doctor of Musical Arts    Sup = Supervisor or Co-supervisor  
EdD = Doctor of Education    Ext = PhD External Examiner

6.2.5 *Include CVs of core academic staff teaching in the program as well as key administrators (see CAQC's CV template). Be sure their permission has been given.*

### 6.3 Scholarly and Creative Activity

6.3.1 *Describe what constitutes scholarship and/or creative activity for academic staff teaching in this program, and summarize the institutional expectations of academic staff with respect to scholarship and professional development as well as how these are assessed. Describe plans for supporting scholarly activities and professional development of academic staff (see Council's expectations regarding scholarship, research and creative activity in s. 3.7.3 of Council's Handbook).*

6.3.2 *For doctoral proposals, include a tabular summary of research grants held by key academic staff involved in the program, both (i) in aggregate form, and (ii) by academic staff member, years of tenure of each grant, and source and amount of the grant.*

### 6.4 Physical and Technical Infrastructure

*Describe the facilities, laboratory and computer equipment (as applicable) available to meet the specialized demands of the program, as well as plans to address any deficiencies in what might be required.*

### 6.5 Information Services

*Provide an inventory and analysis of information resources to support the program (using standard library reference guides) and plans to deal with any deficiencies, and a description of student access to other information services.*

## SECTION 7: CONSULTATION AND ASSESSMENT

### 7.1 Program Evaluation

*Describe the criteria and methods which will be used to ensure the ongoing quality of the program. Include mechanisms for periodic review using external evaluation. Include the expected outcomes, key performance indicators and performance targets for the program.*

### 7.2 Consultation / Accreditation or Regulatory Approval

7.2.1 *Building on s. 2.3, outline the consultation that has occurred with other institutions, organizations or agencies, including advisory bodies formed by the applicant institution to assist in program design, implementation and evaluation. This should include, where appropriate, professional associations, regulatory agencies and/or accrediting bodies, and prospective employers.*

7.2.2 *If the program is subject to accreditation or approval of a regulatory body, provide a description of the review process, requirements of the body and timing of the review (if in process). If possible, a chart or table may be useful to outline accreditation or regulatory approval requirements.*

7.2.3 *If not already covered in 7.2.2., indicate how graduates will meet professional or regulatory expectations.*

### 7.3 Reports of Independent Academic Experts

*CAQC views external peer review, which can be both formative and summative, as foundational to ensuring the quality of academic programs. In order to strengthen the proposal, before the proposal is finalized, the institution should consult with one or more independent academic experts it selects from outside the institution to provide advice regarding all aspects of the program. The report(s) of these external independent academic experts should be*

*provided, along with the institution's response to the report(s). If an institution wishes a program proposal to be exempted from the normal requirement of an assessment by an external expert, it must provide a compelling case as part of its request for a Fully Expedited Review. Short résumés of the academic experts involved and a rationale as to why they were selected should be provided (see CAQC's guidelines with respect to the selection and use of Independent Academic Experts in Appendix G of the CAQC Handbook).*

## SECTION 8: OTHER

### 8.1 Adverse Claims or Allegations

*Disclose any adverse claims or allegations that might affect this application or be of concern to Council.*

### 8.2 Statement of Institutional Integrity

*Include a signed Statement of Institutional Integrity (see Council template on web site).*

### 8.3 Other documentation

*Provide any other supporting documents such as the Graduate Program Handbook, Faculty Handbook, current calendar, cyclical review of programs policy, etc. that would add support to the applicant's case and would help reviewers (provide website links, if available).*

## I. TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF MINISTERIAL APPROVAL FOR NON-RESIDENT INSTITUTION DEGREE PROGRAMS

Name of Institution:

Approval for: Degree title: Specialization:

to be offered in: Alberta

The following terms and conditions are attached to this Approval from the Minister of Advanced Education under section 106 of the [Post-secondary Learning Act](#) (Appendix A) and [Programs of Study Regulation \(AR 91/2009\)](#) (Appendix A).

1. Scope of approval: Approval is specific to the program (or major, if specified) and/or locations noted in this Approval. The Institution must inform the Minister if the program is suspended, terminated, or altered in any substantive manner, and any such termination, suspension, or alteration gives the Minister the right to change these terms and conditions as the Minister sees fit.
2. Material change in circumstances: Where a material change in circumstances occurs, as set out in Campus Alberta Quality Council (CAQC) policy, as amended from time to time, the Institution shall inform the Minister of such material change in writing, after which the Minister has the right to rescind or alter the terms and conditions of this Approval as he sees fit.
3. Approval not transferable: This Approval is not transferable.
4. Offering program in home jurisdiction: The Institution must continue to offer the same or a comparable program in its home jurisdiction. The curriculum and delivery methodologies used for the degree program delivered by the Institution must continue, in the sole opinion of the Minister, to be substantially the same as, or of comparable quality to, those used for the same or similar degree program **in the Institution's home jurisdiction, or a sound rationale for any differences must be clearly demonstrated to the Minister's satisfaction.**
5. Institution/program approval in home jurisdiction: Approval and/or accreditation of the Institution and/or program by the appropriate authorities and/or professional bodies in its home jurisdiction must remain valid during the duration of the program offering in Alberta.
6. Program no longer offered in Alberta: Where the program is no longer offered in Alberta, any arrangements made by the Institution to allow students enrolled in the program to complete their studies must remain in place. Credits earned by students in programs offered by the Institution in Alberta must be accepted as credit towards degrees offered in the Institution's home jurisdiction or at other locations where the institution offers its program.
7. Notice for students and public: **The following statement must appear in the Institution's current calendar/catalogue and in the student's enrolment contract:**

*This program is offered pursuant to the written approval of the Minister of Advanced Education effective (approval date) having undergone a quality assessment process and been found to meet the criteria established by the Minister. Nevertheless, prospective students are responsible for satisfying themselves that the program and the degree will be appropriate to their needs (for example, acceptable to potential employers, professional licensing bodies, or other educational institutions).*

