**BRITISH COLUMBIA**

**Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills**

**September 2024**

*QUALITY ASSESSMENT PROCESS AND CRITERIA*

*Private and Out-of-Province Public Post-Secondary Institutions*

# Acknowledgements

The Standards and Criteria for introducing new degree programs in British Columbia were first established and published by the Minister of Advanced Education (now the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills; hereafter "the Ministry") in November 2006.

The June 2024 updates to the Standards and Criteria were prepared with advice from many stakeholders and quality assessment experts. The Ministry and the Degree Quality Assessment Board acknowledges with thanks the many individuals and organizations that shared their experience and expertise.

**Modifications to Policies, Standards, Criteria, and Guidelines**

The Degree Quality Assessment Board recommends to the Minister the policies, standards, criteria, and guidelines that apply for the purposes of degree authorization.

The Minister reserves the right to modify policies, standards, criteria, and guidelines from time to time and will post current versions on the website.

Institutions are responsible for ensuring they are using the current policies, standards, criteria, and guidelines.

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# Table of Contents

# 1. Introduction

This document outlines the requirements for private and out-of-province public post-secondary institutions wishing to:

- offer a new degree or use the word "University"; and,
- renew ministerial consent to offer a degree or use the word "University".

## 1.1 Legislation – Degree Authorization Act

The *Degree Authorization Act* (the Act) applies to all private and out-of-province public post-secondary institutions operating in BC. It does not apply to BC public post-secondary institutions.

The Act requires private and out-of-province public post-secondary institutions to obtain consent from the Minister if they wish to do any of the following:

- grant or confer a degree in British Columbia;
- provide a program in British Columbia which leads to a degree that is conferred inside or outside British Columbia;
- advertise a program offered in British Columbia leading to a degree that is conferred inside or outside British Columbia;
- sell or offer for sale a diploma, certificate or other document that implies the granting or conferring of a degree; or
- make use of the word "university" or any derivation or abbreviation of the word "university" to indicate that an educational program is available, from or through the organization.

## 1.2 Role of the Minister

The Act provides that the Minister may give an applicant consent if the Minister is satisfied that the applicant has undergone a quality assessment process and been found to meet the criteria. The Minister must establish and publish the criteria that will apply for the purposes of giving or refusing consent.

## 1.3 Role of the Degree Quality Assessment Board

The Degree Quality Assessment Board (Board) is appointed by the Minister to determine whether a review of the applicant's submission is warranted, to oversee the quality assessment process, to evaluate applications, and to provide advice to the Minister.

Reporting directly to the Minister, the Board establishes the processes for the Degree Program Review, the Organization Review, and the Use of the Word "University" review, administers these reviews, and makes recommendations to the Minister regarding consent, Special Terms and Conditions of Consent, and on actions required to ensure quality standards are maintained through annual reporting and monitoring of institutions with consent.

Board operations are supported by the Board Secretariat and Ministry staff who provide administrative and research support to the Board.

## Board Composition

The Board is comprised of five members from BC public post-secondary institutions, two members from private post-secondary institutions, two members from business/industry, two members from the general public, and two non-voting members, one from the BC Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT), and one from the Ministry.

## Board Meetings

Board meetings are held in-camera, normally every 6-8 weeks. Meeting dates are listed on the Degree Authorization website. To ensure an item is on the agenda, all information related to the item must be provided to the Board Secretariat according to the schedule listed on the Degree Authorization website.