8. Advertising: The Institution must not use any term or phrase in advertising that refers to this Approval other than that the program is offered pursuant to the written approval of the Minister of Advanced Education.
9. Program Implementation: The Institution must enroll students in the degree program within three years from the date of this Approval. If the degree program has not been offered, or no students have been enrolled in the program within the three-year time period, this Approval is automatically cancelled.
10. Reporting: The Institution must make such reports, and provide such information regarding the approved program, as may be required by the Minister or the CAQC in the form and manner required by the CAQC, and according to the timelines set by the CAQC.
11. Cancellation or suspension of Approval: The Minister may, in his sole discretion, amend, suspend or **cancel this Approval where, in the Minister's opinion,**
  - i. the Institution fails to comply with any term or condition of this Approval, or
  - ii. the Institution fails to comply with any obligation under any applicable statute or regulation, or
  - iii. the Institution is no longer in compliance with applicable CAQC standards and/or conditions.
12. Financial security: The Institution must provide proof satisfactory to the Minister of security for the payment of tuition or other mandatory fees in a form and amount acceptable to the Minister as specified in the attached [Financial Security Requirements for Non-Resident Institutions](#) document (Appendix J), which is attached to and forms part of this Approval.
13. Security of student records and transcripts: The Institution must ensure the security of student records and transcripts, including their retention, in accordance with CAQC policy, as it may be amended from time to time.
14. Student contracts: The Institution shall ensure that each student enrolled in the program enters into an enrolment contract for a period of time not exceeding 12 consecutive months, which must include the following:
  - i. the title of the program and name of degree,
  - ii. the start date and end date,
  - iii. applicable policies on student withdrawal and refund of fees and charges, and
  - iv. the statement required under condition #7.
15. Awareness of policies affecting students: The Institution must have a calendar/catalogue or other comparable publication available to students and the public, setting out the policies affecting students.
16. Misrepresentation or malfeasance: Where, in the sole opinion of the Minister, the Minister determines that anyone acting on behalf of the Institution for the purposes of a review:
  - i. has made a false statement or a misrepresentation, orally or in writing,
  - ii. has given false or misleading information, or
  - iii. has failed to provide complete information,the Minister may, in his sole discretion, suspend or cancel this Approval, and in the case of a suspension, determine the length of the suspension.

Where charges have been laid against the Institution or a member of its staff for a violation of any law related to the offering of the program which is the subject of this Approval, the Minister may suspend or cancel this Approval.

17. Amendment of terms and conditions: The Minister may add, delete or amend any of the terms and conditions of this Approval by providing reasonable notice in writing to the Institution, including the date the notice takes effect.

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Name of authorized representative

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Position at the Institution

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Signature

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Date

## J. FINANCIAL SECURITY REQUIREMENTS FOR PRIVATE RESIDENT AND PRIVATE NON-RESIDENT INSTITUTIONS

For the purpose of the financial security provisions outlined in this appendix, an “institution” refers to:

- a private non-publicly funded resident institution in Alberta, or
- a private non-resident institution.

*Added October 2020*

The following requirements are intended to protect the interests of students and the public against the inability of the Institution to deliver approved degree programs to completion.

### 1.1 Ability to Provide Security

As part of its initial application for approval, an institution shall provide proof satisfactory to the Minister of Advanced Education (“the Minister”) in the form of an official letter signed by its President confirming that it will be able to provide financial security for students in approved degree programs in accordance with the requirements set out herein.

### 1.2 Security Requirements

Any approval of a program proposed by a private resident institution that is not an Independent Academic Institution or by a private non-resident institution does not take effect unless and until the institution submits proof of financial security satisfactory to the Minister. Public post-secondary institutions, as determined by the Minister, are exempt from this requirement.

*Revised October 2020*

### 1.3 Form of Security

The security must be in the form of an Irrevocable Letter of Credit in favour of the Government of Alberta or other form of security satisfactory to the Minister.

### 1.4 Amount of Security Required

1.4.1 The amount of security required for approval of a degree program offered by an institution is the greater value of “(1)” or “(2)” below:

- 1) \$100 000,
- 2) **An institution must make a projection of the program’s total annual tuition and mandatory fees<sup>29</sup> for a 12-month period and use one of the following two calculation options based on its schedule for collecting the total annual tuition:**
  - a) where an institution requires students to pay tuition fees in one or more installments **throughout the year, with any single installment exceeding 50% of the program’s total annual tuition**, the institution must provide financial security using the following formula:  
*Security = Total annual tuition x 0.75; OR*
  - b) where an institution provides students with an option of paying tuition fees in two or more installments throughout the year, with no single installment exceeding 50% of

<sup>29</sup> Total annual tuition and mandatory fees is calculated by multiplying the projected total student enrollment in a program by the per student tuition and mandatory fees during a 12-month study period. An institution may use its own fiscal year dates as endpoints for the 12-month period or can provide rationale for using another 12-month cycle.



the program's total annual tuition, the applicant must provide financial security using the following formula:

$$\text{Security} = (\text{Total annual tuition} / 2) \times 0.75.$$

- 1.4.2 Security calculated pursuant to section 1.4.1 must be based on the same currency in which the tuition is paid.

## 1.5 Additional Obligations

### 1.5.1 An institution must:

- a. ensure that any security required with respect to an approved degree program(s) remains in force for as long as there are students registered in the program(s),
- b. notify the Minister immediately of any changes to the total annual tuition for the program and/or tuition collection schedule that would necessitate an increase in the amount of the security calculated under section 1.4.1,
- c. annually, or when otherwise requested by the Minister, provide evidence satisfactory to the Minister that security is being maintained in accordance with the requirements set out in this document, and
- d. at the request of the Minister, provide any information or documents to verify the calculation of security under section 1.4.

- 1.5.2. If the Minister, in his sole discretion, believes that the security provided by an institution is no longer sufficient for any reason, the Minister may at any time require the institution to provide additional security, or to change the form of security or the holder of the security, and the institution must comply with these additional requirements and provide the Minister with proof thereof.

## 1.6 Forfeiture of Security

- 1.6.1 The Minister may declare any security that has been submitted by an Institution to be forfeited to the Crown in the right of Alberta if, in the Minister's sole discretion,

- a. the institution is unable to continue offering the degree program in Alberta covered by the security, or
- b. in the case of a private non-resident institution, is unable to meet its other obligations as specified in the [Terms and Conditions of Ministerial Approval for Non-Resident Institution Degree Programs](#) (Appendix I) document, and
- c. is unable or refuses to refund the applicable tuition and mandatory fees, or
- d. fails to comply with requirements as outlined in 1.5.1(c).

*Revised October 2020*

- 1.6.2 If the Minister declares any security to be forfeited to the Crown in right of Alberta in accordance with clause 1.6.1, the Minister may, in his sole discretion, determine the amounts of tuition and mandatory fees to be refunded to students who are, in the Minister's opinion, eligible for refunds. **If a student's tuition and/or mandatory fees were paid by a financial institution, employer or other third party, the Minister may pay any refund directly to the third party or to any other party where, in the Minister's sole discretion, he considers it appropriate to do so.**
- 1.6.3 If the amount of all tuition and mandatory fees to be refunded exceeds the amount of security, the security will be distributed on a pro rata basis among those entitled to a refund in proportion to the cost of the program not provided.

- 1.6.4 If the amount of security exceeds the amount of all tuition and mandatory fees to be refunded, the Minister shall return the remaining funds to the authorized issuer of the security within eighteen months after the date of the forfeiture.

## K. RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP IN CAMPUS ALBERTA: CAQC INTERPRETATION OF THE ROLES AND MANDATES POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR ALBERTA'S PUBLICLY FUNDED ADVANCED EDUCATION SYSTEM (MARCH 2008)

The Campus Alberta Quality Council (CAQC) appreciates the Ministry's careful analysis of and planning for a high-quality post-secondary system in Alberta as embodied in the recently approved *Roles and Mandates Policy Framework* (RMPF). As an arms-length body created by the [Post-secondary Learning Act](#) (Appendix A) and charged there with the task of making recommendations to the Ministry on the acceptability or otherwise of new program proposals, the CAQC values the Ministry's commitment to quality within all of the six sectors identified within Campus Alberta (RMPF, pp. 9-10). We applaud, in particular, the Ministry's renewed commitment to an "advanced education system . . . of the highest quality, recognized globally for its excellence, and a successful participant within the global knowledge economy" (RMPF, p. 2).

In order to ensure the credibility, quality and portability of the degrees offered to students in the Advanced Education System and in order to ensure that those degrees are widely recognized and respected, both nationally and internationally, the CAQC has adopted and applied standards and policies on "Academic Freedom and Scholarship" and on the role of scholarship and research in informing undergraduate and graduate programs. These standards are intended to ensure that the degrees students receive in Alberta are consistent with national and international norms and expectations. CAQC regards the [Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework](#) (Appendix B), developed by the Council of Ministers of Education (CMEC), Canada and endorsed by all ministers of advanced education in Canada, as an especially important expression of national norms and expectations for undergraduate degree programs.

The RMPF alludes to research and scholarly activity frequently and uses the "type and intensity of research activity" (p. 9) as the major device for differentiating and classifying post-secondary institutions within Campus Alberta. CAQC believes it to be appropriate and timely, therefore, to comment on its standards vis-à-vis the RMPF's references to engagement in research. We want to affirm for students, educational providers, and prospective employers CAQC's on-going commitment to ensuring that Alberta's undergraduate and graduate degrees are informed by scholarly activities of various kinds, all of them undertaken within a post-secondary organization demonstrably committed to open inquiry and academic freedom.

The RMPF refers to three kinds of research: pure research, applied research and scholarly activity. CAQC's policy on [Academic Freedom and Scholarship](#) (Section 3.7) identifies a broad range of activities that constitute "scholarship" there defined as "multi-faceted activity involving the creation, integration and dissemination of knowledge." CAQC will continue to expect that all undergraduate programs aspiring to instructional excellence and approved for delivery in Alberta be grounded in scholarly activity, broadly defined, notwithstanding an institution's engagement, as well, in pure and/or applied research.

CAQC retains its expectation that for approved programs in Alberta "a spectrum of scholarly activity will normally exist within the complement of academic staff, ranging from the scholarship of discovery, to the scholarship of teaching, integration, application and engagement." This taxonomy of kinds of scholarship follows Ernest Boyer's classification,<sup>30</sup> which is widely used around the world. The "scholarship of discovery," as CAQC uses the term, is synonymous with RMPF's term "pure research."

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<sup>30</sup> Ernest Boyer, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate* (The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1990.)

CAQC continues to recognize that the “type and intensity” of research, scholarly activity and creative activity predominant at a post-secondary institution will vary, depending on its classification within one of the six sectors. For example, polytechnics in Alberta will normally offer degrees that are grounded in applied research and professional activities undertaken by members of its academic staff.

CAQC continues to recognize that the “type and intensity” of research, scholarly activity and creative activity presented by a particular institution may vary, depending on the discipline within which its program falls. For example, at both a “comprehensive academic and research university” and an “undergraduate university”, pure research may be more prevalent in a Bachelor of Science program than in a Bachelor of Business Administration program. **CAQC’s expectation is that, within a program, individual faculty members may engage in one or more kinds of scholarly activity found within the spectrum it has outlined.**

CAQC recognizes the strong linkages between research and scholarship and the delivery of graduate degrees, **and it has therefore adopted standards for the offering of degrees at the master’s and the doctoral levels.**

CAQC remains committed to “peer review” as the primary form of ensuring the quality of academic publications and the dissemination of various forms of scholarship.

CAQC has adopted as a key Operating Principle respect for academic freedom. In the provision of undergraduate and graduate degrees proposed to the CAQC, all degree granting institutions within Campus Alberta must demonstrate that they recognize the foundational role of critical inquiry and academic freedom. CAQC is prepared to respond to questions from institutions within Alberta or from other parties about how to interpret its standards, policies and expectations in light of the new RMPF and the statements made there on engagement in research.

## L. GRADUATE PROGRAM EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

*With revisions to March 2020*

This Framework has been developed by CAQC to be used as a resource for institutions to support their preparation of high-quality program proposals. The elements of the Framework are based on accumulated wisdom of practice drawn from the review of degree proposals from Alberta institutions that have taken place **since CAQC's creation in 2004. CAQC recommends that the 10 standards and their subpoints be carefully** considered in the development of program proposals. CAQC recognizes that Alberta institutions are diverse, and that, reflecting that diversity, there will be variation in the way that institutions respond to the elements of the Framework.

### Standard 1: Faculty and staff

Is the program supported by suitably qualified academic faculty and instructional staff to develop and deliver the graduate degree program and to supervise students?

The applicant has:

- demonstrated that the program will be anchored by a designated complement of faculty who are primarily responsible for its delivery and continuity
- demonstrated that faculty have an appropriate level of scholarly output and/or research or creative activity to ensure the intellectual vitality of the proposed graduate program
- engaged a critical mass of scholars/researchers, not only in the program area but in related areas, with a range of expertise to allow for intellectual leadership and challenge
- described any institutional resources and plans for future development of faculty to enhance their research/scholarship
- identified areas of content and research specialization among the core and supporting faculty

### Standard 2: Commitment to research and scholarship

Does the institution and the program being proposed have a research/creative culture which guides and is fundamental to maintaining and enhancing high quality graduate programs?