## 2. Application Process Overview

### 2.1 Process Workflow Summary

```
Application          Preliminary          Peer & Public
Submission    <-->   Assessment    --->   Comment

            Degree Quality Assessment Board

Minister                                   Substantive
Decision      <---  Recommendation  <---   Assessment
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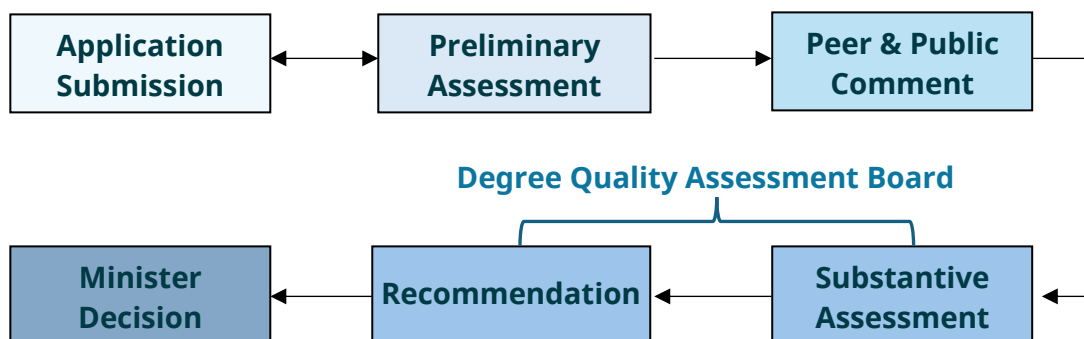
See Appendix 13 for detailed workflow.

### 2.2 Application

An application is not to be submitted for the new degree review process until the senior governance body has approved it as appropriate for the institution's plan and priorities.

All submissions must follow the submission guidelines and address the criteria established for the type of review that will be conducted. Applications should be submitted 18-24 months prior to the institution's desired start date. Applications for renewal of consent must be submitted 12-18 months prior to the end of consent.

New applicants applying for the first time to offer degree-level education in BC must meet with the Degree Quality Assessment Board (Board) Secretariat to determine the applicant's readiness for submission.

Submissions for degree approval and associated reviews will be subject to the *Personal Information Protection Act*.

**Post Secondary Institution Proposal System (PSIPS)**
Applications are submitted through the Post-Secondary Institution Proposal System (PSIPS), a web-based interface supporting the post-secondary program proposal and quality assessment review processes for degree-granting institutions in BC. Access to PSIPS is managed by the Board Secretariat, with cooperation from the institution's Vice President Academic Office or equivalent.

**Formatting Guidelines**

Institutions are expected to adhere to the following formatting guidelines:

- Stage 1 should be submitted using the Stage 1 template and should not exceed 12 pages or 4,000 words, excluding appendices.
- All other applications, i.e., Stage 2, Use of the Word "University", and Organization Review, should have numbered pages and not exceed 10,000 words each, excluding appendices.
- Stage 1 and Stage 2 must be submitted together as a single PDF document with Stage 1 preceding Stage 2. The appendices should form separate documents, e.g., Stage 1 appendix; Stage 2 appendix.
- Organization Review applications are to be submitted as an appendix to Stage 2.
- All other submissions should have numbered pages and not exceed 10,000 words, excluding appendices.
- When providing information on institutional policies, include only a summary of the policy in the main body. Attach the full policy as an appendix.
- Provide a Table of Contents for appendices.
- Appendices should be uploaded as separate documents. Appendices for degree program applications, Organization Review, and Use of the Word "University" applications should indicate the standard, appendix number and name, with one appendix per standard. For example, *Standard 3 Appendix 1 Curriculum Map*; *Standard 6 Appendix 2 Faculty CVs*.
- Proprietary information should be included in the appendices, which are not publicly available for review. Examples of proprietary information may include referee letters, letters of support, faculty CVs (which contain personal information such as names and addresses), full course outlines, and financial information.
- Only PDF documents are accepted. PDF files should incorporate navigation tools such as "bookmarks" to allow the reader to navigate quickly to a particular page or section within the document.

## 2.3 Fees and Payment

Application fees are set by the *Degree Authorization Regulation*. Institutions will receive an invoice through PSIPS. Delays in payment of the application fees may delay the quality assessment process. If the Board determines a quality review of the applicant's submission is warranted, additional fees to cover the costs of the review will be required.

# 3. Review Phases

## 3.1 Preliminary Assessment

The Degree Quality Assessment Board (Board) Secretariat reviews applications for completeness and adherence to the formatting and submission guidelines. An application will be returned to the institution for revisions if it:

- Does not fully and clearly address the criteria in the order presented by the Submission Guidelines for the type of review.
- Does not provide the evidence required.
- Exceeds the recommended length.
- Does not follow the formatting guidelines.

Inactive applications in revision will be placed "on hold" after six months and withdrawn after one year.

## 3.2 Peer and Public Review Period

When the application is considered complete by the Board Secretariat, it will be publicly posted on the Degree Authorization website for 30 days for peer and public review. The general public may submit comments during this period. The office of the Vice President Academic (or equivalent) of the public and private degree-granting institutions will be notified through PSIPS that a new submission is available for review and comment. The applicant must respond to all comments at the end of the peer and public review period.

Application appendices, in addition to the Organization Review and its related appendices, will not be publicly available for viewing.

## 3.3 Degree Quality Assessment Board Substantive Assessment

The Board will review the applicant's submission following the end of the peer and public review period and will determine the next steps of the application:

- Make a recommendation to the Minister based on the materials provided; or,
- Conduct an external review by experts to inform the Board's recommendation.

If the Board proceeds with an external review, it will determine the type of external review required, and the composition of the External Review Panel.

External Review

The Board determines the depth of review required based on the level and quality of information provided by the applicant. The Board may contract external expert reviewers to conduct:

- Degree Program Reviews that focus on the quality of the degree program.
- Organization Reviews that focus on the characteristics of the institution, its financial viability, and its readiness to offer degree-level programs.
- Use of the word "University" reviews that focus on the institution's academic organization, policies, expertise, and financial viability.

For each external review required, the applicant must provide the Board with three nominations of qualified external experts for the Board's consideration. Qualifications required of external experts are outlined in Appendix 9. The Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Policy outlines the requirements to ensure external experts are not in a position of actual or perceived conflict (see Appendix 10). The Board has the final decision over the contracting of expert panel members.

The applicant will be invoiced by the Ministry for the cost of the review, which covers the expert reviewers' honoraria and associated travel costs at provincial government rates (see the Degree Authorization website for additional information). Payment for the review must be received by the Ministry at least two weeks prior to the visit by the Expert Review Panel. Delay of payment may result in a delay of the review.

The External Review Panel report is advice to the Board and is the property of the Board. The institution will be provided with a copy of the report for its response.

## 3.4  Recommendation to the Minister

The Board will review the applicant's submission, and if an external review is undertaken, the External Review Panel report and the applicant's response to the report's findings are taken into consideration by the Board when making its recommendation to the Minister. The Board also considers other factors, including general information provided by the Ministry, and the institution's history inside and outside of BC.

During its deliberations, the Board may call the External Review Panel chair to seek further clarification on the review and/or the applicant institution to address outstanding questions regarding the submission materials or its response to the External Review Panel

report. The Board then makes a recommendation to the Minister on whether the applicant meets or does not meet the standards and criteria, and whether terms and conditions should be attached.

## 3.5   Minister's Decision

The *Degree Authorization Act* provides that the Minister may give an applicant consent if the Minister is satisfied that the applicant has undergone a quality assessment process and been found to meet the criteria. Before granting consent, the Minister must be satisfied that the interests of students are protected. The Minister cannot give consent unless:

- the Minister is satisfied that the applicant has given financial security to protect the interests of students, if security is required by the Regulations in respect of the person seeking consent; and,
- the applicant has made adequate arrangements to provide students with access to their transcripts in the event of closure.

Section 6 outlines the expectations for financial security and transcript maintenance.

The Minister attaches Standard Terms and Conditions to a consent, including an expiration date after which the consent will cease to be effective unless the Minister extends consent or renews it following reapplication and quality assessment. The Minister may also attach Special Terms and Conditions to a consent to ensure the institution undertakes specified actions to improve the quality of its operations and/or a degree program.

# 4.  Type of Review

The *Degree Authorization Act* states:

> "**Degree**" means recognition or implied recognition of academic achievement that:
> a) is specified in writing to be an associate, baccalaureate, masters, doctoral or similar degree, and
> b) is not a degree in theology.

Degrees must meet or exceed the degree level standards detailed in Section 5. Additionally, the degree name and nomenclature must be consistent with the Guidelines on Naming Degrees and the Guidelines on Degree Majors, Minors, and Concentrations (Appendices 3 and 4).

This section provides a summary of the types of review that may be required for the degree assessment process. A review matrix displaying the type of review an institution may undergo is provided in Appendix 12.

## 4.1  Health Program Review

All post-secondary institutions in British Columba that wish to offer a new degree program in health or make substantial revisions to an existing health degree are required to undergo a review of the program application conducted collaboratively by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills. Health programs include any program in the Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) 51 – Health Professionals and Related Programs category listed on the Statistics Canada website. Institutions are encouraged to engage in the Health Education Program Review process prior to submitting a formal application in PSIPS. The CIP 51 Review Policy is available on the Degree Authorization website.

## 4.2  Degree Program

Degree program reviews are conducted in two stages as outlined below.

**Stage 1**

All new degree program applications must include a Stage 1 application and undergo a Stage 1 review conducted by the Degree Quality Assessment Board (Board).

Stage 1 is an evidence-based review intended to determine whether the proposed degree program:

- provides benefits to students;
- addresses a need in the BC post-secondary system and creates no unnecessary duplication with existing programs offering similar learning objectives;
- provides social and economic benefits to British Columbians (including labour market benefits); and
- is proposed by an institution with sufficient expertise and resources to sustain the program over the long term.

The Stage 1 and Stage 2 applications must be submitted together. Stage 1 applications must be submitted using the Stage 1 template.

Only when an institution successfully meets the Stage 1 criteria and is approved by the Minister will the new degree application proceed to the Stage 2 review of degree program quality.

A Stage 1 review will not normally be required of applications for renewal of consent, except when an existing degree has been revised that it effectively constitutes a new degree program (see Determination of New Degree, Section 8) or other factors that may have changed where a Stage 1 review of the degree may be appropriate (e.g., system need for the program, labour market need).

**Stage 2 – Degree Program Quality**
The Stage 2 Degree Program Quality Review is an assessment to ensure the proposed degree program meets high-quality standards. The submission requirements and assessment criteria for giving or refusing consent are outlined in Section 5.

The quality assessment process is initiated with the peer and public review of the full program application posted on PSIPS. In conducting the quality assessment review, the Board normally requires institutions to undergo an external expert panel review to inform the Board's assessment of the degree application.

*Applications for Renewal of Consent*
The Stage 2 review for a renewal of consent application follows the same process as a new application. Institutions applying for renewal of consent are required to follow the

Renewal of Consent Submission Guidelines. Further information on renewal of consent is found in Section 7 and Appendix 11.

*Branch Operations and Collaborative Partnerships*
For institutions headquartered outside of BC that wish to operate a satellite or branch location in BC or through a collaborative arrangement with another institution, the Degree Program Review Standards and Criteria will be applied to the institution's operations in BC and may include a review of how these degree offerings vary or are the same as degree offerings in the home jurisdiction.

For institutions headquartered in BC that wish to grant BC degrees, the degree program review criteria and guidelines will be applied to operations both inside and outside BC, as appropriate.

Institutions should refer to:

- Operational Guidelines for Collaborative Arrangements (Appendix 7).
- Operational Guidelines for Branch Operations (Appendix 8).

## 4.3  Organization Review

Applicant institutions that do not use the word "University" in their names and are not applying to use the word "University" may be required by the Board to undergo an Organization Review along with the Stage 2 review. In conducting the quality assessment process for Organization Reviews, the Board normally requires institutions to undergo an external expert panel review, which is separate from the Stage 2 review, to inform the Board's assessment. If an Organization Review is required, the Board will select the review experts, and the applicant institution will be invoiced for costs associated with the review.

An institution without consent to use the word "University" would normally undergo an Organization Review every five years or if it is:

- A new institution seeking to offer a degree program in BC for the first time.
- An institution with consent seeking to offer a degree in a new field of study or at a degree level that it has not previously offered in BC.

The submission requirements and assessment criteria are outlined in Section 5.

*Branch Operations and Collaborative Partnerships*
For institutions headquartered outside of BC that wish to operate a satellite or branch location in BC or through a collaborative arrangement with another institution, the Organization Review Standards and Criteria will be applied to the operations in BC.
For institutions headquartered in BC that wish to operate a satellite or branch location outside BC and grant BC degrees, the Organization Review criteria and guidelines will be applied to operations both inside and outside BC, as appropriate.

Institutions should refer to:

- Operational Guidelines for Collaborative Arrangements (Appendix 7).
- Operational Guidelines for Branch Operations (Appendix 8).

## 4.4  Use of the Word "University"

Under the Act, use of the word "University" or any derivation or abbreviation of the word to indicate an educational program is available from or through an organization is prohibited without authorization of the Minister.

The Use of the Word "University" criteria and submission guidelines are outlined in Section 5. The criteria for Use of the Word "University" reflects a mature institution and it is recommended that prior to applying, the institution should be in operation and authorized to deliver a number of degree programs for a minimum of two years.

The quality assessment process is initiated with the peer and public review of the Use of the Word "University" application posted on PSIPS. The public posting gives the general public (including academic experts from inside and outside BC) the opportunity to review and provide comments to the applicant institution and the Board.

In conducting the quality assessment process for Use of the Word "University", the Board normally requires institutions to undergo an external expert panel review to inform the Board's assessment. The Board will select the review experts and the applicant institution will be invoiced for any costs associated with the review.

# 5. Standards and Criteria

This section describes the standards and criteria that are used to assess submissions from private and out-of-province public institutions:

- **5.1 Degree Program Review** (Stage 1 and Stage 2).
  - Health programs must complete a CIP 51 Review before proceeding to Stage 1 (see Section 4).
  - All new degree program applications must include a Stage 1 and a Stage 2 submission.
  - Applications for reconsent:
    - Follow the Renewal of Consent Submission Guidelines (see Section 7 when preparing to seek reconsent).
    - A Stage 1 is not normally required except when the program is determined to be a new degree (see Section 7 for further information on renewal of consent and Section 8 for determination of new degree) or other factors that may have changed where Stage 1 review of the degree may be appropriate (e.g., system need for the program, labour market need). Existing programs determined to be a new degree follow the Submission Guidelines.
- **5.2 Organization Review**
- **5.3 Use of the word "University" Review**

## 5.1  DEGREE PROGRAM REVIEW

### Program Overview

Provide the following information:

a)  An overview of the organization's history, mission, and academic goals;

b)  Proposed credential to be awarded, including the level and category of the degree and the specific discipline or field of study;

c)  Location of where the proposed degree program will be offered;

d)  Faculty or school(s) offering the proposed degree program;

e)  Anticipated program start date;

f)  Anticipated completion time in years or semesters;

g)  Academic year system (e.g., term, semester, block, quarter) and definitions (e.g., number of weeks, contact hours, etc.);

h)  Expected number of students at launch and at steady state;

i)  A summary of the proposed program, including:

- Aims, goals, and/or objectives of the proposed program;
- Anticipated contribution of the proposed program to the mandate and strategic plan of the institution;
- Linkages between the learning outcomes and the curriculum design and whether a work-integrated learning experience is required for degree completion;
- Delivery methods (in-person, online, combination of in-person and online, or other (explain));
- Program strengths; and,
- Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) Code (minimum 4-digit; 6-digit preferred).

j)  Name, title, phone number, and e-mail address of the institutional contact person if more information is required.

Renewal of Consent Submission Guidelines

Follow the Submission Guidelines with the modifications below:

- Omit (e) Anticipated program start date.
- Omit (h) Expected number of students at launch and at steady state.

## STAGE 1 REVIEW

The purpose of Stage 1 is to determine the need for a new degree program and to evaluate how it complements other programs currently offered in the BC post-secondary education system.

Stage 1 applies to all post-secondary institutions seeking authority to grant a new degree program in BC. It is a means to ensure that students are provided with high-quality education, and when developing new programs, that institutions avoid unnecessary duplication and consider government priorities for social and economic goods, such as principles of diversity and inclusion. A Stage 1 review will not normally be required of applications for renewal of consent unless the degree program is deemed to be a new degree (see Determination of New Degree, Section 8) or other factors where a Stage 1 review of the degree may be appropriate (e.g., system need for the program, labour market need).

### Standard 1    Benefits to Students
*The institution must demonstrate that the proposed degree will provide benefits to students.*

Institutions must respond to the following:

a)  Who is the targeted student population?
b)  What specific need is there for the proposed program and how will it benefit the targeted student population?
c)  Will the proposed program provide specific benefits to Indigenous students in BC's post-secondary system and/or at your institution? If so, describe.
d)  Will the proposed program specifically benefit those traditionally underserved and underrepresented students in BC's post-secondary system and/or at your institution? If so, describe.
e)  What specific opportunities are available to program graduates for further study, and at which institutions? If the expectation is that the degree is terminal, state that is the case. Provide evidence of discussions with other post-secondary institutions with regard to advanced degree opportunities in an appendix.
f)  What is the anticipated tuition fee for the program by year and by credit/unit? Include both proposed domestic and international tuition.
g)  What are the tuition fees for similar programs at this degree level at other post-secondary institutions in the province? If the tuition fee is higher than fees for similar programs in BC, what is the rationale for the higher rate and what actions will the institution take to mitigate student tuition costs?

**Standard 2    System Coordination and Program Duplication**

*The institution must establish that the proposed program fills a need within the post-secondary system and that there is no unnecessary duplication with existing programs.*

A. System Context

Use the table below to list all similar degree programs at the same level at other private and public post-secondary institutions in BC. (The Stage 1 template allows the addition of as many lines as required.)

| Institution offering similar program | Name of degree program | How proposed program differs |
|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |

B. Consultation with Other BC Post-Secondary Institutions

For each institution in the preceding list that offers a similar program at the same level, summarize the form of consultation that occurred with that institution and materials used, and briefly describe the institution's feedback. (The Stage 1 template allows the addition of as many lines as required.)

| Name, position, and institution of person consulted | Method of consultation and materials used | Feedback and Applicant's Response |
|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |

C. Rationale for Duplication

If programs with similar learning objectives are currently available in the region or online within the province, what is the specific rationale for establishing another program?

D. Collaboration

Describe how the institution will collaborate and/or share resources with other institutions offering related programs, including articulation and laddering agreements. Provide resource sharing agreements and articulating and laddering agreements in the appendix.

**Standard 3    Social and Economic Benefits**

*The institution must demonstrate that the proposed program will serve the economic and social needs of British Columbians.*

A. Social and Economic Benefits

- What social and economic benefits would the program offer the community, region, or province?
- Reference specific government and community initiatives, plans, and priorities that the proposed program supports.
- What occupations are students most likely to seek or advance in immediately after graduating (limit to 2-3 occupations)? Provide written correspondence from a number of potential employers supporting the proposed degree program, stating their organization's total staff numbers and how many of their current staff positions could be filled by program graduates.

B. Engagement with Indigenous Peoples

- What is the institution's plan to incorporate Indigenous content in the program?
- How did the institution work on this application with local First Nations on whose territory the institution is located, and with other First Nations or Indigenous groups or experts?

C.  Engagement with Employers, Community Groups, and Professional Organizations

- Describe the engagement process with relevant employers, community organizations, professional bodies, and program advisory committees. Summarize the materials used and the feedback received from these groups, and state how the proposed program changed in response to feedback. Provide documented evidence of engagement in an appendix.
- If the program is primarily relevant to public sector employment, describe the support the program has from government ministries or other public sector employers and explain how the proposed program changed in response to feedback.  Provide documented evidence of engagement in an appendix.
- If the program relates to a regulated profession, summarize the feedback provided by the regulatory or licensing bodies and the responsible Ministry.  Provide documented evidence of engagement in an appendix or state "Not Applicable".

**Standard 4    Institutional Resources**

*The institution must show it has access to sufficient resources to implement and sustain the program.*

a)  Explain how the proposed program relates to the overall academic plan of the institution or advances the mandate of the institution.

b)  Briefly summarize how well program areas related to the proposed program performed over the last four years and describe how successful performance was defined and measured.

c)  If the proposed program builds on existing programs, how will the existing programs be affected?

d)  Identify operation resources required to launch and maintain the program (e.g., faculty, staff, student services, capital equipment, classroom/laboratory space, learning resources), and explain how these needs will be met.

e)  Provide an enrolment plan for the program over the next four years, identifying projected number of students (full-time and part-time; domestic and international), minimum viable enrolment, and anticipated number of credentials to be awarded each year.

## STAGE 2  PROGRAM QUALITY REVIEW

The Ministry is committed to ensuring the national and international recognition of BC degrees and works closely with other provinces on pan-Canadian quality assurance initiatives. The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada endorsed a Ministerial Statement on Quality Assurance of Degree Education in Canada. The Ministry's quality assessment processes and standards are consistent with those contained in the Statement and the Degree Quality Assessment Board (Board) has adopted the Statement's Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework for use when assessing the level of proposed degree programs.

### Standard 1    Degree Level Standard

*The institution must demonstrate that the proposed program meets or exceeds the proposed degree level standard and learning outcomes. The curriculum design must ensure that the curriculum is purposefully structured and logically sequenced throughout the degree program so that students are building on what they have learned and are acquiring the knowledge and skills that will progressively prepare them for more challenging, higher-level work within the degree.*

The focus of the degree level standards is on the knowledge and skills graduates are expected to have for 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:

- to facilitate the assessment of credentials for broad purposes of credit transfer and credential recognition,
- to provide clear learning outcome standards to instructional and program designers, and
- 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. See Appendix 2 Degree Categories and Degree Level Standards for detailed descriptions for each degree level.

Assessment Criteria
- The degree program demonstrates transferable learning skills and level of mastery of a body of specialized knowledge in the six dimensions of the degree level standards.

Submission Guidelines
a) Provide a curriculum map that demonstrates the curriculum is purposefully structured and logically sequenced to ensure that what students are taught matches the academic expectations in a particular subject area and degree level standard.
b) Provide a learning outcomes matrix for the degree that demonstrates that the curriculum addresses both subject matter and program learning outcomes appropriate for the degree level standard.
c) In the case of pathways or block transfer credits from specific partner institutions and/or programs, provide evidence that the institutional partner sending students has provided an adequate foundation for entrance into 2nd, 3rd, or 4th year of the proposed degree program.

Renewal of Consent Submission Guidelines
Follow the Submission Guidelines with the modification below:
- Provide in the appendix how student achievement meets the six dimensions of the relevant degree level standards through the submission of student work that shows exemplary, average, and minimally acceptable performance from the last year of the degree program.

**Standard 2    Credential Recognition and Nomenclature**
*The institution must demonstrate that the program's learning outcomes and standards are sufficiently clear and at a level that will facilitate recognition of the credential by other post-secondary institutions, professional and licensing bodies, and employers.*

*The name of a degree should convey long-term meaning, the content of a degree program should be consistent with the name, and the reputation of the institution and of post-secondary education in BC should be enhanced by the quality of the offering. Beyond that, the degree must be recognized by the relevant licensing and accrediting bodies as a basis for entry to practice into a given profession.*