The applicant has:

- developed a research/scholarly/creative culture (as evidenced by publications or exhibitions, research grants and prizes, and personnel policies that explicitly recognize the importance of research and scholarship), both within the institution and within the proposed program, which will maintain and enhance high quality graduate programs
- provided evidence that it is clearly committed to research/scholarship/creative activity which promotes the depth and breadth of knowledge, both within the field/discipline, and in a cognate field/discipline when necessary
- described any institutional supports that will be provided to create and maintain a strong research/scholarly/creative culture
- described the manner in which faculty and graduate students will be involved in a thriving and dynamic research/scholarly/creative culture
- demonstrated, within the context of the institution or unit, how students might participate in the research/scholarly/creative culture online or in a distributed experience as well as in an on-campus experience

- described its mechanisms to support graduate students' participation in and contribution to the broader research community (conferences, international meetings, etc.)

Standard 3: Academic and program policies and procedures

Is the program governed by academic policies (whether at the institutional, faculty/department/school, or program level) appropriate to the administration of the proposed full-time or part-time graduate program?

The applicant has:

- developed appropriate policies and procedures dealing with admissions, placement, applicable residency requirements, maximum time limits for completion, assessment, progression and graduation requirements
- developed appropriate policies and procedures dealing with credit transfer and prior learning assessment, appeals, academic dishonesty, intellectual property rights and ethical guidelines for research
- developed appropriate policies and procedures dealing with supervisory committee requirements, comprehensive/candidacy examination requirements and thesis/dissertation oral examination committee and procedures, where applicable

Standard 4: Graduate supervision plans

Does the institution have a detailed graduate supervision plan in place to organize the advising, supervision and monitoring of graduate students?

The applicant has:

- specified criteria for the appointment of faculty for the proposed program who will supervise graduate students, and for the appointment of supporting or adjunct faculty
- described any mentoring practices to enhance graduate supervisory skills of faculty
- specified graduate supervisory loads for faculty, advising and monitoring practices for graduate students
- specified the procedures for the monitoring and evaluation of students that will provide adequate feedback to the program administrators and to the student

Standard 5: Quality of students

**Do the program's admissions and progression policies enable recruitment, retention and recognition of high-quality students?**

The applicant has:

- specified the profile for students to be recruited to the program, the desired balance between **different types of students in the program (part time/full time, master's/PhD/undergraduate, etc.)**, and the critical mass of graduate students necessary to provide students with an excellent program and to maintain program viability
- **demonstrated that admission to master's or doctoral programs will normally require either a** recognized undergraduate or graduate degree with an appropriate specialization or relevant bridging studies
- shown that it expects those admitted to graduate programs to have achieved an academic standing in the previous degree (or equivalent) to enable success in the program and that it will require that

students maintain standards appropriate to graduate study in order to progress and graduate from the program

- demonstrated that it has a systematic and effective process for recruiting high quality graduate students by the proposed date of implementation
- adequately described the extent and nature of financial support available to students and the financial resources dedicated to support the proposed size, scope and nature of the program (including the critical mass of students necessary to make the program viable)

**Standard 6: Resource capacity**

Will the program be supported by the physical resources, both start-up and continuing, needed to assure its quality?

The applicant has:

- provided appropriate library and learning resources (physical and electronic)
- provided, where applicable, space for graduate students, equipment, laboratories, computing facilities, shops, specialized equipment and work placements
- made an institutional commitment to maintaining and supplementing resources and equipment as needed to meet standards applicable to the field

**Standard 7: Recognition of the degree**

**Does the credential align with Canadian standards and will it be recognized and accepted by other post-secondary institutions, by employers, and by professional and licensing bodies, where applicable? Is the program type and degree level consistent with Canadian practice in graduate education, and does it have learning outcomes that are consistent with national and international standards of quality?**

The applicant has:

- demonstrated that the credential will align with Canadian standards appropriate to the discipline and will be recognized and accepted by other post-secondary institutions, by employers, and by professional and licensing bodies, where applicable
- shown that the nomenclature of the degree reflects its content
- demonstrated that the program type and degree level is consistent with Canadian practice in graduate education, as exemplified by the Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework (CDQF)
- developed program learning outcomes that are consistent with the CDQF
- indicated how advisory committees, if any, will be selected and what their roles will be

**Standard 8: Graduate program design, content, and delivery**

Does the program meet relevant national and international standards, and is the content of the program appropriate to the degree level and field of study?

The applicant has:

- designed curriculum of sufficient breadth and rigour to meet relevant national and international standards, and to align with the national standards for similar programs
- demonstrated that the program has a sufficient empirical and/or theoretical foundation
- balanced the desired level of breadth with specialization and depth in the area of focus
- demonstrated that the content of the program, in both subject matter and learning outcomes, is appropriate to the level of the graduate degree program and the field of study

- designed the program and structured the content to assure that the student is expected to meet clear and achievable learning objectives and outcomes
- demonstrated that the program's curriculum is current and reflects the state of knowledge in the field, or fields in the case of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary programs
- demonstrated that the learning methodologies (defined as the methods of delivery) that will be used to achieve the desired learning outcomes are at an acceptable level of quality
- shown that it has the expertise and resources to support the proposed method(s) of delivery and ensure its effectiveness
- indicated whether and how practica or other such experiences, if any, will be utilized to achieve program objectives and how they will be organized
- provided evidence of sufficient planning to launch and deliver the program by the projected date of implementation

#### Standard 9: Graduate program evaluation

Does the institution have a process to maintain the currency of the program and the quality of its learning outcomes?

The applicant has:

- described its process to maintain the currency of the program and the quality of its learning outcomes
- demonstrated that the program is subject to a formal, approved policy and procedure requiring a cyclical review and improvement process, which includes assessment of the program against **published standards (including the institution's own learning outcome standards for the program)**,
- methods of assessing individual student work in the terminal stage of the program against program outcomes
- verified that its program assessments will include the advice of independent academic experts external to the institution

#### Standard 10: Credentialing

If the program prepares students for licensing or the practice of a profession, has its design taken account professional standards and expectations?

The applicant has:

- described how the learning outcomes and other requirements for graduation in a program leading to a profession (such as an entry to practice program) are designed to prepare students to meet the requirements of the relevant regulatory, accrediting, quality assurance or professional body
- demonstrated that the proposed program, if it is a professional or clinical practice program, has sufficient empirical and theoretical foundations so that study can be integrated with and informed by original research in the unit and by the student
- demonstrated that the proposed program, if it is a professional or clinical practice program, is supported by faculty who have the appropriate experience and knowledge in the relevant area.