Assessment Criteria

- Employers, relevant occupational and professional groups, regulatory bodies, and other post-secondary institutions will recognize the credential and the credential will contribute to the professional advancement of the graduate.
- For credentials not intended to be "terminal degrees" (i.e., doctoral degrees and certain professional programs), other post-secondary institutions will consider the credential as a basis for admission to advanced study.
- For programs leading to a profession that is subject to government regulation, the learning outcomes and standards and other requirements for graduation reflect the requirements of the relevant regulatory or professional body.
- There is an appropriate fit between the nomenclature of the credential and the content of the degree.
- The degree name is consistent with the degree name and nomenclature conventions used in BC (see Appendix 3).

Submission Guidelines

a) Explain how the design of the program facilitates credential recognition by other post-secondary institutions. Include an analysis of research undertaken to ensure credential recognition in BC or Canada.

b) For programs that are not doctoral programs and are intended to be terminal degrees, explain how the institution will inform students prior to enrolment of the terminal nature of the degree.

c) Explain how the nomenclature of the degree fits with the content of the degree. In cases where the degree name is not consistent with the Guidelines on Naming of Degrees (see Appendix 3), provide a compelling rationale for diverging from the established nomenclature conventions in BC.

d) For programs leading to a profession that is subject to government regulation, describe the consultations undertaken to ensure the credential and learning outcomes will be considered by the regulatory, licensing, or credentialing bodies. Provide copies of letters from regulatory, licensing, or professional credentialing bodies indicating that there are no concerns that the degree and learning outcomes will be recognized.

e) In some instances, regulatory, licensing, or professional credentialing bodies do not recognize or accredit programs but require individuals to meet the certification requirements (e.g., certification exams). In such cases, describe the role of the regulatory, licensing, or credentialing body and the steps taken to ensure graduates will be eligible to meet the education requirements of the regulatory, licensing, or credentialing body.

Renewal of Consent Submission Guidelines

Follow the Submission Guidelines with the modifications below:

- Omit (b) For programs that are not doctoral programs and are intended to be terminal degrees, explain how the institution will inform students prior to enrolment of the terminal nature of the degree.
- Omit (c) Explain how the nomenclature of the degree fits with the content of the degree. In cases where the degree name is not consistent with the Guidelines on Naming Degrees (see Appendix 3), provide a compelling rationale for diverging from the established nomenclature conventions in BC.
- Modified (a) Provide evidence that other BC post-secondary institutions recognize the credential either through acceptance of transfer credit or for admission to advanced studies.
- Modified (d) For programs leading to a profession that is subject to government regulation, provide copies of letters from regulatory, licensing, or professional credentialing bodies indicating that there are no concerns with the degree program.
- Modified (e) In some instances, regulatory, licensing, or professional credentialing bodies do not recognize or accredit programs but require individuals to meet the certification requirements (e.g., certification exams). In such cases, describe the role of the regulatory, licensing, or credentialing body and provide evidence demonstrating that graduates successfully meet the requirements of the regulatory, licensing, or credentialing body.

**Standard 3    Curriculum and Program Content**

*The program's structure is well-defined and permits delivery of the quality of education necessary for students to attain the learning outcomes. The institution must demonstrate that the program, in both subject matter and learning outcome standards, offers an education of sufficient breadth and rigor to be comparable to similar programs at the proposed degree level offered by recognized provincial, national, and international post-secondary institutions. The curriculum must be current and reflect the state of knowledge in the field, or fields in the case of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary programs. The curriculum is inclusive and promotes a diversity of perspectives.*

Assessment Criteria

- Approval by the institution's senior academic governance body (i.e., Senate, Education Council, or equivalent) which has sufficient qualifications to assess the curriculum.
- The curriculum is current; inclusive of a diversity of peoples and perspectives; aligns with the institution's policies on the respectful use of traditional knowledge and

Indigenous intellectual property; and reflects the state of knowledge in the field and the needs of the field in practice.

- Learning outcomes and standards for the program demonstrate how graduates will be prepared with a sound basis in theory, as well as the intellectual, communication, collaboration, teamwork, innovation, intercultural understandings, and other skills necessary to be effective in the workplace upon graduation and to remain current in their field.
- Courses provide exposure to increasingly complex theory, and in programs with an applied or professional focus, the application of that theory to practice in the field. For doctoral programs, course work is aimed at cultivating further conceptual depth or breadth and may involve written and oral examinations of knowledge and skills in aspects of the discipline prior to authorization to proceed to work on a dissertation.
- Where applicable, development of program content and learning materials referenced in course outlines include, and reflect consultation with, a diversity of perspectives and peoples, including those whose physical and cultural characteristics have been traditionally underrepresented and underserved in BC's post-secondary system.
- In programs relevant to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action such as social work, health care, law, public administration, education, and journalism/media, Indigenous peoples are engaged in the development and implementation of program content.
- Agreements, protocols and practices for the protection and respectful use of Indigenous knowledge, intellectual property, and wisdom have been developed with the Indigenous peoples from whom the content originates.
- The program has sufficient breadth (i.e., courses outside the professional or main field of studies, some of which are free electives) and/or an appropriate balance of professional and liberal studies.
- Time allotments assigned to the program as a whole, and to components in the program, are appropriate to the stated learning outcomes.
- The type and frequency of evaluations of student learning are commensurate with the stated learning outcomes, flexible to reasonably accommodate students with diverse learning needs, and provide appropriate information to students about their achievement levels.
- Levels of student achievement for successful course completion and the graduation requirements for the proposed program are appropriate to the learning outcome goals and degree level standard, flexible to reasonably accommodate students with diverse learning needs, and allow for confirmation that a student is making satisfactory progress in the program.

- For degrees with an applied or professional focus, work-integrated learning experiences have appropriate articulated learning outcome goals, can be accessed equitably by eligible students regardless of financial and/or other barriers, and have a method for joint instructor and employer evaluation leading to the assignment of a grade. See Appendix 1 for a definition of work-integrated learning.
- For new degrees at the baccalaureate level, applications must either demonstrate that there are accessible work-integrated learning components available for students or provide a satisfactory reason why not.
- Where there are work-integrated learning opportunities within First Nations communities, the institution has worked with each community to adopt culturally appropriate research methods and ethical approaches that are specific to the project and community, and that work-integrated learning opportunities are led by collaborative practice between communities and institutions.

Submission Guidelines

a) Provide a brief description of the institution's senior academic governance body. In the appendix, provide documentation showing approval of the program by that body.
b) Explain the consultation process and how feedback was incorporated into the program development process to ensure the curriculum is inclusive and promotes a diversity of perspectives.
c) Describe the institution's process for developing agreements, protocols, and practices for the protection and respectful use of Indigenous knowledge, intellectual property, and wisdom. Provide these policies in the appendix.
d) Describe the involvement of Indigenous Peoples in the development and implementation of the program content and learning materials.
e) Describe the program structure, learning outcomes, the length of the program (number of credit hours), and proposed student evaluation.
f) Identify the prescribed set of core and prerequisite courses. Course descriptions included in the program application should be of the level of detail found in the academic calendar. Full course outlines must be provided in an appendix. Course outlines should each be no more than 5 pages long and must follow a standardized format (either the institution's own or the template available on the Degree Authorization website) that includes at minimum a course description, course structure, prerequisites, required texts (or texts typically used) and other learning resources, learning outcomes, assessment methods, and grading policy.
g) Identify which courses already exist at the institution and which new courses will be implemented as a result of the program.

h) Explain how the course and curriculum requirements will contribute to the intended goals of the program.

i) Where work-integrated learning is a component of the program, describe the anticipated learning outcome goals, how the experience will provide the opportunity to put the stated learning outcomes into practice, how students will be evaluated by the instructor and employer during their placements, and how the institution will ensure all eligible students have equity of access to placement opportunities.

j) Provide a rationale if there are no work-integrated learning components (applicable only for new degree programs at the baccalaureate level).

Renewal of Consent Submission Guidelines

Follow the Submission Guidelines with below modifications:

- Omit (a) Provide a brief description of the institution's senior academic governance body. In the appendix, provide documentation showing approval of the program by that body.
- Omit (b) Explain the consultation process and how feedback was incorporated into the program development process to ensure the curriculum is inclusive and promotes a diversity of perspectives.
- Omit (j) Provide a rationale if there are no work-integrated learning components (applicable only for new degree programs at the baccalaureate level).
- Modified (c) Provide the institution's policy for the protection and respectful use of Indigenous knowledge, intellectual property, and wisdom in the appendix.
- Modified (d) Describe the implementation of the program content and learning materials that were developed with the involvement of Indigenous Peoples.
- Modified (i) Where work-integrated learning and field placement are a component of the program, provide information on the placements, the qualifications of the supervisor, and the learning outcomes of the placement.
  NOTE: If work-integrated learning was added to the degree program in the reconsent application use Submission Guideline (i).

**Standard 4    Learning Methodologies and Program Delivery**

*Learning methodologies are the methods of delivery that will be used to achieve the desired learning outcomes at the degree level standard and at an acceptable level of quality. The institution must demonstrate that it has the expertise and resources to support the proposed method of delivery effectively and reasonably accommodate students with physical and health-related challenges.*

Assessment Criteria

- The delivery method(s) and quality assurance policies are appropriate to course content, reasonably accessible for all students involved, and support the proposed learning outcomes.
- Learning methodologies and delivery methods can reasonably accommodate students with physical and health-related challenges.
- The institution has the expertise and resources to support the proposed method of delivery (both human and material that support the program and its students and provide processes for students' feedback) or demonstrates a viable plan to put the necessary expertise and resources in place.
- Where appropriate, institutions have First Nations, Métis, or Inuit mentors, or academic supports for students wishing to draw upon Indigenous ways of knowing and methods of grading and provides feedback that is influenced by Indigenous ways of knowing.
- Policies pertaining to technology-based, computer-based, and web-based learning and modes of delivery ensure:
    - Students are fully advised about the competencies, self-discipline, and equipment they will need to have in order to successfully participate in the program.
    - Students gain experience in teamwork and collaboration and have ready access to faculty.
    - Availability of appropriate hardware, software, and other technological resources and media.
    - Reliable and sufficient course management systems are in place.
    - Students and faculty are prepared and orientated to the technology.
    - Faculty are supported and have access to training in the pedagogy of online learning.
    - Appropriate safeguards are in place to assure the authentication of student identity and the integrity of student work in blended and distributed/distance programs.
    - Appropriate storage protocols are in place to assure that security of personal information is protected in conducting assessments and evaluations and in the dissemination of results.
    - Accessible, ongoing technical assistance for students and faculty is available.
    - The technology and equipment are well-maintained and current.
    - Students without access to the equipment needed are provided with alternative options that support their ability to complete the program successfully.

a) Indicate which of the following methodologies will be incorporated into the learning environment of the degree program, and how they will be used:

- work-integrated learning (e.g., applied research projects, co-operative education, practicums, field placements, internships, clinical, work term or simulated work experience);
- distance education;
- hybrid learning;
- independent study, computer-assisted instruction, etc.;
- lectures, labs, tutorials; and,
- other.

b) Describe the availability of Indigenous mentors and/or academic supports available for students wishing to draw upon Indigenous ways of knowing and methods for grading and providing feedback.

c) Include any policies pertaining to technology-based, computer-based, or web-based learning and modes of delivery.

d) Describe the expertise and resources (both human and material) available to ensure there is broad access to technological resources and learning methodologies.

Renewal of Consent Submission Guidelines

Follow the Submission Guidelines.

**Standard 5    Admissions, Transfer, and Residency**

*Admissions policies should be used to create a vibrant educational community where students are with peers of different backgrounds, including those from traditionally underrepresented groups, to promote a diversity of perspectives and prepare graduates for respectful interactions in an increasingly diverse and inclusive workforce and society. Policies, practices, and supports should be in place to promote the retention and success of students. Where appropriate, the program, courses, or curricular elements are designed to facilitate credit transfer by other post-secondary institutions both within the province and other jurisdictions and provide opportunities for further education.*

Assessment Criteria

- The institution has clearly established policies and procedures on admissions that promote diversity, inclusion, and equity of opportunity for qualified applicants that are consistent with the level of the degree program (including policies on direct entry, transfer, mature students, and assessment of prior and competency-based learning).

Policies and procedures on admissions must be publicly available on the institution's website.

- The institution manages program enrollment growth within its current capacity (human and physical) to ensure students are appropriately supported to achieve the program learning outcomes.
- The institution has clearly established policies and procedures on transfer and articulation consistent with the level of the degree program. Policies and procedures on transfer and articulation must be publicly available on the institution's website.
- The institution's policy on admissions and transfer indicates a willingness to consider qualified applicants to undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs from other post-secondary institutions.
- The institution has appropriate residency requirements that lead to degrees granted in the institution's name. The institution must have policies specific to the amount of time that must be spent or a number of courses or credits that must be completed by a student at the institution granting the credential.

Submission Guidelines

a) Describe the admissions process, including the admissions requirements, procedures for conditional admissions and exceptions, and procedures for making admissions decisions. Provide a copy of the policies and procedures on admissions as an appendix.

b) Describe the policies, practices, and supports in place to promote the admission, retention, and success of Indigenous students.

c) Describe the policies, practices, and supports in place to promote the admission, retention, and success of students from traditionally underrepresented groups.

d) Provide an enrolment plan for the length of the program (e.g., four-year projection of cumulative enrolment) that accounts for projected attrition and indicates the number of current and new faculty and staff (advisors, technical, teaching assistants, etc.) required to support the program.

e) Submit the policy and process for course transfer and recognizing transfer credit (e.g., course articulation, prior learning assessment, block transfer/pathway agreements, or competency-based learning) in the appendix. Include the institution's framework for developing block transfer/articulation agreements.

f) Describe the residency requirements for this program. Specify the minimum number of credits that must be completed at the institution awarding the degree.

Renewal of Consent Submission Guidelines

Follow the Submission Guidelines above and add additional information as noted below:

- New (g) Provide the program graduation rate for the last 4 years.
- New (h) Provide the program retention/attrition rates for the last 4 years.
- New (i) Provide the program's average GPA for admitted students for each year during the last 4 years.
- New (j) Provide information on students who were provided transfer or block credit and the success of those students.
- New (k) Provide the percentage of change in program enrollment over the duration of the last consent period. Provide a rationale for the change and describe the corresponding adjustments to human and physical resources supporting the program.

NOTE: The British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT) administers the *British Columbia Online Transfer Guide* which provides information on course or program articulation agreements between institutions. Institutions are encouraged to contact BCCAT early in the development of degree program applications for information on admissions and transfer in BC. Information on [Principles and Guidelines for Transfer](#) as well as a provincial transfer-friendly course outline form for voluntary use by post-secondary institutions is available on the BCCAT web site at [http://www.bccat.ca/](http://www.bccat.ca/).

**Standard 6    Faculty and Staff**

*The institution must demonstrate that it has the ongoing human resources necessary to develop and deliver a quality degree program. The institution must have an appropriate number of continuing (permanent), qualified faculty in the department/discipline in which the degree program is offered. The institution must have faculty selection criteria that ensure new faculty hires have the necessary qualifications and add to the diversity of the unit offering the program being proposed. The institution must demonstrate that it has the appropriate level and balance of student support staff to ensure the necessary supports are in place for student success in the degree level proposed.*

Assessment Criteria

- Faculty and instructors are in enough numbers, based on the size of the student body and length of the degree program, with appropriate credentials to develop and deliver the degree level offered and program proposed.
- New degree programs must start with a minimum of one continuing faculty member for the degree, and additional continuing and/or term faculty members for each secondary specialization, minor, concentration, etc. The continuing faculty are to be in

place prior to the start of the program.

- The degree program must be anchored by a designated complement of continuing faculty who are primarily responsible for the delivery and continuity of the degree program. Continuing faculty are expected to be actively and deeply engaged in the activities of the institution and program in matters beyond direct teaching responsibilities (e.g., governance, curricula and policy development, advising, research, service, etc.).
- The institutions must demonstrate that ninety percent of its faculty in BC engaged in teaching meet the standards of being *Academically Qualified* or *Experientially Qualified* (see definitions in Appendix 1).
- Staff resources at locations where the program is offered must be sufficient to ensure the coverage required within the discipline for the proposed program.
- There is an adequate number of professional staff with appropriate qualifications (education and experience) to support students, faculty, and staff at locations where the program is offered.
- There are qualified staff to support and serve Indigenous students.
- The institution's policies and practices on the type of academic appointment of faculty (e.g., continuing/regular appointments) are fair, equitable, and appropriate to sustain the degree program.
- The institution has satisfactory policies pertaining to faculty that address issues such as the protection of academic freedom; academic and professional credentials; professional development; the regular review of faculty performance; and the means of ensuring that faculty knowledge of the field is current, that teaching, supervision, and student counselling loads are appropriate, and that a diverse, equitable, and inclusive faculty culture is promoted and retained. Policies and procedures relating to faculty and staff must be publicly available.
- Faculty have an appropriate level of scholarly output and/or research or creative/experiential activity for the baccalaureate or graduate program involved.
- For degrees with an applied or professional focus, faculty maintain continuing academic and professional competence and accreditation in their discipline or field appropriate to the specific degree program.
- For graduate programs the institution must have a detailed graduate supervision plan in place to organize appropriate and accessible advising, supervision, monitoring, and support of graduate students.

- Faculty whose work involves Indigenous Peoples have agreements with them that uphold Indigenous data collection processes and collaborative research design and include principles of ownership, control, access, and protection to avoid cultural appropriation.
- Confirmation that a Research Ethics Board is in place if human research is involved.
- Confirmation that an Animal Care Committee is in place if animal research is involved.

Submission Guidelines

a) Indicate the number of faculty, instructors (present and future), and other administrative and academic support services staff required to mount and maintain the program and the qualifications required. Indicate if the position(s) will be new to the institution. In cases where new faculty or staff will be hired, provide the selection criteria that will be used to ensure new hires have the necessary qualifications.

b) Indicate the number of faculty, instructors, and staff who will be continuing, term, or sessional appointments. Provide a rationale of how this faculty model supports the institution's mission, the overall quality, and the continuous improvement of the degree program.

c) Describe how applications from qualified Indigenous Peoples were encouraged for faculty and staff positions.

d) Describe how applications from qualified people from traditionally underrepresented groups were encouraged for faculty and staff positions.

e) Provide policies pertaining to faculty and instructors specific to the program, including:
   - policies that define the minimum academic/professional credentials required of faculty teaching all courses in the program, and where appropriate, serving as members of thesis or project examining committees;
   - protection of academic freedom;
   - review of faculty performance;
   - teaching, supervision, and student counselling loads; and,
   - professional development of faculty.

f) Provide the institution's policies and practices on the type of academic appointment of faculty specific to this program (e.g., continuing, term, and sessional appointments).

g) Describe the graduate supervision plan for graduate research programs. The plan should specify graduate supervisory loads for faculty; flexible, accessible, and culturally sensitive advising and monitoring practices for graduate students; and procedures for the support, monitoring, and evaluation of students that will provide adequate feedback to the program administrators and to students in support of their success.

h) Explain how the institution ensures that faculty whose work involves Indigenous Peoples have agreements with them that uphold Indigenous data collection processes and collaborative research design and include principles of ownership, control, access, and protection to avoid cultural appropriation.

i) Provide evidence that the institution has the necessary staff to provide appropriate student support services necessary to mount and sustain a quality program at the proposed degree level and to ensure students, including Indigenous students, have the appropriate supports and resources they need to succeed.

j) Provide the number of professional staff providing support for learning and information resources, and the minimum qualifications for senior professional staff.

k) Provide the curricula vitae of faculty members and instructors specific to the program. Curricula vitae follow a standardized format (either the institution's own or the template from the Degree Authorization website) for consistently presenting faculty members' qualifications. Curricula vitae demonstrate academic and/or professional background, teaching experience, service activities, community relationships and involvement, awards/honours, and scholarship. Each faculty member's list of scholarship/research works must not exceed 10 pages in length. Institutions with exempt status are not required to include faculty CVs.

l) Provide policies on faculty research/scholarly activity requirements.

m) State if the institution has a Research Ethics Board and/or an Animal Care Committee.

Renewal of Consent Submission Guidelines

Follow the Submission Guidelines the modification below:

- Modified (a) Indicate the number of faculty, instructors (present and future) and other administrative and academic support services staff required to support the program and the number that are currently supporting the program and their qualifications by campus. Indicate whether the faculty, instructors and staff will be continuing, term, or sessional appointments. In exceptional cases where a substantial proportion of an institution's faculty resources are not permanent in nature, the institution must explain how this faculty model supports the institution's mission achievement, overall high quality, and continuous improvement and how this model is consistent with the spirit and intent of this standard.

**Standard 7    Program Resources and Infrastructure**

*The institution must demonstrate that it has the learning, physical, and information resources (at start-up and at steady state) needed to mount and sustain a program of acceptable quality. These include facilities, equipment, library services and resources, laboratories, computing facilities, shops, specialized equipment, student support services, etc., and work-integrated learning placement supports where this is a component of the program.*

Assessment Criteria
- Program resources (such as support services, library services, databases, computing, classroom equipment, and laboratory facilities) are sufficient in scope, quality, currency, and type to support students and faculty in the program.
- Students and faculty (including those with physical disabilities) have reasonable and equitable access to program resources (such as support services, library services, databases, computing, classroom equipment, and laboratory facilities).
- The institution is committed to providing and maintaining necessary learning and other resources specific to the program and to supplementing them as necessary to meet standards applicable to the field and current technology.