## M. AUDIT PILOT PROJECT PROCESS

*Added December 2014*

QUALITY ASSURANCE AUDIT PILOT PROJECT TASK FORCE  
A Process  
for  
The Pilot Project  
to  
Audit the Internal Quality Assurance Processes  
at  
Comprehensive Academic and Research Institutions (CARI)

### 1.0 PREAMBLE

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Throughout this document, “review” is used when referring to a CARI sector institution’s own internal processes for ensuring the quality of its own programs/units, while “audit” is used when referring to the external assessment processes of this pilot project. It is understood that some institutions (“institution” refers hereafter to the four universities from the CARI sector) undertake stand-alone program reviews and some undertake program reviews as part of broader unit reviews. In what follows, the word review means a program review, whether or not this forms part of a broader unit review.

It is an expectation of the Ministry that degree-granting institutions will have internally approved processes requiring the cyclical review of degree programs, both at the undergraduate and graduate level. While respecting the autonomy and accountability of Board-governed institutions and the commonalities and differences among institutional review processes, the audit pilot project has the following purposes:

- to ensure that criteria and processes are in place at each institution for the rigorous examination of programs and to provide external assurance that those criteria and processes are being rigorously applied;
- to explore ways of creating streamlined processes enabling the CAQC to inform its monitoring role with procedures that respect the internal processes used in each of the institutions;
- to ensure that an audit process will, to the extent possible, avoid unnecessary duplication of effort and will be cost-effective for both institutions and CAQC;
- to inform the design of a made-in-Alberta auditing system that avails itself of leading practices found in quality assurance audit systems in other jurisdictions in Canada and in the world;
- **to identify leading practices within institutions’ cyclical review practices that will be shared with each other and with other institutions from other sectors in the system.**

### 2.0 AUDIT PROCESS OBJECTIVES

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The main objectives of an audit are to ascertain that the institution:

- (a) **Has a quality assurance process for internal review of its degree programs that meets the Minister’s expectations;** and
- (b) Applies its quality assurance process for its degree programs and addresses review findings with an appropriate response.

### 3.0 DURATION OF AUDIT PILOT PROJECT

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The pilot project will be conducted over two years, with audits performed in each year at two of the four institutions, one that undertakes stand-alone program reviews and another that undertakes program reviews as part of unit reviews.

### 4.0 AUDIT PROCESS FOR THE PILOT PROJECT

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#### 4.1 Initiation of the Audit

The Task Force will schedule audits during the pilot (i.e., University of Alberta and University of Lethbridge in 2011-2012 and University of Calgary and Athabasca University in 2012-2013).

The Task Force will work with each institution to determine both the schedule for the audit, including the site visit, and the information and documentation to be provided.

#### 4.2 Audit Team

An audit team will normally consist of three members with senior academic administrative experience and with experience in participating in institutional review processes. One of the members will be from another CARI sector institution. The Task Force will accept suggestions for auditors from the institution and from CAQC members on the Task Force, will ask the institution to prioritize the complete lists of potential auditors (i.e., one list for those from CARI institutions and another for those from other institutions) and will make the final decision on who will be invited to serve on the audit team. The Task Force will make every effort to secure as members of the Audit Team those who have been highly ranked in the prioritized lists provided by the institution. The audit team will select its own team lead.

A Task Force member from a CARI sector institution not being audited will accompany the audit team on the site visit as an observer but will not participate actively either in the interviews or in writing the report.

#### 4.3 **Submission of Documentation Relevant to an Institution's Policy and Practice**

Prior to the audit, the institution will submit the following documents, care of the CAQC Secretariat, to the Task Force:

- **policy or other documents describing the institution's quality assurance process for cyclical program reviews;**
- a schedule of completed and planned reviews; and
- a commentary, completed by the administrator(s) responsible for the cyclical quality assurance reviews, addressing institutional processes, criteria, practices and follow-up actions.

#### 4.4 Sampling of Completed Reviews for Audit

From the schedule of completed reviews conducted by the institution, the Task Force will select a minimum of three in order to examine how the institution is applying its approved internal review process. In its selection the Task Force will consider the diversity of types and levels of degrees offered by the institution. In consultation with the institution, the Task Force will determine the appropriate **documentation necessary to enable it to assess the application of the institution's internal review process** to the specific reviews selected.

The documentation to be submitted for each of the program reviews selected would normally include a self-**study document, the external review team's report, and an account of the institution's follow-up** response. Other relevant documents will be made available on site and on a confidential basis to the audit team at its request.

#### 4.5 Site Visit

The audit pilot process will include a site visit to the institution so that the audit team can speak both with members of the senior administration responsible for implementing the cyclical review process, and with the deans whose program reviews were selected for sampling by the audit team. The site visit will begin with an orientation/briefing session by the Task Force Chair, the Provost (or designate) of the institution whose internal processes are being audited and the Task Force institutional member who is participating as an observer. These same individuals will attend the final session with the audit team.

#### 4.6 Audit Report

Using the materials provided by the institution as well as insights gained from the site visit, the audit team will prepare a report to the Task Force. First and foremost, the report should address the two objectives of the audit process identified in section 2.0 of this document. Second, the report should identify strengths and weaknesses in the internal quality assurance processes it has examined and should provide recommendations for improvement, if there are any. Finally, the audit team should identify leading policies or procedures or effective practices in an **institution's internal review process that might be shared** with other institutions.

The audit report will be forwarded by the Task Force to the institution for a written response, in which the institution will have an opportunity to comment on the audit report and to respond to the findings and recommendations of the audit team.

#### 4.7 Outcome

**The audit team's report and the institution's response will be reviewed by the Task Force.** The Task Force will report to CAQC and to the institution whose internal review processes for its degree programs were the subject of the audit.

### 5.0 EVALUATION OF PILOT PROJECT

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After the first year of the pilot project has been completed according to the specifications of section 4, the Task Force will provide an interim report to both CAQC and AUA and may recommend mid-stream adjustments to the process outlined in this document.

Following the completion of the two-year pilot project, the Quality Assurance Audit Pilot Project Task Force will review the pilot project and what has been learned from it, and will make a recommendation on whether an **on-going audit process, perhaps with modifications, will serve thereafter as Council's vehicle for monitoring** programs at institutions from the CARL sector. The Task Force will develop an appropriate evaluation process prior to the completion of the pilot.

Notes to update the 14 February 2011 version of the Process document

#### 4.0 Audit Process for the Pilot Project

- The attached Framework was adopted by the Task Force in Fall 2011 to guide the work of each audit team.