- The institution has sufficient resources for First Nations community-based delivery of the program when delivery is in the First Nations community.

Submission Guidelines
a) Describe the resources that will support this program, including:
  - library resources (on-site library resources relevant to the degree program area and at the appropriate degree level for faculty and students and other library access such as web-based or inter-library arrangements). Include the number of print holdings relevant to the field of study and number of electronic holdings available as program-specific databases;
  - computers and computer access;
  - classrooms, laboratories, and equipment;
  - existing and shared resources at the institution or at other institutions that will be used to offer the program;
  - arrangements to facilitate and support work-integrated learning placements where this is a component of the program;
  - student support services; and,
  - additional resources that will be required to offer this program.

b) Describe the process for ensuring that program resources and associated costs are negotiated and agreed upon with First Nations for in-community delivery prior to the start of the program.

c) Provide the intended implementation schedule and evidence of the appropriateness of the schedule, given the timing of the application and readiness of the institution to offer the program.

d) Describe the institution's plans for determining the adequacy and appropriateness of its learning and information resources and their renewal and upgrade.

e) Submit any agreements with other institutions where resources and services are shared or contracted out.

Renewal of Consent Submission Guidelines

Follow the Submission Guidelines with the modification below:

- Omit (c) Provide the intended implementation schedule and evidence of the appropriateness of the schedule, given the timing of the application and readiness of the institution to offer the program.

**Standard 8    Program Review and Assessment**

*To ensure the ongoing currency of the program and the quality of its learning outcomes, the institution must show evidence that a program review and assessment policy is in place. An institution seeking a renewal of consent must show evidence that it has implemented and is following its program review and assessment policies and procedures.*

Assessment Criteria

- The institution has an institutionally approved policy and procedure for the periodic academic review of programs (i.e., normally every five years) that includes the following characteristics:
    - A self-study undertaken by faculty members and administrators of the program based on evidence relating to program performance, including strengths and weaknesses, desired improvements, and future directions.
    - The self-study takes into account:
        - the continuing appropriateness and accessibility of the program's structure, admissions requirements, method of delivery, and curriculum for the program's educational goals and standards;
        - the adequacy and effective use of resources (academic and student support services, physical, technological, financial, and human);

- faculty performance, including the quality of teaching and supervision and demonstrable currency in the field of specialization;
- the learning outcomes achieved by students and graduates meet the program's stated goals, the degree level standard, and where appropriate, the standards of related regulatory, accrediting, or professional association;
- the continuing adequacy of the methods used for evaluating student progress and achievement to ensure that the degree level standards have been achieved; and,
- the graduate employment rates, graduate satisfaction level, employer satisfaction level, advisory board satisfaction level, student satisfaction level, and graduation rate.

  o An assessment conducted by a panel, usually consisting of three academic, disciplinary experts <u>external to the</u> <u>institution</u>, with experience teaching at the degree level of the program. The review normally includes a site visit, a report of the expert panel assessing program quality and recommendations to strengthen program quality, and an institutional response to the recommendations.

    Note: Degree Quality Assessment Board degree program reviews, reviews conducted by other external accrediting bodies, and consultation with program advisory committees are not substitutes for an institution led periodic external program review process.

  o A summary of the conclusions of the evaluation is made publicly available.

- For professional and applied programs, regular consultation with an external program advisory committee.

<u>Submission Guidelines</u>

a) Describe the policies and procedures that are planned for ensuring adequate depth and breadth and frequency of ongoing program review and assessment once the program has been implemented.

b) Provide the institutionally approved policy and procedures for periodic academic review of programs that conforms to the Assessment Criteria above.

c) Describe the role of an external program advisory committee in developing the program and after the program is implemented.

Renewal of Consent Submission Guidelines

Follow the Submission Guidelines with the modifications below:

- Modified (c) Describe the role of the external program advisory committee since the program was implemented.
- New (d) Existing programs with consent are required to undergo an external academic review prior to the institution applying for renewal of consent. Provide a copy of the external review in an appendix and indicate how the program changed in response to this feedback. External academic reviews should be conducted according to the policy and procedures provided under Submission Guideline (b) of this Standard.
- New (e) For regulated programs that require review, reports from appropriate external review bodies are to be included.

## 5.2  ORGANIZATION REVIEW

The Organization Review Assessment Criteria and Submission Guidelines follow the Overview. The Assessment Criteria and Submission Guidelines apply to all locations in BC.

**Overview**

Provide information about the institution:

A. Organization Information
- Full legal name of organization.
- Operating name of organization if different from the legal name. Note: The proposed name must not be similar to another educational institution established in BC or deemed misleading in any other way that may cause confusion to the public.
- Date of the institution's establishment.
- Institution website (URL).
- Addresses for the head office, the main campus, and all branch campuses.
  - Indicate whether the institution plans to close, expand, or relocate from its current facilities within the next five years. A change in location is a substantive change and requires the Minister's consent before the change may be implemented.
- Number of employees (faculty, administration, and staff) by status (part-time/full-time and continuing/temporary) at each location.
- Number of students enrolled part-time/full-time at the certificate, diploma, undergraduate, and graduate levels, as applicable, at each location.

B. Corporate Structure and Legal Character
- Legal status in the institution's home jurisdiction (if applicable).
- Legal status in BC (e.g., society, corporation).
- Legal character (e.g., articles of incorporation, bylaws, charter, statutory authority, or other documents) including documentation relevant to any relationship with parent, subsidiary, or other corporate groups.

*Institution is a corporation:*
- Provide organizational chart(s) identifying names and position titles of owners, directors, officers, and board members.
- Provide the name, address, telephone number, and electronic mail address of owners, directors, officers, and board members of the institution.

- List all individuals or corporations holding at least 10% ownership in the institution; indicate the percentage of ownership held by each individual or corporation; and describe the nature of any other relationship those individuals may have to the applicant (e.g., president, members of the governing body).
- Describe the reporting relationship between the institution and its parent company.

*Institution is a non-profit/charitable organization:*
- Provide the name, address, telephone number, and email address of each of the members of the governing body.
- Describe the nature of any other relationship those persons may have to the organization (e.g., president, staff).

C. Associated Institutions and Accrediting Bodies
- Name and location of any other business and/or institution with common ownership or otherwise associated with the institution, including at any other location.

- Name and address of any accrediting body that granted approval for the organization.
- Name and address of any body (e.g., regulator, accreditor) responsible for oversight of the organization.
- Provide a letter signed by the organization's legal representative that gives the Degree Quality Assessment Board (Board) the right to contact each of the approval bodies identified and instructs the approval body to release to the Board any and all information relevant to the organization's compliance or noncompliance status with that body.

D. Conduct
- Disclose any instances of non-compliance with legislation, and any legal or administrative actions, either pending or completed, against the organization, its owners, its principals, or any associated institutions, by any law enforcement agency in BC or any other jurisdiction over the previous 10 years.

E. Branch Campus Operations in BC
Institutions applying to operate a branch campus in BC must provide evidence of how the branch campus addresses the Organization Review Standards and Criteria. The following expectations should be considered when addressing the criteria:
- The institution maintains direct responsibility and oversight of all aspects of its branch campus.

- The institution ensures that the academic standards of all degree programs and research expectations provided at the branch campus are comparable to what is provided by the institution's main campus.
- The institution commits to understanding and participating in the BC community and post-secondary system.
- The institution is obligated to meet expectations in BC for programming and operations at its branch campus, which may differ from the institution's home jurisdiction.

See also Operational Guidelines for Branch Operations (Appendix 8).


**ASSESSMENT STANDARDS**


**Standard 1    Mission Statement and Academic Goals**
*The institution has a clearly articulated and published mission and academic goals statement, approved by the governing body, that identifies the academic character and the aspirations of the organization appropriate to that of an academic institution of high standard. The mission and academic goals demonstrate the extent to which the institution is committed to the dissemination of knowledge through teaching and, where applicable, the creation of knowledge and service to community or related professions. The institution has sustainable academic policies and standards that support the institution's mission and academic goals to ensure degree quality and relevance.*

<u>Assessment Criteria</u>
- The institution has a clear and suitable statement of mission and academic goals.
- The mission is articulated publicly and operationalized throughout the institution.
- The mission supports the principles of equity, inclusion, diversity, and anti-racism.
- The institution's programs, support services, and enrollment profile are consistent with its mission and academic goals.
- Investments, resources, and policies support the mission.
- Academic policies are in place and implemented accordingly to support the institution's mission and the program offerings.

- Key information about the organization, its mission, policies, and programs are readily available to students and the public through its website and includes:
  - The organization's mission and academic goals statement.
  - The organization's history and its governance and academic structure.
  - A description of the type(s) of programming currently offered.
  - A general description of each degree program (e.g., purpose, outcomes, length, and credit value).
  - The senior administrators and their academic credentials.
- The institution affirms its commitment to equal treatment of all persons without discrimination on the basis of Indigenous identity, race, ethnicity, religious beliefs, colour, gender, physical or mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, family status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or other grounds identified in applicable human rights law.

Submissions Guidelines

a) Provide the organization's official mandate and/or mission statement and academic goals.
b) Provide a summary of the organization's plans for growth in programs and enrolments.
c) Include a summary on how resources are used to advance the organization's mission.
d) Provide a hyperlink to the specific documents on the institution's website and/or in its academic calendar/catalogue outlining the key organizational information and the policies noted above.
e) Provide the institution's statement on its commitment to the equal treatment of all persons.

**Standard 2    Institutional Evaluation and Effectiveness**

*The institution has implemented a formal, sustainable policy and procedure requiring the periodic review of all units to occur on a cyclical basis, normally not exceeding ten years. The underlying principle of the institutional evaluation will be continuous improvement as a high-quality educational enterprise committed to the principles of equity, inclusion, diversity, and anti-racism.*

Assessment Criteria

- The institution has appropriate academic and operational policies that support its mission, priorities, and educational goals.

- The institution provides evidence that its planning process is inclusive of faculty, staff, and students, and offers opportunities for comment by a wide range of interested parties inside and outside the institution.
- The institution understands the community in which it operates, both its immediate community and wider post-secondary system within the province, and values external peer review.
- The periodic review policy and procedure to assess the institution's effectiveness includes, at a minimum:
  - a self-study undertaken by faculty members and administrators based on evidence relating to the institution's performance in the areas of student learning, enrollment management, data and records management, resources, facilities, and support services as well as its commitment to the principles of equity, inclusion, diversity, and anti-racism;

  - the self-study should include strengths and weaknesses, desired improvements, and future directions;
  - an assessment conducted by a panel of experts external to the institution that normally includes a site visit;
  - a report of the expert panel assessing institutional effectiveness that provides recommendations to strengthen institutional quality and commitment;
  - an institutional response to the recommendations; and,
  - a summary of the conclusions of the evaluation made publicly available.

Submission Guidelines

a) Explain how the organization undertakes periodic reviews of its processes and operations to assess its achievement of institutional goals and its effectiveness as a high-quality degree-granting institution. Include the institutional review policy and submit previous reviews, including recommendations and actions that resulted from the review.

b) Explain the organization's process for conducting student outcomes reviews that are informed by demographics (e.g., gender, number of Indigenous students, number of racialized students, number of students with disabilities, etc.) and include:
  - enrolment;
  - student retention rates;
  - student learning outcomes;
  - student completion times;
  - student employment outcomes;

- graduate satisfaction; and,
- employer satisfaction.

c) Explain the organization's accountability process (including appropriate reporting mechanisms) to account for revenue received from any public sources (e.g., tuition and ancillary fees, federal or provincial government funding) and how the revenue is effectively distributed within the institution for its operations.

d) Describe the organization's enrollment management plan, including how the organization monitors student retention, progress, and success; manages enrollment based on its current capacity (human and physical); and plans for growth by making the necessary investments to ensure program quality is maintained.

e) Describe the organization's records management system, including what records are kept; who has responsibility for records; who can access the records; how the accuracy and integrity of records are assured; where records are stored, etc. Include the organization's records management and retention policy in the appendix.

f) Explain the organization's policy framework, including the controls for policy development, approval, review and updating; awareness and distribution of policies; and processes to ensure roles and responsibilities have the right level of authority for decision-making. In the appendix, provide the organization's policy framework, showing areas of responsibility consistent with the organization chart submitted for Standard 4.

g) Describe how the institution engages with its local community, including First Nations, and responds to its needs.

**Standard 3    Program Development, Evaluation, and Effectiveness**
*The institution has implemented a sustainable plan, policies, and processes for new program development, for assessing the effectiveness of its existing educational programs and services, and for making continuous improvement.*

Assessment Criteria
- The institution has an institutionally approved policy and procedure for the development of new programs that includes the following characteristics:
    - fit with the institution's areas of strengths;
    - analysis of the feasibility of the program, including labour market analysis, student demand, resource implications, and resources required to maintain the program;
    - analysis of economic and social needs for the program that includes government priorities, targeted students, and environmental analysis;

- o broad consultation with internal stakeholders (e.g., other departments, faculty, and students) and external stakeholders (e.g., other post-secondary institutions in BC, employers, professional accrediting bodies, where applicable, and people whose lives contribute to the integrity of the program); and
  - o review and approval by the institution's academic governing body (i.e., senate, education council or equivalent).
- The institution has an institutionally approved policy and procedure for the periodic academic review of programs (normally every five years) that includes the following characteristics:
  - o A self-study undertaken by faculty members and administrators of the program based on evidence relating to program performance, including strengths and weaknesses, desired improvements, and future directions.
  - o The self-study takes into account:
    - the continuing appropriateness and accessibility of the program's structure, admissions requirements, method of delivery, and curriculum for the program's educational goals and standards;
    - the adequacy and effective use of resources (academic and student support services, physical, technological, financial, and human);
    - faculty performance including the quality of teaching and supervision, and demonstrable currency in the field of specialization;
    - the learning outcomes achieved by students and graduates meet the program's stated goals, the degree level standard, and where appropriate, the standards of related regulatory, accrediting, or professional association;
    - the continuing adequacy of the methods used for evaluating student progress and achievement to ensure that the degree level standards have been achieved; and,
    - the graduate employment rates, graduate satisfaction, employer satisfaction, advisory board satisfaction, student satisfaction, and graduation rate.
  - o An assessment conducted by a panel, usually consisting of three academic, disciplinary experts external to the institution, with experience teaching at the degree level of the program. The review normally includes a site visit, a report of the expert panel assessing program quality and recommendations to strengthen program quality, and an institutional response to the recommendations.

Note: Degree Quality Assessment Board degree program reviews, reviews conducted by other external accrediting bodies, and consultation with program advisory committees are not substitutes for an institution led periodic external program review process.

- The institution has policies and processes for continuously improving upon the effectiveness and relevancy of programs which include:
    - acting upon the findings of internal and external reviews; and
    - conducting surveys that evaluate the success of a program's graduates by demographic and ensure programs represented as preparation for advanced study and/or employment accomplish these purposes.

Submission Guidelines

a) Describe the program development process for new degree programs. Include the institution's policy and procedures for new program development in the appendix.

b) Describe the institution's policy and procedures for the periodic academic review of programs that address the program review elements described in the criteria above. Provide the institutionally approved policy and procedures in the appendix.

c) Describe how the institution responds to the findings of external and internal reviews, and how it undergoes the process of approving and changing its policies, processes, or programs as a result of the external or internal reviews.

**Standard 4    Governance and Administrative Capacity**
*The institution has an effective governance structure necessary to organize and manage a reputable, effective, and high-quality degree-granting institution in BC. The structure includes a body competent to either make decisions or give advice on academic matters. It has an effective system of leadership, staffed by qualified administrators, with appropriate, clearly defined levels of authority, responsibility, and accountability. The institution's decision-making structures and processes are inclusive of a diversity of people and perspectives, and take into consideration the views of faculty, staff, and students on matters that they have a direct and reasonable interest in.*

Assessment Criteria

- The institution has an appropriate governing structure such as a governing board that is responsible for managing the activities of the institution and maintaining the purpose, viability, and integrity of the institution; monitoring and assessing organizational performance in achieving institutional goals; selecting administrative leadership; and, providing the appropriate financial, physical plant, and human

resources.

- The institution's reporting structure clearly indicates the relationship between owners, and governing and managing bodies with clear reporting lines, roles, and accountability structures, reflected in an appropriate organizational chart.
- Governance structures have clear lines of decision-making authority that are consistent with the institution's academic purposes and mission and are followed as part of the institution's general operating procedure.
- The institution has an academic council, senate, or equivalent, which includes faculty and students in its membership, that is responsible for academic policies and standards, and for ensuring the academic integrity of programs.
- The institution has an academically and/or experientially qualified chief executive officer who is accountable to the governing board and whose full-time or major responsibility is the administration of the institution.
- The institution has an academically qualified Vice President Academic or equivalent whose full-time or major responsibility is to provide academic leadership within the institution.
- The institution has sufficient and qualified senior administrative staff, with clear lines of responsibility, decision-making authority, and accountability necessary to conduct the affairs of the institution.
- The institution is able to demonstrate how administrative policies and practices ensure that business practices and decisions support the academic integrity of programs and protect student interests.

Submission Guidelines:
a) Provide an organizational chart that outlines the organization's governance and administrative structure showing:
   o a description of the responsibilities and authority of each body identified in the chart, and the eligibility criteria for the appointment to each body;
   o information on the organization's reporting structure and the relationship among the governing bodies; and
   o an outline of the bodies, committees, and senior administrative roles within the organization involved in the development of, and/or decision-making pertaining to, the curriculum, academic policies, and academic standards, and identify the roles of faculty and students within these bodies and committees. Provide this in an appendix.

b) Provide job descriptions for each senior administrative role in the organization, including duties, decision-making authority, and required qualifications.

c) Provide copies of CVs of the individuals currently in senior administrative roles as an appendix.

d) Describe plans to subcontract any functions of the institution and how the institution will provide oversight of the subcontractor. Provide agreements in an appendix.

## Standard 5 Institutional Conduct

*The institution values and upholds integrity and ethical conduct as an administrative organization as demonstrated by the policies and practices by which it conducts its business and, if applicable, by its past performance within and/or outside of BC. The institution proactively complies with legislative and regulatory obligations.*

Assessment Criteria

- An acceptable statement by the governing board, administrative officers, and other representatives of the organization, of the ethical standards relating to fair and honest operational practices, including a policy on conflict of interest that will guide its conduct in the course of operations in BC and in other jurisdictions.

- The institution can demonstrate it has developed and implemented policies and practices that are necessary to comply with the *Degree Authorization Act* and regulations, the requirements of Ministerial consent, and meet reporting and other obligations as a result of its inclusion in provincial or federal programs.

- The institution can demonstrate it has developed and implemented policies and practices that are necessary to meet its obligations under the *Personal Information Protection Act* and any other legislation that may apply to its operations concerning the collection and use of personal information.

- The institution, its partners, and agents represent the institution's information clearly, accurately, and consistently regarding its programs, resources, and services to students.

Submission Guidelines

a) Provide an institutionally approved statement of ethical standards on fair and honest operational practices.

b) Provide an institutionally approved conflict of interest policy regarding the practices within the institution.

c) Explain how the institution will ensure it is proactively and continuously in compliance with regulatory obligations.

d) Provide the institution's policy regarding the collection, protection, use, and disclosure of personal information.

e) Describe the process(es) that will be in place to collect data required for meeting provincial and federal legislative and regulatory obligations and expectations, including how the process(es) assures the quality and integrity of the data, and the mechanism(s) to be used.

f) Describe how the institution will ensure its staff, partners, and agents represent the institution's information clearly, accurately, and consistently regarding its programs, resources, and services to students.

**Standard 6    Dispute Resolution**

*The institution has implemented appropriate policies and procedures for dealing with disputes between the institution and its students, the institution and faculty, the institution and staff, faculty, and students, and between faculty and staff. Complaints, grievances, and/or disputes of students, faculty, staff, and administration are dealt with in accordance with the principles of natural justice and are fair, reasonable, and effective. The dispute resolution policies and procedures are published on the institution's website.*

Assessment Criteria

- The institution has implemented formal policies and procedures through which (i) students' academic appeals, and (ii) students', faculty and staff complaints, grievances and/or other disputes, both academic and non-academic in nature, are dealt with in accordance with the following principles of natural justice:
  - Individuals have a right to:
    - A fair and expeditious resolution of disputes with reasonable deadlines.
    - Know and understand the charges or complaints made against them.
    - Be heard in response to charges or complaints made against them before any disciplinary decision is taken.
  - Institutions have an obligation to:
    - Deal with complaints or grievances according to clear and reasonable deadlines.
    - Establish and operate according to administrative processes that deal with disputes fairly and expeditiously.
    - Prior to registration, confirm that information has been provided to students regarding policies and procedures pertaining to: (i) academic policies and standards; (ii) student support and services; and (iii) withdrawal, dismissal, and refund policies.

- Students, faculty, and staff have ready access to the policies and procedures on the institution's website and are informed about the policies and procedures for dispute resolution prior to joining the institution and upon every change in policy. To these ends, the institution'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 and who may facilitate the satisfactory resolution of disputes that is clearly identified in policy.
  - There is a process for, and an officer charged with, reviewing disputes and examining the evidence.
  - There is a provision for a final internal review by a person, or body of persons, not involved in the dispute in any way.

Submission Guidelines

a) Provide institutionally approved dispute resolution policies and processes for academic, financial, or any other circumstances in which disputes may arise within the institution.
b) Provide evidence that the policies and procedures are publicly available.
c) Explain how students, faculty, and staff are informed about (i) the policies and procedures for dispute resolution; and (ii) changes to policies or procedures.

**Standard 7    Financial Capacity**

*The institution demonstrates financial capacity sufficient to assure stability and adequate long-term financial resources, to provide a stable learning environment, and to ensure that the number of students assumed in the business plan can complete the degree program in the event that revenue falls short of the business plan or costs exceed the estimated allowances.*

Assessment Criteria

- The institution has identified the source of funds to be invested.
- The institution has a policy requiring the regular audit of financial methods and records, performance, and stability by a qualified third-party professional accountant in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices.
- The institution has evidence of methods to protect student financial investment.
- The institution has a credible and strategic business plan outlining academic, financial, facilities, marketing, and human resources (both academic and non-academic) that demonstrate the institution has the administrative organization and capacity to effectively manage a degree-granting institution and/or a branch campus.

- Financial information indicates the organization has a financial base adequate to support activities consistent with its mission and educational objectives, and the required financial resources for start-up and ongoing operating costs associated with the delivery of degree programs in BC.
- The institution is able to provide independently audited financial statements that provide assurance of the institution's financial viability over a term of no less than five years.

<u>Submission Guidelines</u>

a) Provide a short- and long-term business plan that speaks to the assessment criteria above. The short- (1-2 years, e.g., start-up phase) and long-term business plan (at least five years) must demonstrate adequate financial resources and include:
   o a best case / worst case scenario (including risk management and risk mitigation strategies) that addresses the institution's future educational, enrolment, physical, and fiscal growth in BC;
   o yearly financial ratios (including: cost per student per course completion, cost per student per credit hour, cost per graduate, ratio of teaching costs to overhead costs, percent of budget allocated to learning resources and library, percent of expenditures on contracts for teaching staff who are not full-time employees of the organization, net of earned revenue minus costs, technology expenditure per student and graduate);
   o future fiscal priorities;
   o the process of costing new programs and assessing risks; and,
   o analysis of financial strengths and challenges.
b) Provide the institution's policy requiring the regular audit of financial methods, performance, and stability by a qualified third-party accountant in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices in the appendix.
c) Include the current audited financial statements in an appendix. The audited financial statements must include a breakdown of the institution operating in BC if it is audited as part of a larger corporation or parent company. Review engagement reports will not be accepted in place of audited financial statements.
d) In the case of new institutions, or institutions that are in the process of being planned or launched, the institution must provide concrete commitments from its financial backers, such as a letter of credit on corporate letterhead.

**Standard 8   Facilities and Learning Infrastructure**

*The institution has the facilities and learning infrastructure to support the educational objectives of a degree-granting institution and to specifically support the academic programs offered (or proposed to be offered) at all locations in BC. The institution is committed to maintaining and supplementing learning resources and equipment and regularly reviews how priorities are established with respect to their acquisition.*

Assessment Criteria

- The physical space, equipment, technology, learning infrastructure, and support services fully support the institution's educational and student activities at BC locations in BC.
- The institution has a planning process to assess the appropriateness of the institution's facilities and learning resources for the number of students, faculty, and staff, and their physical needs, including those with disabilities.
- The facilities comply with the enactments of BC and the municipality or the regional district in which the facilities are located.
- Technology-based, computer-based, and web-based learning and modes of delivery ensure:
  - appropriate hardware, software, and other technological resources, and media are readily accessible and up-to-date;
  - reliable and sufficient course management systems are in place;
  - appropriate safeguards are in place to assure the authentication of student identity and the integrity of student work;
  - appropriate storage protocols are in place to assure that security of personal information is protected in conducting assessments and evaluations, and in the dissemination of results;
  - accessible, ongoing technical assistance is equitably and readily available for students and faculty; and,
  - well-maintained and current technology and equipment are available to all students and faculty on an equitable basis.
- Institutions that offer or plan to offer graduate level programming must provide the essential information resources and supports appropriate to graduate student work. These resources must be adequate for the number of students enrolled, for the level of study, and be reasonably accessible to students with disabilities. Resources include laboratory, computer, studio, and/or creative facilities, as well as essential other resources, to adequately support the research of faculty and students, including those with physical disabilities.

- The institution ensures a safe environment for students, faculty, and staff, including those with physical disabilities, and is prepared to respond to emergency situations and critical incidents at all locations in BC.

<u>Submission Guidelines</u>
a) Describe how the physical plant and learning infrastructure, including laboratories, classrooms, library, technology, and specialized equipment are accessible to students, faculty, and staff of all abilities at all locations in BC. Include the policies and/or procedures to ensure these facilities remain up-to-date and relevant. Submit floor plans indicating the facilities available and the dimensions and capacity of spaces in an appendix.
b) Provide a statement that the institution's location(s) comply with municipal or regional district bylaws including but not limited to zoning and land uses, building bylaws, public health, and BC Fire Code compliance.
c) Describe the planning processes in place for the institution's facilities and learning resources, including how the institution assesses whether they are appropriate for the number of students, faculty, and staff, and their physical needs, including those with disabilities. Include policies and/or procedures for the acquisition of learning resources.
d) For institutions offering graduate programs, describe the learning and physical resources to support faculty and student research as appropriate to the degree level.
e) Submit any agreements with other institutions or organizations where resources and services are shared or subcontracted.
f) Provide policies pertaining to technology-based, computer-based, and web-based learning and modes of delivery, including what steps the institution will take to ensure these are equitably available to all students.
g) Provide the institution's safety and emergency preparedness policies for all locations in BC to support the needs of students, faculty, and staff, including those with physical disabilities.

**Standard 9    Faculty and Staff**

*The institution has appropriately qualified faculty and instructional staff led by a group of continuing faculty committed to achieving its mission and academic goals. The institution has policies and procedures with respect to appointment, evaluation, and employment conditions of faculty and staff, including employment equity, promotion, termination, and professional development. The institution has sufficient staff to provide an appropriate level and balance of student support services to ensure the necessary supports are in place for student success in the degree level(s) proposed or granted consent in BC.*

Assessment Criteria

- The institution's faculty plan for BC demonstrates it has continuing faculty and staff in sufficient numbers to:
  - Provide academic programs stability, consistency, continuity of programming, and ongoing quality improvement.
  - Plan, develop, and deliver academic program(s) (including in each of the fields of specialization identified in the program);
  - Act as research supervisors, where appropriate.
  - Meet the demands of the projected student enrolment as indicated in the institution's enrolment management plan and/or business plan.
- The institution commits to, and maintains, a minimum threshold of 50 percent of course sections within each degree program to be taught by continuing and/or term faculty. Some fields may require a higher minimum standard.
- The institution's faculty qualifications policy incorporates best practices such as hiring academically qualified faculty with terminal degrees in the field in which they are teaching, hiring experientially qualified faculty recognized by professional peers as exemplary in the field, etc.
- The institution's hiring policy and practices promote the principles of equity, inclusion, diversity, and anti-racism.
- The institution demonstrates due diligence in hiring, including provisions against fraudulent credentials.
- The institution demonstrates it has the necessary student support services and human resources to mount and sustain quality programs and support student life.
- The institution has policies and procedures that are fair and equitable for the appointment, evaluation, employment conditions, promotion, termination, and professional development of faculty and staff. To this end, the policies and procedures:
  - Demonstrate that a comprehensive faculty orientation and development program is in place that includes best practices in pedagogy; courses in equity,

inclusion, diversity, and anti-racism; and evaluation processes to ensure that all faculty are teaching and evaluating students in a fair, equitable, and consistent manner.

- o Define teaching and administrative workloads to allow faculty time for course development, preparation, continuing research, and/or involvement in other scholarly activities that are appropriate to the degree level, delivery mode, and program type they are teaching.
- o Demonstrate that faculty are engaged in intellectual activities, and when applicable, community service, institutional service, service in academic organizations, organizational consulting, and other outreach within BC's post-secondary sector;
- o Require the regular review of faculty performance, including student evaluation of teaching and/or supervision;
- o Identify the means of ensuring that faculty knowledge of the field is current through professional development, scholarship, and research.
- o Specify teaching and supervisory loads and availability to students.
- o Support the professional development of faculty and staff, including the promotion of curricular and instructional innovation, as well as technological skills, where appropriate.
- o Clearly outline the duties and responsibilities, institutional reporting structure, and performance standards for faculty and staff, and ensure the roles and responsibilities assigned to staff do not pose a conflict of interest.

*Additional Assessment Criteria for Graduate Programs*

- Institutions planning to offer graduate level degree programming must have a policy and process for graduate supervision (e.g., qualifications of advisers, committee members, interim advisers, co-supervision, mentoring new supervisors, number of students to be supervised, monitoring of student progress).
- Institutions planning to offer graduate level programming have continuing 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.).
- Institutions must demonstrate sufficient numbers of administrative staff to manage the increased complexity of policies and procedures associated with offering graduate-level programs. 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.

- Institutions whose work involves Indigenous Peoples have developed agreements that uphold Indigenous data collection processes and collaborative research design, including the principles of ownership, control, access, and protection to avoid cultural appropriation.

<u>Submission Guidelines</u>

a) Provide a faculty plan that outlines the scale of faculty and staff requirements to support projected enrolments in the short- (three years) and long-term (five years) for each degree program. Indicate whether the faculty, instructors, and staff will be continuing (permanent), term, or sessional appointments, and whether these appointments are for a specific program or shared across several programs, and if shared, specify which program(s). In exceptional cases where a substantial proportion of an institution's faculty resources do not have continuing appointments, the institution must provide documentation of how this faculty model supports its mission, promotes high quality and continuous improvement, and is consistent with the spirit and intent of this standard.

b) Provide the institution's policies and practices on the type of academic appointment of faculty (e.g., continuing, term, or sessional appointments).

c) Provide the institution's policies and practices on the minimum qualifications required of faculty members and on the process for verifying qualifications.

d) Provide the institution's policies and procedures with respect to appointment, evaluation, employment conditions including employment equity, promotion, termination, and professional development for faculty and staff.

e) Provide evidence that the institution has the student support services and human resources necessary to mount and sustain quality programs and support student life.

f) For institutions planning to offer graduate level degree programming, provide the policy and process for graduate supervision (e.g., qualifications of advisers, committee members, interim advisers, co-supervision, mentoring new supervisors, number of students to be supervised, monitoring of student progress).

g) Describe how the institution will ensure faculty whose work involves Indigenous peoples will uphold Indigenous data collection processes and collaborative research design.

h) Provide the number of professional staff providing support for learning and information resources and the minimum qualifications for senior professional staff.

i) Describe the ways scholarly work is supported (e.g., financial release time) at the institution.

**Standard 10  Admissions, Student Recruitment, and Transfer**

*The institution has equitable, ethical, and transparent policies in place governing admissions and recruitment of students that are consistently applied. The institution has a systematic method for evaluating and awarding academic credit and clearly defined criteria for evaluating student learning and awarding course credit. The institution has established policies and procedures for awarding the transfer of academic credit with consistency and provides prominent and meaningful disclosure of transfer and articulation agreements.*

Assessment Criteria
- The institution's public reports, materials, and advertising are produced in a full, accurate and truthful manner, and student recruitment policies follow fair business practices, including the advertisement of transfer arrangements.
- Admission policies are consistent with the institution's mission and academic goals, the level of preparation necessary for students, and admission requirements for students entering similar degree programs at other degree-granting institutions in BC.

- All policies and procedures have been implemented appropriately and consistently and are publicly available to prospective and current students.
- The institution has policies for evaluating and awarding transfer credit that are systematic and satisfy current program course requirements.
- Students are informed about the transfer credit arrangements currently in place with other institutions.
- The institution has policies for requesting and articulating transfer credit that are systematic and consistent with those established for institutions currently within the BC Transfer System.

Submission Guidelines
a) Provide the institution's policies on ensuring that print or website recruitment material remain truthful, accurate, and transparent.
b) Provide the institution's admission policies and procedures, including prior learning assessment, the weight put on entrance examinations and other admissions criteria, program requirements, and academic prerequisites.
c) Provide policies on transfer arrangements. Describe how current transfer agreements with other institutions are achieved and how students are informed of transfer agreements and transfer options available.

**Standard 11  Policies on Academic Freedom, Honesty, and Integrity**

*The institution maintains an atmosphere in which academic freedom exists and students and academic staff display a high degree of intellectual independence. The institution not only promotes a full and balanced treatment of diverse types of pedagogy, theories, and opinions, but also encourages testing the limits of knowledge, and communicating research and scholarly findings and their implications widely.*

*Academic activity is supported by policies, procedures, and practices that encourage academic honesty and integrity and respect the ownership rights of the creators of intellectual property whether faculty, staff, or students. The institution has adopted formal ethical research standards as well as policies concerning the management of research funds. The institution has the means and procedures for the enforcement of the above policies based on principles of natural justice.*

<u>Assessment Criteria</u>
- The institution has clearly articulated and published policies and procedures on academic freedom that recognize and protect the rights of individuals in their pursuit of knowledge and respects the rights of individuals to communicate acquired knowledge and the results of research freely.
- If students or staff are asked to sign or adhere to a statement of faith and/or a code of conduct, it must not constrain academic freedom.
- Policies and processes pertaining to academic honesty, including appropriate enforcement procedures, are in place ensuring faculty and students are educated in, and fully understand, the concept of plagiarism. Students are provided with the tools they need to ensure proper citation and referencing appropriate to the degree program and degree level offered.
- There is an appropriate plan for informing students and faculty about, and ensuring their understanding of, the policies and procedures concerning academic honesty and the consequences of violating these policies.
- There is an appropriate policy on ownership of the intellectual property of faculty, staff, and students.
- There is an appropriate policy on the management of research funds.
- Where appropriate, there are formal ethical research standards, as evidenced by policies on human research participants, the use of animals in research, and the management of research funds.

- The institution has for e-learning, blended learning, and distance learning components:
  - appropriate policies and procedures to address copyright and intellectual property issues (e.g., digital rights management and the use of object learning repositories);
  - appropriate safeguards to assure the authentication of student identity and the integrity of student work; and
  - policies and procedures to assure the verification of student identity for course work and examinations, and for the control of examinations, including but not limited to security, time limits, and the selection of proctors/invigilators.
- The institution publishes the policies noted above and makes these accessible and available to faculty, staff, and students in an academic calendar or other publication.

Submission Guidelines

a) Include the institution's policies and procedures related to academic honesty and integrity, as well as plagiarism and the appropriate student resource tools for proper citation and referencing.
b) Indicate whether students and staff are asked to sign or adhere to a statement of faith and/or a code of conduct that might constitute a constraint upon academic freedom. Provide the related policy in an appendix.
c) Summarize the policies and procedures referenced in the Assessment Criteria and indicate where faculty, staff, and students may access them. Provide the policies and procedures in an appendix.
d) For e-learning, blended learning, and distance learning components, summarize the policies and procedures for copyright and intellectual property issues, authentication of student identity and integrity of work, and verification of student identities for course work and examinations. Provide the policies and procedures in an appendix.

**Standard 12  Student Protection and Awareness**
*The institution 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, and admission requirements, including credit transfer and prior learning assessment policies. The institution creates a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment that supports its mission and the learning, growth, and well-being of its students. The institution provides clear and informative student enrollment agreements or other contracts verifying student awareness of relevant policies, support services, payment requirements and refund policies, financial assistance, and transcript protection. The institution*

*provides prominent and meaningful public disclosure of all policies that affect student education and degree completion.*

Assessment Criteria
- The institution's student policies are publicly available.
- Students are provided with, and confirm through the student enrollment contract, or when responding to a letter of acceptance, their awareness of the following policies and procedures prior to the institution accepting a tuition deposit:
  - admission requirements;
  - the weight placed on entrance examinations and other admissions criteria;
  - prior learning assessment;
  - other academic prerequisites;
  - credit transfer arrangements and recognition by other institutions;
  - method of course delivery;
  - academic integrity;
  - intellectual property;
  - student support services available at the institution;
  - scholarship and other financial assistance;
  - grading;
  - appeal of grades;
  - student withdrawal, dismissal and tuition refund;
  - student complaints and grievances;
  - anti-bullying, equity, diversity, inclusion, anti-racism, and accommodation for students with disabilities;
  - sexual violence and misconduct; and
  - supervision, preparation, and examination of theses/dissertations (applicable to research graduate programs).
- The student enrollment contract and related policies are fair, reasonable, and consistent with the expectations of a degree level institution, and with the Standard Terms and Conditions of the Minister's consent.

Submission Guidelines
a) Explain how the institution ensures all students are informed of the institution's policies listed in the Assessment Criteria prior to accepting the tuition deposit.
b) Provide a copy of the student enrolment contract and a template Letter of Acceptance.
c) Indicate a publicly accessible location where students may review the policies (i.e., website).

**Standard 13  Student Withdrawal, Dismissal, and Refund Policies**

*The institution has policies and procedures for student withdrawal, dismissal, and refund that are fair, reasonable, and effective, and can confirm the awareness of students of these policies and procedures.*

Assessment Criteria
- The institution has clearly articulated policies and procedures regarding student withdrawal, dismissal, and tuition refunds that are fair and reasonable.
- The policies and procedures must be made available to prospective and current students, as well as made publicly available on the institution's website.
- The institution has policies for resolving student complaints and disputes with respect to withdrawal, dismissal, and tuition refunds that are fair, reasonable, effective, and transparent.
- The dispute resolution procedures for resolving student complaints and disputes with respect to withdrawal, dismissal, and tuition refunds must be fair, reasonable, effective, and transparent.

Submission Guidelines
a) Provide policies and procedures regarding student withdrawal, dismissal, and refunds that include dispute resolution procedures.
b) Provide evidence that the policies and procedures are implemented and followed.

**Standard 14  Student Life and Support Services**

*The institution has at all locations in BC, the facilities, services, and programs that provide equitable support for all students to succeed in their studies and to develop and grow in non-academic areas.*

Assessment Criteria
- The institution has policies, procedures, and staff to administer student financial assistance programs and to assist students.
- The institution has qualified staff who are experienced in advising students on academic performance and related matters.
- The institution has qualified staff who are experienced in advising students on employment opportunities and providing career services.
- Students have equitable access to health and wellness services, including mental health services.

- The institution has written policies and procedures that address sexual violence and misconduct, including sexual misconduct prevention, and set out procedures for:
    o making a complaint or report of sexual misconduct involving a student; and
    o responding to a complaint or report of sexual misconduct involving a student.
- The institution has support services that facilitate the success of Indigenous students.
- The institution has support services that facilitate the success of students from diverse backgrounds.
- The institution has other support services typical of post-secondary degree-granting institutions that support daily life and facilitate student success.
- The institution provides support for ancillary services (e.g., housing).

NOTE: Refer to the *Sexual Violence and Misconduct Policy Act* for a definition of "sexual misconduct".

Submission Guidelines
a) Provide evidence that the institution has the resources to equitably administer the student financial assistance program and to assist students. Include the institution's policies and procedures for student financial assistance.
b) Describe the academic advising services available to students, including the number of advisors per student, their qualifications, and availability.
c) Describe the support services that facilitate the success of Indigenous students.
d) Describe the career services available to students, including the resources available to students prior to graduation and post-graduation.
e) Describe the health and wellness services available to students.
f) Provide the institution's policies relating to anti-bullying, equity, diversity, inclusion, anti-racism, and accommodation for students with disabilities.
g) Provide the institution's policy on sexual misconduct.
h) Describe the services offered for international students to facilitate their settlement in the community such as advising on and accessing housing services, health services, orientation to Canadian culture, accessing transportation and other services, etc.
i) Describe student life services provided by the institution. For example, food services, housing, athletics, recreation, student government, clubs, and other extra-curricular activities.
j) Describe how the institution ensures students have access to student life and support services at all locations.

## 5.3 USE OF THE WORD "UNIVERSITY"

**Preamble**

A university is an institution of higher education and research, which grants degrees in a variety of subjects. The word *university* is derived from the Latin *universitas magistrorum et scholarium*, roughly meaning "community of teachers and scholars."

A university's primary commitment is to:

*Teaching – the intellectual development and academic success of its students*
- A university offers programs primarily at the baccalaureate level or above, usually including graduate degrees (master's or doctoral).
- Undergraduate programs include a significant liberal arts and science component that provides students with broad exposure to multiple disciplines.

*Research/Scholarship – the creation of knowledge and its dissemination through application, publication, presentation and/or teaching*
- Research and/or scholarly activity is a key function of its faculty and is built into the workload of continuing faculty.
- Research and/or scholarly activity can be foundational or applied.
- Faculty have the academic freedom to teach and conduct research within an academic environment.

*Community engagement – service to the community within and outside of the university*
- A governance structure with an acceptable level of faculty and student involvement in decision making.
- A commitment to public accountability and local community involvement, and functions in an open and transparent manner.
- Undergraduate programs are integrated into the BC post-secondary system with opportunities for students to transfer and ladder across institutions.
- Engagement with First Nations.

Branch Campus Operations

Institutions applying to operate through a branch campus must provide evidence of how the branch campus addresses the criteria for Use of the Word "University". The following expectations should be considered:
- The institution maintains direct responsibility and oversight of all aspects of its branch

campus.

- The institution ensures that the academic standards of all degree programs and research expectations provided at the branch campus are comparable to what is provided by the institution's main campus.
- The institution commits to understanding and participating in the BC community and post-secondary system.
- The institution is obligated to meet expectations in BC for programming and operations at its branch campus, which may differ from the institution's home jurisdiction.

See also Operational Guidelines for Branch Operations (Appendix 8).

New Organizations

The Standards and Criteria for Use of the Word "University" are indicative of a mature institution. As such, it is difficult for new institutions to provide all the evidence required to satisfy the Standards and Criteria. The Degree Quality Assessment Board recommends that prior to applying, the institution should be in operation and authorized to deliver a number of degree programs for a minimum of two years.

**Overview**

The Use of the Word "University" Assessment Submission Guidelines follow the Overview. The Assessment Criteria and Submission Guidelines apply to all BC locations.

Provide information about the institution:

A. Organization Information

- Full legal name of organization.
- Operating name of organization if different from the legal name. Note: The proposed university name must not be similar to another educational institution established in BC or deemed misleading in any other way that may cause confusion to the public.
- Date of the institution's establishment.
- Institution website (URL).
- Addresses for the head office, the main campus, and all branch campuses.
  - Indicate whether the institution plans to close, expand, or relocate from its current facilities within the next five years. A change in location is a substantive change and requires the Minister's consent before the change may be implemented.

- Number of employees (faculty, administration, and staff) by status (part-time/full-time and continuing/temporary) at each location.
- Number of students enrolled part-time/full-time at the certificate, diploma, undergraduate, and graduate levels, as applicable, at each location.

B. Corporate Structure and Legal Character
- Legal status in the institution's home jurisdiction (if applicable).
- Legal status in BC (e.g., society, corporation).
- Legal character (e.g., articles of incorporation, bylaws, charter, statutory authority, or other documents) including documentation relevant to any relationship with parent, subsidiary, or other corporate groups.

*Institution is a corporation:*
- Provide organizational chart(s) identifying names and position titles of owners, directors, officers, and board members.
- Provide the name, address, telephone number, and electronic mail address of owners, directors, officers, and board members of the institution.
- List all individuals or corporations holding at least 10% ownership in the institution; indicate the percentage of ownership held by each individual or corporation; and describe the nature of any other relationship those individuals may have to the applicant (e.g., president, members of the governing body).
- Describe the reporting relationship between the institution and its parent company.

*Institution is a non-profit/charitable organization:*
- Provide the name, address, telephone number, and email address of each of the members of the governing body.
- Describe the nature of any other relationship those persons may have to the organization (e.g., president, staff).

C. Associated Institutions and Accrediting Bodies
- Name and location of any other business and/or institution with common ownership or otherwise associated with the institution, including at any other location.
- Name and address of any accrediting body that granted approval for the organization.
- Name and address of any body (e.g., regulator, accreditor) responsible for oversight of the organization.
- Provide a letter signed by the organization's legal representative that gives the Degree Quality Assessment Board (Board) the right to contact each of the approval bodies

identified and instructs the approval body to release to the Board any and all information relevant to the organization's compliance or noncompliance status with that body.

D. Conduct
- Disclose any instances of non-compliance with legislation, and any legal or administrative actions, either pending or completed, against the organization, its owners, its principals, or any associated institutions, by any law enforcement agency in BC or any other jurisdiction over the previous 10 years.


**ASSESSMENT STANDARDS**

**Standard 1    Mission Statement and Academic Goals**

*The institution has a clearly articulated and published mission and academic goals statement, approved by the governing body, that identifies the academic character and the aspirations of the organization appropriate to that of an academic institution of high standard. The mission and academic goals demonstrate the extent to which the institution is committed to the dissemination of knowledge through teaching, and, where applicable, the creation of knowledge and service to community or related professions. The institution has sustainable academic policies and standards that support the institution's mission and academic goals to ensure degree quality and relevance. The core teaching mission and the primary educational activity of the institution is at the degree-level.*

Assessment Criteria
- The institution has an approved, clearly articulated and publicly stated mission statement reflecting goals that are appropriate to an institution providing high quality, degree level education that includes a commitment to the creation and extension of knowledge through research and scholarly activity, and the dissemination of knowledge through teaching, publication, and presentation.
- The institution has a clear and suitable statement of mission and academic goals that includes the principles of equity, inclusion, diversity, and anti-racism.
- This mission is articulated publicly and operationalized throughout the institution.
- The institution's programs, support services and enrollment profile are consistent with its mission and academic goals.
- Investments, resources, and policies support the mission.

- Academic policies are in place and implemented accordingly to support the institution's mission and the program offerings.
- Key information about the organization, its mission, policies, and programs are readily available to students and the public through its website and includes:
  - The organization's mission and academic goals statement.
  - The organization's history and its governance and academic structure.
  - A description of the type(s) of programming currently offered.
  - A general description of each degree program (e.g., purpose, outcomes, length, and credit value).
  - The senior administrators and their academic credentials.
- The institution affirms its commitment to equal treatment of all persons without discrimination on the basis of Indigenous identity, race, ethnicity, religious beliefs, colour, gender, physical or mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, family status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or other grounds identified in applicable human rights law.

Submissions Guidelines

a) Provide the organization's official mandate and/or mission statement and academic goals.
b) Provide a summary of the organization's future plans for growth in programs and enrolments.
c) Include a summary on how resources are used to advance the organization's mission.
d) Provide a hyperlink to the specific documents on the institution's website and/or in its academic calendar/catalogue outlining the key organizational information and the policies noted above.
e) Provide the institution's statement on its commitment to the equal treatment of all persons.

**Standard 2   Institutional Evaluation and Effectiveness**

*The institution constitutes a cohesive academic community with a proven commitment to high academic quality, as evidenced by systems for internal and/or external quality assessment reviews of its operations. The institution has implemented a formal, sustainable policy and procedure requiring the periodic review of all units and all campuses to occur on a cyclical basis, normally not exceeding ten years. The underlying principle of the institutional evaluation will be continuous improvement as a high-quality educational enterprise committed to the principles of equity, inclusion, diversity, and anti-racism.*

Assessment Criteria

- The institution has appropriate academic and operational policies that support its mission, priorities, and educational goals.
- The institution provides evidence that its planning process is inclusive of faculty, staff, and students and offers opportunities for comment by a wide range of interested parties inside and outside the institution.
- The institution understands the community in which it operates, both its immediate community and wider post-secondary system within the province, and values external peer review.
- The periodic review policy and procedure to assess the institution's effectiveness includes, at a minimum:
  - a self-study undertaken by faculty members and administrators based on evidence relating to the institution's performance in the areas of student learning, enrollment management, data and records management, resources, facilities, and support services as well as its commitment to the principles of equity, inclusion, diversity, and anti-racism;
  - the self-study should include strengths and weaknesses, desired improvements, and future directions;
  - an assessment conducted by a panel of experts external to the institution that normally includes a site visit;
  - a report of the expert panel assessing institutional effectiveness that provides recommendations to strengthen institutional quality and commitment;
  - an institutional response to the recommendations; and,
  - a summary of the conclusions of the evaluation made publicly available.

Submission Guidelines

a) Explain how the organization undertakes periodic reviews of its processes and operations to assess its achievement of institutional goals and its effectiveness as a high-quality degree-granting institution. Include the institutional review policy and submit previous reviews, including recommendations and actions that resulted from the review.

b) Explain the organization's process for conducting student outcomes reviews that are informed by demographics (e.g., gender, number of Indigenous students, number of racialized students, number of students with disabilities, etc.) and include:
  - enrolment;
  - student retention rates;
  - student learning outcomes;

- o student completion times;
- o student employment outcomes;
- o graduate satisfaction; and,
- o employer satisfaction.

c) Explain the organization's accountability process (including appropriate reporting mechanisms) to account for revenue received from any public sources (e.g., tuition and ancillary fees, federal or provincial government funding) and how the revenue is effectively distributed within the institution for its operations.

d) Describe the organization's enrollment management plan, including how the organization monitors student retention, progress, and success; manages enrollment based on its current capacity (human and physical); and plans for growth by making the necessary investments to ensure program quality is maintained.

e) Describe the organization's records management system, including what records are kept; who has responsibility for records; who can access the records; how the accuracy and integrity of records are assured; where records are stored, etc. Include the organization's records management and retention policy in the appendix.

f) Explain the organization's policy framework, including the controls for policy development, approval, review and updating; awareness and distribution of policies; and processes to ensure roles and responsibilities have the right level of authority for decision-making. In the appendix, provide the organization's policy framework, showing areas of responsibility consistent with the organization chart submitted for Standard 4.

g) Describe how the institution engages with its local community, including First Nations, and responds to its needs.


**Standard 3    Program Development, Evaluation, and Effectiveness**

*The institution has implemented a sustainable plan, policies, and processes for new program development, for assessing the effectiveness of its existing educational programs and services, and for making continuous improvement.*


Assessment Criteria
- The institution has a formal, institutionally approved policy and procedure for the development of new programs that includes the following characteristics:
  - o fit with the institution's areas of strengths;
  - o analysis of the feasibility of the program, including labour market analysis, student demand, resource implications, and resources required to maintain the program;

- o analysis of economic and social needs for the program that includes government priorities, targeted students, and environmental analysis;
- o broad consultation with internal stakeholders (e.g., other departments, faculty, and students) and external stakeholders (e.g., other post-secondary institutions in BC, employers, professional accrediting bodies, where applicable, and people whose lives contribute to the integrity of the program); and
- o review and approval by the institution's academic governing body (i.e., senate, education council or equivalent).
- The institution has a formal, institutionally approved policy and procedure for the periodic academic review of programs (normally every five years) that includes the following characteristics:
  - o A self-study undertaken by faculty members and administrators of the program based on evidence relating to program performance, including strengths and weaknesses, desired improvements, and future directions.
  - o The self-study takes into account:
    - the continuing appropriateness and accessibility of the program's structure, admissions requirements, method of delivery, and curriculum for the program's educational goals and standards;
    - the adequacy and effective use of resources (academic and student support services, physical, technological, financial, and human);
    - faculty performance including the quality of teaching and supervision and demonstrable currency in the field of specialization;
    - the learning outcomes achieved by students and graduates meet the program's stated goals, the degree level standard, and where appropriate, the standards of related regulatory, accrediting, or professional association;
    - the continuing adequacy of the methods used for evaluating student progress and achievement to ensure that the degree level standards have been achieved; and,
    - the graduate employment rates, graduate satisfaction, employer satisfaction, advisory board satisfaction, student satisfaction, and graduation rate.
  - o An assessment conducted by a panel, usually consisting of three academic, disciplinary experts external to the institution, with experience teaching at the degree level of the program. The review normally includes a site visit, a report of the expert panel assessing program quality and recommendations to strengthen program quality, and an institutional response to the recommendations.

Note: Degree Quality Assessment Board degree program reviews, reviews conducted by other external accrediting bodies, and consultation with program advisory committees are not substitutes for an institution led periodic external program review process.

- The institution has policies and processes for continuously improving upon the effectiveness and relevancy of programs which include:
  - o acting upon the findings of internal and external reviews; and
  - o conducting surveys that evaluate the success of a program's graduates by demographic and ensure programs represented as preparation for advanced study and/or employment accomplish these purposes.

Submission Guidelines

a) Describe the program development process for new degree programs. Include the institution's policy and procedures for new program development in the appendix.
b) Describe the institution's policy and procedures for the periodic academic review of programs that address the program review elements described in the criteria above. Provide the formal, approved policy and procedures in the appendix.
c) Describe how the institution responds to the findings of external and internal reviews and how it undergoes the process of approving and changing its policies, processes, or programs as a result of the external or internal reviews.

**Standard 4  Range of Programming**

*The institution's primary activity is offering a comprehensive range of degree programs, normally including, but not limited to, programs in the arts and sciences or of a professional nature, normally at both undergraduate and graduate levels.*

Assessment Criteria

- The institution offers degree programs that are characterized by breadth and depth in the traditional areas of the liberal arts and/or sciences or are of a professional nature (such as business/management, engineering, law, medicine, teacher education).
- Undergraduate programs include a significant liberal arts and science component that provides broad exposure to multiple disciplines.
- The institution has in place programs that can be appropriately integrated with the provincial post-secondary system in program transfer and articulation at the undergraduate level.

a) Provide an education plan outlining all undergraduate and graduate degree programs.
b) Include evidence of established transfer and articulation agreements for undergraduate degrees.

## Standard 5    Governance and Administrative Capacity

*The institution has a stable administrative structure, and an effective governance system necessary to organize and manage a reputable, effective, and high-quality degree-granting institution in BC. It includes a body competent to either make decisions or give advice on academic matters. It provides for the participation of faculty members in decisions determining academic standards and provides for appropriate student involvement. It is committed to the principles and practices of quality education, and academic freedom and responsibility.*

*It has an effective system of leadership, staffed by qualified administrators, with appropriate, clearly defined levels of authority, responsibility, and accountability. The institution's decision-making structures and processes are inclusive of a diversity of people and perspectives, and take into consideration the views of faculty, staff, and students on matters that they have a direct and reasonable interest in.*

Assessment Criteria
- The institution has a governance structure with a fully constituted board and academic council or senate with sufficient autonomy and administrative capacity appropriate to that of a university to make decisions in the best interests of the institution and assure its integrity.
- The institution is committed to public accountability and community involvement, and functions in an open, transparent, and accessible manner.
- The governing board is responsible for managing the activities of the institution and maintaining the purpose, viability, and integrity of the institution; monitoring and assessing organizational performance in achieving institutional goals; selecting administrative leadership; and, providing the appropriate financial, physical plant, and human resources.
- The institution's reporting structure clearly indicates the relationship between owners, and governing and managing bodies with clear reporting lines, roles, and accountability structures, reflected in an appropriate organizational chart.
- Governance structures have clear lines of decision-making authority that are consistent with the institution's academic purposes and mission and are followed as part of the institution's general operating procedure.

- The institution has an academic council, senate, or equivalent, which includes an acceptable level of continuing faculty and students in its membership, that is responsible for making decisions related to academic policies and standards, and for ensuring the academic integrity of programs.
- The institution has an academically qualified president or equivalent with clear and documented lines of responsibility (reflected in an appropriate organizational chart), decision-making authority, and accountability necessary to conduct the affairs of a university.
- The president (or equivalent) is accountable to the governing board and whose full-time or major responsibility is the administration of the institution.
- The institution has an academically qualified Vice President Academic or equivalent whose full-time or major responsibility is to provide academic leadership within the university.
- The institution has sufficient and qualified senior administrative staff, with clear lines of responsibility, decision-making authority, and accountability necessary to conduct the affairs of the institution.
- The institution is able to demonstrate how administrative policies and practices ensure that business practices and decisions support the academic integrity of programs and protect student interests.

Submission Guidelines

a) Provide an organizational chart that outlines the organization's governance and administrative structure showing:
   - a description of the responsibilities and authority of each body identified in the chart, and the eligibility criteria for the appointment to each body;
   - information on the organization's reporting structure and the relationship among the governing bodies; and
   - an outline of the bodies, committees, and senior administrative roles within the organization involved in the development of, and/or decision-making pertaining to, the curriculum, academic policies, and academic standards, and identify the roles of faculty and students within these bodies and committees. Provide this in an appendix.
b) Provide job descriptions for each senior administrative role in the organization, including duties, decision-making authority, and required qualifications.
c) Provide copies of CVs of the individuals currently in senior administrative roles as an appendix.

d) Describe plans to subcontract any functions of the institution and how the institution will provide oversight of the subcontractor. Provide agreements in an appendix.

**Standard 6    Institutional Conduct**

*The institution values and upholds integrity and ethical conduct as an administrative organization as demonstrated by the policies and practices by which it conducts its business and, if applicable, by its past performance within and/or outside of BC. The institution proactively complies with legislative and regulatory obligations.*

Assessment Criteria
- An acceptable statement by the governing board, administrative officers, and other representatives of the organization, of the ethical standards relating to fair and honest operational practices, including a policy on conflict of interest that will guide its conduct in the course of operations in BC and in other jurisdictions.
- The institution can demonstrate it has developed and implemented policies and practices that are necessary for the institution to comply with the *Degree Authorization Act* and regulations, the requirements of Ministerial consent, and meet reporting and other obligations as a result of its inclusion in provincial or federal programs.
- The institution can demonstrate it has developed and implemented policies and practices that are necessary to meet its obligations under the *Personal Information Protection Act* and any other legislation that may apply to operations in BC concerning the collection and use of personal information.
- The institution, its partners, and agents represent the institution's information clearly, accurately, and consistently regarding its programs, resources, and services to students.

Submission Guidelines
a) Provide an institutionally approved statement of ethical standards on fair and honest operational practices.
b) Provide an institutionally approved conflict of interest policy regarding the practices within the institution.
c) Explain how the institution will ensure it is proactively and continuously in compliance with regulatory obligations.
d) Provide the institution's policy regarding the collection, protection, use, and disclosure of personal information.

e) Describe the process(es) that will be in place to collect data required for meeting provincial and federal legislative and regulatory obligations and expectations, including how the process(es) assures the quality and integrity of the data, and the mechanism(s) to be used.

f) Describe how the institution will ensure its staff, partners, and agents represent the institution's information clearly, accurately, and consistently regarding its programs, resources, and services to students.

## Standard 7    Dispute Resolution

*The institution has implemented appropriate policies and procedures for dealing with disputes between the institution and its students, the institution and faculty, the institution and staff, faculty, and students, and between faculty and staff. Complaints, grievances, and/or disputes of students, faculty, staff, and administration are dealt with in accordance with the principles of natural justice and are fair, reasonable, and effective. The dispute resolution policies and procedures are published on the institution's website.*

Assessment Criteria

- The institution has implemented formal policies and procedures through which (i) students' academic appeals, and (ii) students', faculty and staff complaints, grievances and/or other disputes, both academic and non-academic in nature, are dealt with in accordance with the following principles of natural justice:
  - o Individuals have a right to:
    - A fair and expeditious resolution of disputes with reasonable deadlines.
    - Know and understand the charges or complaints made against them.
    - Be heard in response to charges or complaints made against them before any disciplinary decision is taken.
  - o Institutions have an obligation to:
    - Deal with complaints or grievances according to clear and reasonable deadlines.
    - Establish and operate according to administrative processes that deal with disputes fairly and expeditiously.
    - Prior to registration, confirm that information has been provided to students regarding policies and procedures pertaining to: (i) academic policies and standards; (ii) student support and services; and (iii) withdrawal, dismissal, and refund policies.

- Students, faculty, and staff have ready access to the policies and procedures on the institution's website and are informed about the policies and procedures for dispute resolution prior to joining the institution and upon every change in policy. To these ends, the institution'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 and who may facilitate the satisfactory resolution of disputes that is clearly identified in policy.
  - There is a process for, and an officer charged with, reviewing disputes and examining the evidence.
  - There is a provision for a final internal review by a person, or body of persons, not involved in the dispute in any way.

Submission Guidelines
a) Provide institutionally approved dispute resolution policies and processes for academic, financial, or any other circumstances in which disputes may arise within the institution.
b) Provide evidence that the policies and procedures are publicly available.
c) Explain how students, faculty, and staff are informed about (i) the policies and procedures for dispute resolution, and (ii) changes to these policies or procedures.

**Standard 8    Financial Capacity**
*The institution demonstrates financial capacity sufficient to assure stability and adequate long-term financial resources, to provide a stable learning environment, and to ensure that the number of students assumed in the business plan can complete the degree program in the event that revenue falls short of the business plan or costs exceed the estimated allowances. The institution provides access to learning, faculty, and student resources appropriate to the range and level of programs offered and necessary for students to achieve the learning outcomes for the programs.*

Assessment Criteria
- The institution must provide a credible short- and long-term business and strategic plan that addresses the institution's future educational, enrolment, physical, and fiscal growth in BC.
- The business plan should include the institution's academic (including plans for range of programming), financial, facilities, marketing, human resource, and research support plans. The business plan should demonstrate that the institution has a

financial base adequate to support activities consistent with its mission and educational objectives as a university.

- The institution has identified the source of funds to be invested.
- The institution has a policy requiring the regular audit of financial methods and records, performance, and stability by a qualified third-party professional accountant in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices.
- The institution has evidence of methods to protect student financial investment.
- Financial information indicates the organization has a financial base adequate to support activities consistent with its mission and educational objectives and the required financial resources for start-up and ongoing operating costs associated with the delivery of degree programs in BC.
- The institution is able to provide independently audited financial statements that provide assurance of the institution's financial viability over a term of no less than five years.
- The institution has the appropriate faculty and student resources, library and other services, and facilities to support the proposed degree program and for which it has consent.

Submission Guidelines

a) Provide a short- and long-term business plan that speaks to the assessment criteria above. The short- (1-2 years, e.g., start-up phase) and long-term business plan (at least five years) must demonstrate adequate financial resources and include:
    o a best case / worst case scenario (including risk management and risk mitigation strategies) that addresses the institution's future educational, enrolment, physical, and fiscal growth in BC;
    o yearly financial ratios (including: cost per student per course completion, cost per student per credit hour, cost per graduate, ratio of teaching costs to overhead costs, percent of budget allocated to learning resources and library, percent of expenditures on contracts for teaching staff who are not full-time employees of the organization, net of earned revenue minus costs, technology expenditure per student and graduate);
    o future fiscal priorities;
    o the process of costing new programs and assessing risks; and,
    o analysis of financial strengths and challenges.
b) Provide the institution's policy requiring the regular audit of financial methods, performance, and stability by a qualified third-party accountant in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices in the appendix.

c) Include the current audited financial statements in an appendix. The audited financial statements must include a breakdown of the institution operating in BC if it is audited as part of a larger corporation or parent company. Review engagement reports will not be accepted in place of audited financial statements.

d) In the case of new institutions, or institutions that are in the process of being planned or launched, the institution must provide concrete commitments from its financial backers, such as a letter of credit on corporate letterhead.

**Standard 9    Facilities and Learning Infrastructure**

*The institution has the facilities and learning infrastructure to support the educational objectives of a degree-granting institution and to specifically support the academic programs offered (or proposed to be offered) at all its locations in BC. The institution is committed to maintaining and supplementing learning resources and equipment and regularly reviews how priorities are established with respect to their acquisition.*

Assessment Criteria

- The institution's physical location, equipment, laboratories, and technology adequately support the institution's educational and student activities appropriate to the institution's mission, goals, and programs.
- The institution has a planning process to assess the appropriateness of the institution's facilities and learning resources for the number of students, faculty, and staff, and their physical needs, including those with disabilities.
- The institution provides and maintains the necessary facilities, learning, and other resources specific to the range of programming offered and supplements them as necessary based on the size of enrolment.
- The equipment, technology, learning infrastructure, and support services available at all locations in BC fully support the institution's educational and student activities.
- The facilities comply with the enactments of BC and the municipality or the regional district in which the facilities are located.
- Technology-based, computer-based, and web-based learning and modes of delivery ensure:
  - appropriate hardware, software, and other technological resources, and media are readily accessible and up-to-date;
  - reliable and sufficient course management systems are in place;
  - appropriate safeguards are in place to assure the authentication of student identity and the integrity of student work;

- o appropriate storage protocols are in place to assure that security of personal information is protected in conducting assessments and evaluations, and in the dissemination of results;
- o accessible, ongoing technical assistance is equitably and readily available for students and faculty; and,
- o well-maintained and current technology and equipment are available to all students and faculty on an equitable basis.
- Institutions that offer or plan to offer graduate level programming must provide the essential information resources and supports appropriate to graduate student work. These resources must be adequate for the number of students enrolled, for the level of study, and be reasonably accessible to students with disabilities. The institution has laboratory, computer, studio, and/or creative facilities, as well as essential resources, to adequately support the research of faculty and students, including those with physical disabilities.
- The institution ensures a safe environment for students, faculty, and staff, including those with physical disabilities, and is prepared to respond to emergency situations and critical incidents at all locations in BC.

Submission Guidelines

a) Describe how the physical plant and learning infrastructure, including laboratories, classrooms, library, technology, and specialized equipment are accessible to students, faculty, and staff of all abilities at all locations in BC. Include the policies and/or procedures to ensure these facilities remain up-to-date and relevant. Submit floor plans indicating the facilities available and the dimensions and capacity of spaces in an appendix.

b) Provide a statement that the institution's location(s) complies with municipal or regional district bylaws including but not limited to zoning and land uses, building bylaws, public health, and BC Fire Code compliance.

c) Describe the planning processes in place for the institution's facilities and learning resources, including how the institution assesses whether they are appropriate for the number of students, faculty, and staff, and their physical needs, including those with disabilities. Include policies and/or procedures for the acquisition of learning resources.

d) For institutions offering graduate programs, describe the learning and physical resources to support faculty and student research as appropriate to the degree level.

e) Submit any agreements with other institutions or organizations where resources and services are shared or subcontracted.

f) Provide policies pertaining to technology-based, computer-based, and web-based learning and modes of delivery, including what steps the institution will take to ensure these are equitably available to all students.

g) Provide the institution's safety and emergency preparedness policies for all locations in BC to support the needs of students, faculty, and staff, including those with physical disabilities.

**Standard 10  Faculty and Staff**

*The institution has appropriately qualified faculty and instructional staff led by a group of continuing faculty committed to achieving its mission and academic goals. The institution has policies and procedures with respect to appointment, evaluation, and employment conditions of faculty and staff, including employment equity, promotion, termination, and professional development. The institution has sufficient staff to provide an appropriate level and balance of student support services to ensure the necessary supports are in place for student success in the degree level(s) proposed or granted consent in BC.*

Assessment Criteria

- The institution must demonstrate that it has a core group of continuing, full-time faculty that provide academic leadership within the university to ensure instructional and academic continuity and program sustainability. The number of continuing faculty should be directly related to the size of enrolment and number of programs offered.
- The institution has policies in place on faculty qualifications, hiring, employment equity and diversity, retention, promotion, professional development, reward, and termination appropriate to the degree programs offered and to the mission of creating and disseminating knowledge.
- The institution's policies and practices support faculty in their pursuit of original or applied research by providing sufficient time, facilities, and resources.
- Faculty participate in the larger post-secondary system in BC to build relationships, foster collaboration, create trust and goodwill, and broaden understanding of all institutions and programs, and regularly attend articulation committee meetings through the BC Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT).
- The institution's faculty plan for BC demonstrates it has continuing faculty and staff in sufficient numbers to:
  - Provide academic programs stability, consistency, continuity of programming, and ongoing quality improvement.
  - Plan, develop, and deliver academic program(s) (including in each of the fields of specialization identified in the program).

- o Act as research supervisors, where appropriate.
  - o Meet the demands of the projected student enrolment as indicated in the institution's enrolment management plan and/or business plan.
- The institution commits to, and maintains, a minimum threshold of 50 percent of course sections within each degree program to be taught by continuing and/or term faculty. Some fields may require a higher minimum standard.
- The institution's faculty qualifications policy incorporates best practices such as hiring academically qualified faculty with terminal degrees in the field in which they are teaching, hiring experientially qualified faculty recognized by peers as exemplary in the field, etc.
- The institution's hiring policy and practices promote the principles of equity, inclusion, diversity, and anti-racism.
- The institution demonstrates due diligence in hiring, including provisions against fraudulent credentials.
- The institution demonstrates it has the necessary student support services and human resources to mount and sustain quality programs and support student life.
- The institution has policies and procedures that are fair and equitable for the appointment, evaluation, employment conditions, promotion, termination, and professional development of faculty and staff. To this end, the policies and procedures must:
  - o Demonstrate that a comprehensive faculty orientation and development program is in place that includes best practices in pedagogy, courses in equity, inclusion, diversity, and anti-racism; and evaluation processes to ensure that all faculty are teaching and evaluating students in a fair, equitable, and consistent manner;
  - o Define teaching and administrative workloads to allow faculty time for course development, preparation, continuing research, and/or involvement in other scholarly activities that are appropriate to the degree level, delivery mode, and program type they are teaching.
  - o Demonstrate that faculty are engaged in intellectual activities, and when applicable, community service, institutional service, service in academic organizations, organizational consulting, and other outreach within BC's post-secondary sector.
  - o Require the regular review of faculty performance, including student evaluation of teaching and/or supervision.
  - o Identify the means of ensuring that faculty knowledge of the field is current through professional development, scholarship, and research.

- o Specify teaching and supervisory loads and availability to students.
- o Support the professional development of faculty and staff, including the promotion of curricular and instructional innovation, as well as technological skills, where appropriate.
- o Clearly outline the duties and responsibilities, institutional reporting structure, and performance standards for faculty and staff, and ensure the roles and responsibilities assigned to staff do not pose a conflict of interest.

*Additional Assessment Criteria for Graduate Programs*
- Institutions planning to offer graduate level degree programming must have a policy and process for graduate supervision (e.g., qualifications of advisers, committee members, interim advisers, co-supervision, mentoring new supervisors, number of students to be supervised, monitoring of student progress).
- Institutions planning to offer graduate level programming have continuing 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.).
- Institutions must demonstrate sufficient numbers of administrative staff to manage the increased complexity of policies and procedures associated with offering graduate-level programs. The institution is committed to the timely program completion of its graduate students and to their financial support through various means such as teaching assistantships, scholarships, bursaries, faculty research grants, research contracts, etc.
- Institutions whose work involves Indigenous Peoples have developed agreements with them that uphold Indigenous data collection processes and collaborative research design, including the principles of ownership, control, access, and protection to avoid cultural appropriation.

Submission Guidelines
a) Provide a faculty plan that outlines the scale of faculty and staff requirements to support projected enrolments in the short- (three years) and long-term (five years) for each degree program. Indicate whether the faculty, instructors, and staff will be continuing (permanent), term, or sessional appointments, and whether these appointments are for a specific program or shared across several programs, and if shared, specify which program(s). In exceptional cases where a substantial proportion of an institution's faculty resources do not have continuing appointments, the institution must provide documentation of how this faculty model supports its mission,

promotes high quality and continuous improvement, and is consistent with the spirit and intent of this standard.

b)  Provide the institution's policies and practices on the type of academic appointment of faculty (e.g., continuing, term, or sessional appointments).

c)  Provide the institution's policies and practices on the minimum qualifications required of faculty members and on the process for verifying qualifications.

d)  Provide the institution's policies and procedures with respect to appointment, evaluation, employment conditions including employment equity, promotion, termination and professional development for faculty and staff.

e)  Provide evidence that the institution has the student support services and human resources necessary to mount and sustain quality programs and support student life.

f)  For institutions planning to offer graduate level degree programming, provide the policy and process for graduate supervision (e.g., qualifications of advisers, committee members, interim advisers, co-supervision, mentoring new supervisors, number of students to be supervised, monitoring of student progress).

g)  Describe how the institution will ensure faculty whose work involves Indigenous communities will uphold Indigenous data collection processes and collaborative research design.

h)  Provide the number of professional staff providing support for learning and information resources and the minimum qualifications for senior professional staff.

i)  Describe the ways scholarly work is supported (e.g., financial release time) at the institution.

**Standard 11  Admissions, Student Recruitment, and Transfer**

*The institution has equitable, ethical, and transparent policies in place governing admissions and recruitment of students that are consistently applied. The institution has a systematic method for evaluating and awarding academic credit and clearly defined criteria for evaluating student learning and awarding course credit. The institution has established policies and procedures for awarding the transfer of academic credit with consistency and provides prominent and meaningful disclosure of transfer and articulation agreements.*

Assessment Criteria

• The institution's public reports, materials, and advertising are produced in a full, accurate and truthful manner, and student recruitment policies follow fair business practices, including the advertisement of transfer arrangements.

- Admission policies are consistent with the institution's mission and academic goals, the level of preparation necessary for students, and admission requirements for students entering similar degree programs at other degree-granting institutions in BC.
- All policies and procedures have been implemented appropriately and consistently and are publicly available to prospective and current students.
- The institution has policies for evaluating and awarding transfer credit that are systematic and satisfy current program course requirements.
- Students are informed about the transfer credit arrangements currently in place with other institutions.
- The institution has policies for requesting and articulating transfer credit that are systematic and consistent with those established for institutions currently within the BC Transfer System.

Submission Guidelines

a) Provide the institution's policies on ensuring that print or website recruitment material remain truthful, accurate, and transparent.
b) Provide the institution's admission policies and procedures, including prior learning assessment, the weight put on entrance examinations and other admissions criteria, program requirements, and academic prerequisites.
c) Provide policies on transfer arrangements. Describe how current transfer agreements with other institutions are achieved and how students are informed of transfer agreements and transfer options available.

**Standard 12  Policies on Academic Freedom, Honesty, and Integrity**

*The institution maintains an atmosphere in which academic freedom exists and students and academic staff display a high degree of intellectual independence. The institution not only promotes a full and balanced treatment of diverse types of pedagogy, theories, and opinions, but also encourages testing the limits of knowledge, and communicating research and scholarly findings and their implications widely.*

*Academic activity is supported by policies, procedures, and practices that encourage academic honesty and integrity and respect the ownership rights of the creators of intellectual property whether faculty, staff, or students. The institution has adopted formal ethical research standards as well as policies concerning the management of research funds. The institution has the means and procedures for the enforcement of the above policies based on principles of natural justice.*

- The institution has clearly articulated and published policies and procedures on academic freedom that recognize and protect the rights of individuals in their pursuit of knowledge and respects the rights of individuals to communicate acquired knowledge and the results of research freely.
- Appropriate policies concerning academic integrity and standards.
- If students or staff are asked to sign or adhere to a statement of faith and/or a code of conduct, it must not constrain academic freedom.
- Policies and processes pertaining to academic honesty, including appropriate enforcement procedures, are in place ensuring faculty and students are educated in, and fully understand, the concept of plagiarism. Students are provided with the tools they need to ensure proper citation and referencing appropriate to the degree program and degree level offered.
- There is an appropriate plan for informing students and faculty about, and ensuring their understanding of, the policies and procedures concerning academic honesty and the consequences of violating these policies.
- There is an appropriate policy on ownership of the intellectual property of faculty, staff, and students.
- There is an appropriate policy on the management of research funds.
- Where appropriate, there are formal ethical research standards, as evidenced by policies on human research participants, the use of animals in research, and the management of research funds.
- The institution has for e-learning, blended learning, and distance learning components:
  - appropriate policies and procedures to address copyright and intellectual property issues (e.g., digital rights management and the use of object learning repositories);
  - appropriate safeguards to assure the authentication of student identity and the integrity of student work; and
  - policies and procedures to assure the verification of student identity for course work and examinations, and for the control of examinations, including but not limited to security, time limits, and the selection of proctors/invigilators.
- The institution publishes the policies noted above and makes these accessible and available to faculty, staff, and students in an academic calendar or other publication.

a) Include the institution's policies and procedures related to academic honesty and integrity, as well as plagiarism and the appropriate student resource tools for proper citation and referencing.
b) Include policies regarding the institution's adherence to the principles of academic freedom and responsibility.
c) Indicate whether students and staff are asked to sign or adhere to a statement of faith and/or a code of conduct that might constitute a constraint upon academic freedom. Provide the related policy in an appendix.
d) Summarize the policies and procedures referenced in the Assessment Criteria and indicate where faculty, staff, and students may access them. Provide the policies and procedures in an appendix.
e) For e-learning, blended learning and distance learning components, summarize the policies and procedures for copyright and intellectual property issues, authentication of student identity and integrity of work, and verification of student identities for course work and examinations. Provide the policies and procedures in an appendix.

**Standard 13  Student Protection and Awareness**

*The institution 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, and admission requirements, including credit transfer and prior learning assessment policies. The institution creates a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment that supports its mission and the learning, growth, and well-being of its students. The institution provides clear and informative student enrollment agreements or other contracts verifying student awareness of relevant policies, support services, payment requirements and refund policies, financial assistance and transcript protection. The institution provides prominent and meaningful public disclosure of all policies that affect student education and degree completion.*

Assessment Criteria
- The institution's student policies are publicly available.
- Students are provided with, and confirm through the student enrollment contract, or when responding to a letter of acceptance, their awareness of the following policies and procedures prior to the institution accepting a tuition deposit:
  - admission requirements;
  - the weight placed on entrance examinations and other admissions criteria;

- o   prior learning assessment;
- o   other academic prerequisites;
- o   credit transfer arrangements and recognition by other institutions;
- o   method of course delivery;
- o   academic integrity;
- o   intellectual property;
- o   student support services available at the institution;
- o   scholarship and other financial assistance;
- o   grading;
- o   appeal of grades;
- o   student withdrawal, dismissal and tuition refund;
- o   student complaints and grievances;
- o   anti-bullying, equity, diversity, inclusion, anti-racism, and accommodation for students with disabilities;
- o   sexual violence and misconduct; and
- o   supervision, preparation, and examination of theses/dissertations (applicable to research graduate programs).
- The student enrollment contract and related policies are fair, reasonable, and consistent with the expectations of a degree level institution, and with the Standard Terms and Conditions of the Minister's consent.

Submission Guidelines
a)   Explain how the institution ensures all students are informed of the institution's policies listed in the Assessment Criteria prior to accepting the tuition deposit.
b)   Provide a copy of the student enrolment contract and a template Letter of Acceptance.
c)   Indicate a publicly accessible location where students may review the policies (i.e., website).

**Standard 14  Student Withdrawal, Dismissal, and Refund Policies**
*The institution has policies and procedures for student withdrawal, dismissal, and refund that are fair, reasonable, and effective, and can confirm the awareness of students of these policies and procedures.*

Assessment Criteria
- The institution has clearly articulated policies and procedures regarding student withdrawal, dismissal, and tuition refunds that are fair and reasonable.

- The policies and procedures must be made available to prospective and current students, as well as made publicly available on the institution's website.
- The institution has policies for resolving student complaints and disputes with respect to withdrawal, dismissal, and tuition refunds that are fair, reasonable, effective, and transparent.
- The dispute resolution procedures for resolving student complaints and disputes with respect to withdrawal, dismissal, and tuition refunds must be fair, reasonable, effective, and transparent.

Submission Guidelines
a) Provide policies and procedures regarding student withdrawal, dismissal, and refunds that include dispute resolution procedures.
b) Provide evidence that the policies and procedures are implemented and followed.

**Standard 15  Student Life and Support Services**
*The institution has at all locations in BC, the facilities, services, and programs that provide equitable support for all students to succeed in their studies and to develop and grow in non-academic areas.*

Assessment Criteria
- The institution has policies, procedures, and staff to administer student financial assistance programs and to assist students.
- The institution has qualified staff who are experienced in advising students on academic performance and related matters.
- The institution has qualified staff who are experienced in advising students on employment opportunities and providing career services.
- Students have equitable access to health and wellness services, including mental health services.
- The institution has written policies and procedures that address sexual violence and misconduct, including sexual misconduct prevention, and set out procedures for:
    - making a complaint or report of sexual misconduct involving a student; and
    - responding to a complaint or report of sexual misconduct involving a student.
- The institution has support services that facilitate the success of Indigenous students.
- The institution has support services that facilitate the success of students from diverse backgrounds.

- The institution has other support services typical of post-secondary degree-granting institutions that support daily life and facilitate student success.
- The institution provides support for ancillary services (e.g., housing).

NOTE: Refer to the *Sexual Violence and Misconduct Policy Act* for a definition of "sexual misconduct".

Submission Guidelines

a) Provide evidence that the institution has the resources to equitably administer the student financial assistance program and to assist students. Include the institution's policies and procedures for student financial assistance.

b) Describe the academic advising services available to students, including the number of advisors per student, their qualifications, and availability.

c) Describe the support services that facilitate the success of Indigenous students.

d) Describe the career services available to students, including the resources available to students prior to graduation and post-graduation.

e) Describe the health and wellness services available to students.

f) Provide the institution's policies relating to anti-bullying, equity, diversity, inclusion, anti-racism, and accommodation for students with disabilities.

g) Provide the institution's policy on sexual misconduct.

h) Describe the services offered for international students to facilitate their settlement in the community such as advising on and accessing housing services, health services, orientation to Canadian culture, accessing transportation and other services, etc.

i) Describe student life services provided by the institution. For example, food services, housing, athletics, recreation, student government, clubs, and other extra-curricular activities.

j) Describe how the institution ensures students have access to student life and support services at all locations in BC.

**Standard 16  Commitment to Research and Scholarly Activity**
*The institution demonstrates a clear history of, and commitment to, the practice of active scholarship and the creation and extension of knowledge through research and scholarly activity of an applied or original nature, and the dissemination of knowledge through teaching, publication, and presentation.*

Assessment Criteria
- The institution must have policies, procedures, and practices that demonstrate a commitment to research and scholarly activity including:
    - applied research and scholarly activities to support the programs of the institution, or
    - foundational research that is subject to external peer review.
- The institution demonstrates a history of active faculty involvement in research activity and provides the time, facilities, and resources necessary to support such research activity.
- The institution has policies, structure, and mechanisms in place appropriate to graduate students and research (e.g., policies concerning supervisory responsibilities, appeals system, satisfactory standing, etc.).

Submission Guidelines
a) Outline the institution's policies, procedures, and practices that support faculty research.
b) Outline the institution's policies, procedures, and practices that support graduate students and their research.


***Note: In addition to the above assessment criteria, the board may consider any other information or condition the board deems necessary to determine whether the organizational capacity of the institution merits university status.***

# 6. Minister's Requirements

The *Degree Authorization Act* (Act) requires private and out-of-province post-secondary institutions to obtain consent from the Minister if they wish to advertise, offer a degree program, or grant a degree, or use the word "University" in BC to indicate that an educational program is available.

The Minister's consent must be obtained in writing. The Act sections 3, 4 and 5, outline specific requirements regarding consent. The Minister requires that institutions meet terms and conditions of consent, that they provide sufficient financial security as stated in the *Degree Authorization Regulations*, and that institutions have arrangements in place to ensure students have access to their transcripts. The following sections outline the Minister's requirements as prescribed by legislation.