#### 4.2 Audit Team –

- The list of possible auditors that was compiled prior to selection of the first audit team is to be **considered a “living list” which will be** customized for each of the CARI institutions.
- Once the institution has commented on the customized list of possible auditors and has provided its comments and preferences, the Task Force ratifies the list to be used for recruitment. Once recruitment is complete, the Task Force Chair notifies the institution, the Task Force and members of the audit team of the membership.
- The Task Force designated the members to shadow the audit teams as follows:

##### Task Force Member

Bob Boudreau (UofL)  
Sandy Murphree (UofC)  
Margaret Haughey (AU)  
Colleen Skidmore (UofA)

##### Audit Team

University of Alberta  
University of Lethbridge  
University of Calgary  
Athabasca University

- The CARI member of the audit team cannot be from the same university as the Task Force member shadowing the team.
- The institution being audited will name a contact who will be responsible for working with the review team with respect to logistical arrangements (travel, accommodation, etc.)
- The Task Force member shadowing the audit teams should be present for the full site visit, including team meetings. Although the primary role of the observer will be to participate silently as a member of the audit team, on rare occasions that person might be consulted by the team about the audit pilot project process.

#### 4.3 **Submission of Documentation Relevant to an Institution’s Policy and Practice –**

- At a minimum, each university should provide the following documents:
  - A commentary/context piece written by the administrator(s) responsible for cyclical quality assurance reviews. The purpose of this document is to introduce the audit team to the processes currently and previously in use at the university and to comment on the other materials found in the package that the team will receive or that will be made available during the site visit.
  - **The university’s current policy/practice for cyclical quality assurance reviews.**
  - For each of the three sample completed program or unit reviews the institution should provide the following to the Secretariat six weeks prior to the site visit:
    - The policy/process in effect at the time of the review
    - A summary of process dates
    - The site visit itinerary
    - **The unit’s or program’s self-study** (normally without appendices, containing CVs and similar information)
    - **The external team’s review report**
    - **The institution/unit’s response to the review, including, when pertinent follow-up actions taken in light of the review.**

## Audit Pilot Project Task Force

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### Framework for Audit Teams

#### Background

Item 2.0 of the Quality Assurance Audit Pilot Project Task Force process document speaks directly to the objectives of the Audit:

2.0 “.... to ascertain that the institution:

- (a) Has a quality assurance process for internal review of its degree programs that meets the **Minister’s expectations; and**
- (b) Applies its quality assurance process for its degree programs and addresses review findings with **an appropriate response.”**

Item 4.6 details the Audit Report:

4.6 Using the materials provided by the institution and insights gained during the visit, the audit team prepares a report.

**“First and foremost, it should address the two objectives”** (set out above)

**Second, it should identify “strengths and weaknesses in the internal quality assurance processes it has examined and should provide recommendations for improvement, if there are any.”**

**“Finally, the audit team should identify leading policies and procedures or effective practices in an institution’s internal review process that might be shared with other institutions**

#### Framework

The following framework to assess the two items (2.0 Process and 4.6 Review findings) has been constructed based on these directions.

##### 1. Overall Process

- a. **Does the process reflect the institution’s mission and values?**
- b. Is the scope of the process appropriate?
- c. Are the guidelines adaptable to the needs and contexts of different units?
- d. Does the process promote quality improvement?

##### 2. Review Findings

- e. Is the response to the review findings appropriate
- f. Does the process inform future decision-making?
- g. Are the review findings appropriately disseminated?

## N. ORGANIZATIONAL EVALUATION FRAMEWORK – GRADUATE PROGRAMS

*Added December 2011  
With revisions to June 2022*

### Introduction

The purpose of the organizational evaluation is to examine the extent to which the systems and processes of the organization are clearly established to achieve excellence in learning. That is, the evaluation will establish the extent to which the organization has created sustainable processes, the extent to which its financial and operational resources are adequate to sustain the learning processes students will experience, and the link **between students' experiences** and demonstrable needs. In the case of organizations proposing to offer graduate programs, the focus will be primarily on its capacity to implement and sustain graduate level programming.

This Framework has been developed by CAQC to be used as a resource for institutions to support their preparation of high-quality self-studies. The criteria in the Framework are based on accumulated wisdom of **practice drawn from the organizational evaluations of Alberta institutions that have taken place since CAQC's creation in 2004**. CAQC recognizes that Alberta institutions are diverse, and that, reflecting that diversity, there will be variation in the way that institutions respond to the elements of the Framework.

CAQC recommends that the standards described in the Framework be utilized to structure the self-study. The **Framework includes CAQC's general organizational standards, which are supplemented by specific graduate standards**, where applicable. For each of these standards, the evaluation team will be looking for the approach taken by the organization, the way in which the approach is deployed within the organization, and the results of such deployment.

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.

#### *Criteria:*

- The organization has a clear mandate (public institution) or mission (private institution) and academic goals statement(s) appropriate for an organization offering graduate programming.
- The statement(s) include a commitment to the dissemination of knowledge through teaching and, where appropriate, creation of knowledge and service to the community or related professions.
- **Proposed graduate program(s) are related to the organization's mission/mandate and academic goals.**

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.

#### *Criteria:*

- The organization has an appropriate governance structure, such as a legally constituted governing board that

- has the authority to carry out the mandate/mission of the organization.
  - operates as an independent policy-making body.
  - selects appropriate administrative leadership that is responsible for managing the assets of the organization.
  - maintains the purpose, viability and integrity of the organization.
  - provides the appropriate physical, fiscal and human resources to achieve organizational policies and goals.
  - **The organization's governance and decision-making and reporting structures are clear and consistent with the organization's academic purposes.**
  - The organization has
    - qualified senior administrative staff, including a chief executive officer who is accountable to the governing body and whose full-time or major responsibility is the administration of the organization.
    - sufficient and qualified administrative staff with clear lines of administrative authority and accountability necessary to conduct the affairs of the organization in Alberta.
    - administrative capacity to effectively manage an institution of higher learning as demonstrated by co-ordinated business and academic plans detailing the commitment to the academic quality of program content and delivery.
  - Policies are in place that provide for succession planning.
  - The governing board has made provisions for adequate academic staff participation in academic decision-making and for faculty, staff, students and administrators to be involved in the development of organizational policies.
3. Academic freedom and integrity – The organization maintains an atmosphere in which academic freedom exists. Students and academic staff display a high degree of intellectual independence. Academic integrity is supported by a commitment to educate faculty, staff, and students, and by policies, procedures and practices that include clear definitions and disciplinary processes.

#### *Criteria*

- The organization has adopted and distributed to all members of the academic staff a statement of the principle of academic freedom which
  - assures freedom in teaching, scholarship/research and publication and community activities.
  - protects the right of the individual to the honest search for knowledge, wherever knowledge is to be found, without fear of reprisals by the organization or by third parties.
  - protects the right to communicate freely the acquired knowledge and the result of scholarship/research.
  - implies the duty to respect the rights of others, to exercise that freedom in a reasonable and responsible manner, and to respect the academic objectives of the organization.

*Criteria revised to align with changes to Standard 3, June 2022*

4. 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.

#### *Criteria*

- The organization has demonstrated how administrative policies and practices ensure that business practices and decisions support the academic integrity of programs and protect student interests.

- The organization has clearly stated, widely available and actively followed policies and procedures that ensure the principles of natural justice are followed in the event of breaches of ethical conduct.
  - The organization has appropriate policies pertaining to academic honesty and procedures (including their enforcement) and an appropriate plan for ensuring that students and faculty understand them.
  - The organization has appropriate policies and procedures concerning compliance with legal matters such as copyright law.
  - The organization presents itself accurately and truthfully in all of its written documents. This includes the manner in which it describes its qualities and programs and compares them with other institutions.
  - The organization has fair and ethical policies in place governing recruitment, admission and recruitment of students.
  - The organization has a systematic method for evaluating and awarding academic credit.
5. 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.

#### Criteria

- The organization has policies and procedures to ensure that academic appeals, complaints, grievances and/or other disputes of students, faculty, staff and administration are dealt with in accordance with the principles of natural justice. To that end
    - individuals have a right to a fair and expeditious resolution of disputes.
    - individuals have a right to know and understand the charges or complaints made against them, and a right to be heard in response to such charges or complaints before any disciplinary decision is taken.
    - the organization has an obligation to deal with complaints or grievances according to clear and reasonable deadlines.
    - the organization has an obligation to establish and operate according to administrative processes that deal with disputes fairly and expeditiously at the informal level.
  - Students and employees are informed about and understand the policies and procedures for dispute resolution. **To these ends, the organization's policies ensure that**
    - charges or complaints against an individual are stated clearly and in writing.
    - there is an administrative person(s) responsible for dealing with complaints, and to whom complaints may be directed, who may facilitate the informal resolution of disputes.
    - there is a process for reviewing disputes and examining the evidence.
    - there is provision for a final internal review by a body of persons not involved in the dispute in any way.
6. 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.
- Graduate standard – Organizations proposing graduate programs have policies, structures and mechanisms in place appropriate to graduate studies and research (e.g., policies concerning supervisory responsibilities, appeal systems, satisfactory standing, etc.)



## Criteria:

- The organization has appropriate academic policies to support its mandate/mission (e.g., admission requirements, international students, placement examinations (if any), prior learning assessment, transfer credit, other academic pre-requisites, academic honesty, intellectual property, students support and services, scholarship and financial assistance, residency requirements, maximum time limits for program completion, grading, appeals of grades, student complaints and grievances). Such policies are published and readily accessible to students.
  - In addition and specific to graduate programming, the organization has appropriate policies with respect to such matters as: placement examinations (if any), annual performance review and standards, comprehensive examination requirements (if any), thesis oral examination committee and procedures, dispute resolution/appeals, re-admission after time expiry, continuous registration requirements (if any), provision for part-time study (if any), employment of graduate students, intellectual property rights, ethical guidelines for research, fee differentials.
  - The organization has appropriate administrative structures and mechanisms appropriate to graduate programs, including a clear description of who within the organization/unit will provide intellectual leadership for the development, implementation and improvement of graduate programs.
  - The organization has an appropriate process and regulations for graduate supervision (e.g., qualifications of advisers, committee members, interim advisers, co-supervision, mentoring new supervisors, supervisory committee requirements, number of students to be supervised, monitoring of student progress).
  - The organization has clearly defined policies, procedures and criteria for evaluating and awarding course credit that are systematic and consistent with the principles of the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer.
  - The organization has the capacity to ensure that academic records of students are secure.
7. 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, assessment and improvement of teaching effectiveness, and periodic program review to ensure the ongoing quality of its programs and learning outcomes. Such assessments normally include the advice of external experts.

## Criteria

- The organization has a formal, institutionally-approved policy and procedure for the periodic review of its operations and administrative units to achieve continuous improvement of the organization. It encompasses such services as finance and accounting, registrarial services, purchasing, legal services, plant and facilities management, secretarial, information systems and other administrative services.
- The organization has a formal, institutionally-approved policy and procedure for the systematic and periodic review of its educational programs and services that includes self-study, steering committee for the review, qualified external reviewer(s); report of the reviewer and resulting action plan.
- The organization has a strategic plan which guides the future educational, physical and fiscal growth of the organization and includes implementation plans and activities, and resource requirements, etc. It is informed by students, staff and faculty, integrates improvement and performance issues, has assessed risks and opportunities, and has contingency plans.

- The organization has rigorous and focused planning processes for the design, introduction and evaluation of new programs and services.
8. 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.

#### Criteria

- The organization demonstrates financial capacity (i.e., financial management procedures, resources and appropriate planning) sufficient to ensure stability and a stable learning environment such that students can complete the degree program.
  - The organization has a policy requiring the regular audit of the its financial methods, performance and stability by a qualified third-party accountant in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices.
  - The organization has appropriate procedures in place to assess the financial costs of programs and their financial performance.
9. 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.

#### Criteria

- The organization has full-time academic and other staff in sufficient numbers to develop and deliver the program, act as research supervisors, where appropriate, ensure quality standards are maintained, ensure a high degree of consistency and continuity of curriculum development and deliver the program. The faculty have a range of expertise that allows for intellectual leadership and challenge.
- The organization has appropriate policies pertaining to faculty and staff, including policies that
  - define the academic/professional credentials required of faculty teaching all courses in the program to ensure that credentials held by the faculty are appropriate to the courses they are teaching.
  - demonstrate an appropriate balance between continuing or ongoing faculty appointments and temporary appointments.
  - require due diligence in hiring and credential verification.
  - provide for the appointment, evaluation, employment conditions including employment equity, promotion, termination.
  - require regular review of faculty performance (including student evaluation of teaching and/or supervision) and employee performance evaluation and recognition.
  - identify the means of ensuring that faculty knowledge of the field is current through professional development, scholarship and research.
  - support the professional development of faculty, including the promotion of curricular and instructional innovation, as well as technological skills, where appropriate.
  - clearly outline the duties and responsibilities, institutional reporting structures and performance standards.
- The organization has faculty with supervisory experience at the graduate level or has provisions for mentoring of new faculty advisors.
- The organization has described the current and proposed graduate teaching assignments and undergraduate teaching assignments for core faculty and supporting faculty.

- The organization collects data/retains records on the scholarly and creative activity of faculty and can demonstrate the impact that the current research/scholarly/creative work done by faculty has within the institution, the province, in the profession (where relevant), and/or in the national and international community.
- The organization systematically analyzes education and training needs of employees and links faculty and staff appraisals to training and education.

10. 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.

Graduate Standard – Faculty, as a group, should provide intellectual leadership. In doctoral, and research-oriented master’s programs, **the scholarly activity and intellectual atmosphere of the academic unit is based on the number and quality of significant publications or creative research output of the members and on the unit’s continuing insistence on originality and excellence.** In the case of programs in professional areas, there must be a solid basis of appropriate scholarly or creative activities.

The evidence of accomplishment must be demonstrated through peer review and critical analysis, with peer-adjudicated publication as the predominant way of assessing scholarly achievement in the traditional disciplines. For some fields of study, evidence of professional achievement and intellectual leadership may be inferred from other scholarly or creative activities.

It is essential that the intellectual engagement of faculty, as a whole, be maintained through regular participation in scholarly activities, the validity of which has been verified by peer review. Most members of the unit must be involved in ongoing research and publication of findings, or other scholarly activity as appropriate. The commitment to graduate students, above, also requires a faculty involved in scholarly life of the department and institution.

Research done by the department or unit should have, or have the potential to have, a significant impact provincially, nationally and internationally, commensurate with the size of the department or unit, and appropriate to the program being proposed.

#### Criteria

- The organization has administrative structures and policies to facilitate the expectations in scholarship and research (e.g., sabbatical leaves, research leaves, in-house grants to support research, a system which supports research grant applications to external agencies, recognition of research time demands in the assignment of teaching loads, recognition of research output in salary rewards, etc.)
- The scholarship, research and creative activities policies and practices of the organization were developed and administered under the direction of a representative committee.
- The organization is committed to preserving the freedom of faculty in research, including the communication of results, and has an appropriate policy on the ownership of the intellectual products of employees and students.
- The organization has appropriate policies and procedures related to ethical conduct and reviews, management of research funds, intellectual property and ownership, safety and biohazards, responsibility and accountability, use of human research participants, animal care and maintenance, technology transfer and commercialization, etc., that meet all applicable accreditation and agency standards and requirements.
- As an organization offering graduate programs, the institution has a research culture within which graduate study can occur and which is fundamental to maintaining and enhancing high quality graduate programs. The institution has a clear commitment to a research philosophy which promotes

the depth and breadth of knowledge, both within the field/discipline, and also outside the field/discipline when necessary.

- Evidence of faculty accomplishment is demonstrated through peer review and critical analysis, with peer-adjudicated publication as the predominant way of assessing scholarly achievement in the traditional disciplines. For some fields of study, evidence of professional achievement and intellectual leadership may be inferred from other scholarly or creative activities.

11. 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 for planning and decision-making purposes. It establishes specific performance indicators and benchmarks by which programs and academic units are assessed.

Graduate standard – The institution must provide the essential information resources and support appropriate to graduate student work. These resources must be adequate for the number of students enrolled and for the level of study.

#### Criteria

- The organization has provided evidence of reasonable student and faculty access to learning and information resources (such as library, databases, computing, classroom equipment, studios, laboratory facilities) sufficient in scope, quality, currency and type to support students and faculty in the academic programs offered by the organization. It has a method of setting priorities with respect to their acquisition and is committed to supplementing them.
- The organization has provided any agreements with other institutions where resources and services are shared.
- The organization has a robust and systematic process to gather and analyze data to inform planning and decision making.
- The organization has appropriate performance measures to assess programs and academic units, which explicitly refer to student performance and student satisfaction.
- The organization uses comparative analysis with similar programs, services and institutions and establishes benchmarks to set improvement goals.

12. 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.

Graduate standard – The institution has core faculty committed to the graduate program(s) and to the intellectual life of graduate students through sustained participation in activities involving graduate students (seminars, colloquia, conferences, journal clubs, etc.). The organization is committed to the timely program completion of its graduate students and to their financial support through such means as teaching assistantships, scholarships, bursaries, faculty research grants, research contracts, etc. The quality of graduate supervision is commensurate with an excellent program.

#### Criteria

- Public reports, materials and advertising are produced in a thorough, accurate and truthful manner.
  - **Key information about the organization's policies and programs is published in its academic calendar and is otherwise readily available to students and the public, specifically including: the organization's mission and goals statements; a history of the organization and its governance and academic structure; a general description of each degree program (e.g., purpose, outcomes, length); the academic credentials of faculty and senior administrators; and individual descriptions of all courses in programs and their credit value.**
  - The organization has policies and procedures that protect student and consumer interests in the following areas: security of academic student records; payment schedule of fees and charges; student dismissal; and withdrawal and refunds.
  - Prior to registration, students are provided with policies and procedures pertaining to: admissions; credit transfer arrangements for incoming students; credit transfer arrangements with and recognition by other institutions; entrance examinations; prior learning assessment; grading; the ability of international students admitted to the program to meet program requirements for degree completion; method of course delivery; academic honesty; intellectual property rights; student dismissal; student support and services; tuition; scholarships and other financial assistance; payment of fees and charges; withdrawals and refunds; institutional closure; and where appropriate, supervision, preparation and examination of thesis and dissertations.
  - The organization has staff who are experienced in advising students on academic performance and employment opportunities.
  - The organization has services, programs and activities appropriate to graduate level programming that support students to be successful in their studies (seminars, colloquia, conferences, journal clubs, etc.).
  - The organization has described the extent and nature of graduate student financial support (teaching assistantships, scholarships, bursaries, faculty research grants, research contracts, etc.).
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.
- Graduate Standard – The institution has laboratory, computer, studio, and/or creative facilities, as well as essential resources, to support the faculty and students adequately in their research.

#### Criteria

- The organization has provided evidence that the physical plant, equipment, technology and support **services adequately support the organization's educational and student activities.**
- The organization has safety and emergency preparedness policies that ensure a safe environment for students, faculty and staff, and that demonstrate the organization is prepared to respond to emergency situations and critical incidents.
- Appropriate space is provided for graduate students.
- The organization has laboratory, computer, studio and /or creative facilities and resources to support graduate faculty and students in their research and scholarly activities.