## 6.1  Financial Security Requirements

Under the Act, the Minister must not give consent unless satisfied that an institution has given security to protect the interests of students in the event that the institution cannot complete the delivery of the degree program.

The institution must post financial security in accordance with the Degree Authorization Regulations and the *Bonding Act*. The amount of financial security cannot be less than $100,000 per institution. Institutions must maintain valid security continuously while they are operating, and if they should close, two years beyond the date of closure.

The Minister will not provide consent to offer a degree program until financial security is in place.

### Calculating Financial Security Requirements

The financial security posted must be equal to 75 percent of the highest monthly amount of unearned revenue that the institution will hold during a 12-month period.  Unearned revenue relates specifically to pre-paid fees for services to be delivered. The higher the payment the institution receives in advance from a student, the greater the amount of security that must be posted. Once an institution declares its maximum unearned revenue during the application process and provides security, the level of security must be maintained. If the institution expects to exceed in actual unearned revenue the level of the security posted, the institution must immediately re-calculate and adjust the level of security and inform the Minister of the change.

An example of calculating financial security requirements is provided on the Degree Authorization website, under Minister's Requirements.

## Procedures for Providing and Maintaining Security

The institution must provide an updated projection for the maximum level of unearned revenue for each month for the specified period below:

- For new applicants – 12-month period from when financial security is provided.
- For consent holders – 12-month period beginning from August 1 to July 31.

To support the amount required for security, the institution must enclose a copy of the calculations using the standard form provided by the Degree Quality Assessment Board (Board) Secretariat. If the institution has been operating for more than one year, the institution must also provide an audited financial statement indicating the total amount of tuition collected during the prior year. Review Engagement reports are not sufficient.

Maintaining the level of security required and promptly notifying the Minister of any changes that affect the level of security is a condition of consent.

## Security Instruments

The following security instruments may be used:

1. a surety bond issued by a bonding company or insurer registered to do business in BC;
2. short term deposits registered in the name of the Minister of Finance issued by a Canadian financial institution (chartered bank, trust company, or credit union)
3. marketable bonds in fully registered form issued and/or guaranteed by the Government of Canada or the government of any province of Canada with a maturity date of no longer than three years, together with a duly executed power of attorney to the Minister of Finance;
4. treasury bill notes issued by the Government of Canada or the government of any province of Canada; or
5. irrevocable letters of credit with a termination date beyond the required term of the security, issued by a Canadian financial institution, payable to the Minister of Finance.

Instruments defined under 2, 3, and 4 must be covered by a safekeeping agreement with a financial institution and the government. The interest accumulated from these instruments belongs to the institution. In the event a security matures, the institution

must replace the maturing security with another acceptable security of appropriate value. The government will not release the maturing security until the replacement security is deposited.

Institutions must use the templates available from the Board Secretariat for each type of security instrument.

### Forfeiture of Security

The Minister may declare any security that has been submitted by an institution to be forfeited if the Minister makes the determination that the institution is unable to continue offering the degree program covered by the security. The Minister will provide written notice to the institution regarding the forfeiture. If a security is forfeited, the Minister is responsible for determining the amounts of tuition to be refunded to students. If the amount of all tuition to be refunded exceeds the amount of security, the security will be distributed pro rata.

## 6.2  Transcript Maintenance Plan and Agreement

Under the Act, the Minister must be satisfied that adequate arrangements are in place to provide students with access to their transcripts before consent can be granted.

### Transcript Maintenance Plan

The transcript maintenance plan is to ensure the integrity, safekeeping, and accessibility of student transcripts. The Minister must approve the transcript maintenance plan and may require the institution to make changes before consent is granted.

### Transcript Maintenance Plan Requirements

The institution must include the following in its transcript maintenance plan:
- Institutional policies and practices that ensure the confidentiality and security of student records.
- Institutional policies and practices regarding the certification of the authenticity and accuracy of student transcripts for both electronic records available to students and official transcripts forwarded to other institutions on the students' behalf.
- In addition to the institution's location, the name and location of an off-site storage facility where students' transcripts will be retained.
- Information ensuring that the transcript information will be updated weekly, and a copy retained at the off-site storage facility.
- Information ensuring that the software program for maintaining and managing

electronic student records is appropriate and will allow for future growth in the amount of data.

- Information on the fees students must pay to receive official transcripts. The fee amount must be published in the institution's calendar or other comparable publication.
- Information ensuring that transcripts will be secure and accessible to students for at least 55 years from the time students graduate or withdraw from the institution.

## Student Transcript Requirements

The transcript maintenance plan requires that an individual student's transcript include the following information:

- Student information: The student's name, contact information and student ID number.
- Basis of Admission: The qualifications that form the basis for the student's admission to the institution, that is:
    - Information about any credits transferred, entrance examinations, and prior learning assessment used for admission or advanced placement.
    - The name(s) of any other post-secondary institution(s) attended by the student, and the dates of attendance.
    - The name and completion date of any degree, diploma, or certificate earned by the student before registering at the institution.
- Academic History, that is:
    - The dates of the student's admission and completion or withdrawal from the program(s) of study.
    - The date(s) of each academic semester or term during which the student studied at the institution.
    - A list of all courses completed, in progress, or withdrawn from at the institution.
    - A list of credits and grades earned by the student.
    - The student's grade point average per academic term and overall.
    - A notation of academic suspension, dismissal, or probation if any of these actions has been taken against the student.
    - Academic awards or honours given to the student.
    - The name of any degree earned by the student and the date the degree was granted by the institution.
- Institutional Information, that is:
    - The institution's name, location, and address.
    - The institution's grading key.
    - The name and authorized signature of the registrar or similar official.

- o The institution's seal.
- o The date on which new information was last added, and the date the transcript was issued to the student or other body.
- Alternate Records-Keeper:
  - o The name and contact information of an alternate records keeper who is willing to maintain student transcripts in accordance with the approved transcript maintenance plan. An alternate records keeper would maintain the student transcripts only if the institution was unable to continue to do so.

## Transcript Maintenance Agreement

The Ministry, on behalf of the Minister, the institution, and the alternate records keeper will sign a transcript maintenance agreement. The transcript maintenance agreement outlines the process that will occur if the institution becomes unable to maintain student transcripts.

The approved transcript maintenance plan forms part of the agreement and will include the following elements:

- The institution's responsibilities under the transcript maintenance agreement, which are as follows:
  - o Maintain transcripts in accordance with the transcript maintenance plan.
  - o Upon request by a student, provide electronic and/or paper copies of all transcript information it maintains on behalf of that student, to the student or official paper transcripts to another party named by the student with the school's official seal and signature of the registrar or appropriate official.
  - o Ensure that any student who studies at the institution while it is operational, will have timely access to her/his/their transcripts during her/his/their study period at the institution, and for at least 55 years from the time the student ceases to study at the institution.
  - o Regularly inform the alternate records keeper regarding growth of degree programs and student enrolments at the institution.
  - o Notify the Minister and the alternate records keeper in writing within five business days if the institution becomes unable to maintain students' transcripts in accordance with the terms of the agreement and to take the necessary steps to transfer custody of the transcripts to the alternate records keeper.

- If, while it is still operational, the institution becomes aware that the alternate records keeper is unable to fulfill the terms of the agreement, the institution will notify the Minister within five business days.
- Unless the institution has complied with the five-day notification time frame specified in the prior two points, the institution will be in breach of the agreement.
- If the alternate records keeper is unable to fulfill its obligations under the agreement, the institution must make arrangements with a new alternate records keeper that will be approved by the Minister and must sign a new transcript maintenance plan.

- The alternate record keeper's responsibilities under the transcript maintenance agreement, which are as follows:
  - In the event that the institution becomes incapable of fulfilling its obligations under the agreement, the alternate records keeper will assume all responsibilities of the institution in accordance with the agreement.

- The Minister's responsibilities under the transcript maintenance agreement, which are as follows:
  - If the institution breaches the agreement, the Minister may suspend or revoke consent with or without notice to the institution and/or alternate records keeper.
  - If the institution ceases to be operational, the Minister may review the transcript maintenance at the alternate record keeper's location to ensure that the students whose transcripts are being maintained are adequately served.
  - Nothing in the agreement limits the Minister's capacity to take legal action against a party that does not comply with any term of the agreement.

## 6.3  Standard Terms and Conditions of Consent

All institutions operating under the *Degree Authorization Act* will have the following Standard Terms and Conditions of Consent attached to the ministerial consent granted for a program and for use of the word "University".

1) **Consent period**: The consent period will be identified in the Minister's letter.

2) **Scope of consent:** Consent is based on and specific to the institution's operations, policies, procedures, site, program (major and sub-specialization – e.g., minor, concentration, specialization) and all other matters set out in the submitted

application and represented by the institution to the Degree Quality Assessment Board during the application and review processes.

The consent holder must continuously operate the institution and provide the degree program to the expected level of quality upon which consent was granted, and in accordance with the policies, procedures and other information provided in its submitted application and represented to the Degree Quality Assessment Board or the Minister.

The consent holder must notify the Minister and receive consent before implementing any substantive changes to the institution or program for which consent was provided.

Material changes in circumstances to the program or institution outside the institution's control must be reported to the Minister.

3) **Consent not transferable:** Consent is granted to the specific legal entity that made the application and is not transferable to or assignable to a different legal entity.

4) **Notice for students and public:**

For degree programs, the following must appear in the consent holder's current calendar/catalogue, and in the student's enrolment contract:
   *"This program is offered under the written consent of the Minister effective (consent 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)."*

For Use of the Word "University", the following must appear in the consent holder's current calendar/catalogue:
   *"The term "university" is used under the written consent of the Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills effective (consent date) having undergone a quality assessment process and been found to meet the criteria established by the minister."*

5) **Advertising**: A consent holder must not use any term or phrase in advertising that refers to approval of the Minister or the Government of British Columbia other than that the program is offered under the written consent of the Minister.

6) **Program Implementation:** The consent holder must enroll students in the degree program within three years from the date of consent. If the degree program is not offered within the three-year time period, consent is automatically revoked.

   All policies and procedures are effected upon program consent and are applied appropriately and consistently, and are publicly available to prospective and current students.

7) **Reporting:** The institution must provide information regarding the approved program when requested by the Minister or the Degree Quality Assessment Board, and in the form and manner and according to the timelines set by the Minister or the Degree Quality Assessment Board.

8) **Entitlement of consent holder to government funding:** Ministerial consent does not entitle the consent holder to funding from the Government of British Columbia.

9) **Revocation and suspension of consent:** A consent holder's failure to comply with any terms and conditions of consent or any provisions of the *Degree Authorization Act* or Regulation may lead the Minister to amend, suspend, or revoke consent. The Degree Quality Assessment Board may also recommend that the Minister amend, suspend, or revoke consent. In the case of a suspension, the Minister will determine the length of the suspension until such time as the Minister is satisfied that the situation has been remedied.

10) **Financial security:** The consent holder must continuously meet conditions established regarding financial security. These are outlined in the *Degree Authorization Regulation* established pursuant to Section 9(1) of the *Degree Authorization Act.*

11) **Security of student records and transcripts**: The consent holder must continuously meet Ministry requirements for Transcript Maintenance Plan regarding the access to and security of student transcripts established under Section 4(4) of the *Degree Authorization Act*.

12) **Student contracts:** A consent holder must have an enrolment contract for students enrolling in degree programs. The student's obligation under the contract must not exceed a period of 12 consecutive months. The contract must include the following:
   - the title of the program and name of degree;
   - the start date and end date for the program;
   - policies on student withdrawal and refund of fees and charges; and
   - the statement required under term and condition #4.

13) **Tuition, withdrawal, and refund of fees and charges:** The consent holder must provide in a calendar/catalogue or other comparable publication that is available to students and the public on its website regarding its tuition, fees, charges, and refund policies and procedures.

14) **Awareness of policies affecting students:** The institution must provide all policies affecting students, in their entirety, in a calendar/catalogue or other comparable publication that is available to students and the public on its website.

15) **Misrepresentation or malfeasance:**
   - A person acting on behalf of the institution must provide truthful, accurate and complete information to the Minister and the Degree Quality Assessment Board during any review processes and in all communications with the Minister and the Degree Quality Assessment Board.
   - A person acting on behalf of the institution must provide truthful, accurate, and complete information in all communications with current and prospective students.
   - A person must not make any false statements, misrepresentations, or provide misleading information in their communications with current and prospective students, the Minister or the Degree Quality Assessment Board.

16) **Renewal of Consent:** To apply for renewal of consent, the consent holder must submit, at least one year from the expiry of the consent, an application for renewal in the form specified by the Ministry, along with the prescribed fees. The granting of a consent does not give any express or implied entitlement to renewal of such consent.

# 7. Post-Consent Requirements

If the Standard Terms and Conditions of Consent or Special Terms and Conditions of Consent cannot be met or if any changes at the institution occur that may put the institution in violation of the terms and conditions of consent, the institution has a duty to immediately inform the Minister through the Degree Quality Assessment Board (Board) Secretariat.

## 7.1 Compliance with Terms and Conditions of Consent

Institutions are required to meet the terms and conditions of consent and legislative obligations. If an institution fails to comply with the terms and conditions of consent or with any legislative obligation or by recommendation of the Board after a review, the Minister may amend, suspend, or revoke ministerial consent.

The Minister may appoint inspectors for the purpose of determining whether an institution has failed to comply with the *Degree Authorization Act* (Act) or with the Act's Regulations or with the terms and conditions attached to consent. The Minister may also appoint inspectors when an institution is found to be in non-compliance to ensure compliance and/or to determine the extent to which the quality of the institution or any degree program has not been maintained.

## 7.2 Annual Reporting

Institutions are required to submit an annual report and possibly undergo a performance review.

### The Annual Report

The purpose of the Annual Report is to ensure the accountability of institutions that have obtained consent under the Act. The reporting requirement is established under the Standard Terms and Conditions of Consent. Consent holders must provide an Annual Report to the Minister by July 31 of each year.

Consent holders must submit the following as part of the institution's Annual Report:
- Completed Annual Report template.
- Current institutional academic catalogue, calendar, or equivalent publication.
- Current audited financial statements.
- Completed Financial Security Calculation worksheet and confirmation of security.

Upon receiving consent, institutions are advised to review the current year Annual Report template as part of their preparation for complying with post-consent requirements.

### Performance Meeting Criteria

Performance meetings may be undertaken by representatives of the Ministry and Board Secretariat. Performance meetings focus on evidence-based outcomes. The scope of the meeting is informed by any concerns or issues arising from the most recent quality assessment review(s) and Annual Report and provides a means to follow-up on issues that were raised during the reporting year in relation to current performance.

The Board determines the timing and depth of ongoing monitoring of institutions operating under consent based on an institution's track record of maintaining quality assurance standards. The Board may recommend that the Minister amend, suspend, or revoke consent for institutions and/or degree programs with a history of under-performance and/or non-compliance with quality assurance standards.

### Performance Reports

The Ministry will compile a Performance Report for each institution that has undergone a performance meeting based on information provided in the institution's Annual Report and collected during the performance meeting as well as any previous quality assessment review(s), and any concerns or issues brought to the Ministry's attention during the reporting cycle. The Performance Report will include general observations, examples of good practice noted, and recommendations and requirements for the institution to improve quality. Institutions are required to report in the following year on the steps they have taken to address these recommendations and requirements. Institutions will be given the opportunity to provide feedback and comments on the report before the Board review. The Board will make recommendations to the Minister as necessary.

## 7.3   Renewal of Consent

Consent terms are time limited. The Minister normally grants a five-year consent term for a degree program or for use of the word "University". However, the Minister may grant consent for any length of time.

Institutions will receive notification through PSIPS to apply for renewal of consent 18 months in advance of the expiry date of consent. Regardless of the term of consent, institutions must apply for renewal of consent at least 12 months prior to the expiration date of consent.

Institutions wishing to revise a degree program must incorporate the revisions in its degree application for renewal of consent. Program revisions may only be implemented after receiving the Minister's consent. If the institution or the Board determines the program revisions constitutes a new degree program, the institution is to submit a Stage 1 with its application for reconsent and follow the Degree Program Review Submissions Guidelines for new degree programs. See Section 8 to determine if program revisions are substantive enough to be considered a new degree.

A Stage 1 review may also be appropriate for renewal of consent if other factors in relation to the degree may have changed (e.g., system need for the program, labour market need).

Institutions seeking renewal of consent for a degree program must submit:
- An updated degree program application that follows the Renewal of Consent Submission Guidelines. Note: Completion of an external program review that is in accordance with Standard 8 of the Degree Program Review Standards and Criteria is a requirement for renewal of consent applications.
- An updated Stage 1, as advised by the Board Secretariat.
- An updated Organization Review, as advised by the Board Secretariat.

Institutions seeking renewal of consent for use of the word "University" must submit an updated Use of the Word "University" application.

The quality assessment process for a renewal of consent application follows the same process as a new application. Following the end of the peer and public comment period, the Board will review the applicant's submission and will determine the next steps of the application:

- Make a recommendation to the Minister based on the materials already provided; or,
- Conduct an external review by experts to further inform the Board's recommendation.

If the Board proceeds with an external review, it will determine the type of external review required and the composition of the External Review Panel. Additional fees to cover the costs of the review will be applied.

The external review for renewal of consent applications assesses the capacity of the institution to maintain quality standards at the organizational and program level, and considers whether the institution implemented its commitments made in the previous consent term.

# 8. Substantive Change to Consent

Consent to offer a degree program is specific to the activity, program (major and minor, if specified), and site described in the submitted application. The **consent holder must receive the Minister's consent before** implementing any material change in circumstances (e.g., implementing a new degree or a substantially revised existing degree, changing locations, changing owners, or changing the minimum qualifications of faculty). In addition, the Minister must be notified of any substantive change to the scope of consent such as the termination or suspension of a program under consent.

## 8.1 Determination of New Degree

A substantive change in the scope of consent for an established private or out-of-province public institution most frequently involves implementing a new degree program or substantially revising an existing degree program.

### Implementing a New Degree Program

A "New Degree Program" is defined as:

- any degree that has not been previously granted or conferred by the post-secondary institution in BC; or
- any degree granted or conferred by the post-secondary institution in BC containing one or more of the following elements:
    - a new undergraduate major;

        NOTE: a new honours or minor program in a field in which a major or graduate degree in the subject/field is currently offered and which has experience offering undergraduate courses in the subject/field will not normally be considered a new degree program.
    - a new undergraduate joint major if one or more of the fields in the joint major does not have approval;
    - a new graduate field of study; or
    - a change in degree designation or credential that may be precedent-setting for the institution or the BC post-secondary system.

Institutions that seek to offer a new degree program as defined above must undergo a degree program review and receive the Minister's consent before implementing the program.

## Revising an Existing Degree

Existing degree programs need to make periodic changes to ensure they remain relevant to the needs of contemporary society and maintain high quality. Sometimes program changes can be so substantive that they constitute what is essentially a new degree program, possibly prompting reviews to assess program need (Stage 1) and program quality (Stage 2) in addition to the Minister's consent required by legislation of all new degree programs.

The following changes to an existing degree program may be defined as a new degree depending on the context, significance of the change, experience of the institution, and the field of study, and should be provided to the Degree Quality Assessment Board (Board) for determination:

- degree name (e.g., Master of Counselling to Master of Arts in Counselling; Bachelor of Physical Education to Bachelor of Kinesiology);

NOTE: Changes to a degree name must be consistent with Standard 2 Credential Recognition and Nomenclature of the Degree Program Review Standards and Criteria which states: *The name of the degree should convey long-term meaning, the content of a degree program should be consistent with the name, and the reputation of the institution and of post-secondary education in BC should be enhanced by the quality of the offering*. The degree name must also meet the Guidelines on Naming Degrees (Appendix 3).

- program objectives (e.g., moving from a research-oriented degree to a professional degree);
- learning outcomes;
- delivery mode impacting 50% or more courses (e.g., transitioning to increased online delivery);
- for programs based in BC, program delivery outside BC;
- admission standards;
- graduation requirements;
- target audience;
- partnerships (e.g., program jointly offered by more than one institution, subcontracting academic work and/or program delivery, or dissolution of a partnership);
- a new undergraduate minor in a program area for which the institution does not already have consent to offer a major;
- a new undergraduate concentration constituting one-third* or more of the <u>required</u> course credits in the field of study or major/honours subject area;

- a new graduate concentration constituting one-third* or more of total program content in required credits (e.g., 10 or more credits in a 30-credit program);
- curricular changes to the program's core (required) courses that cumulatively make the program measurably different by over one-third* of the total program content of the degree that was initially granted consent; and
- use of concentration/specialization within the Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degree.

NOTE: The concentration must meet the course requirements of an Associate of Arts or Science without substantially lengthening the graduation requirements for the degree, and a proposed name change reflecting the new concentration must provide evidence that a research university will accept students into a major of the same name.

\* Regarding the one-third threshold to curriculum changes noted above, offices of the Vice-President Academic (or equivalent) are expected to monitor changes to a degree program's required courses over time and submit a Determination of New Degree template to the Board once the one-third threshold is met.

## Application for Determination of New Degree

If the proposed changes to an existing degree with consent appear to meet the definition of a new degree as outlined above, the institution is required to complete a Determination of New Degree template and follow the submission guidelines. The Determination of New Degree template and submission guidelines may be found on the PSIPS website (under "Guidelines & Templates").

An application for a Determination of New Degree must be submitted to the Board at least three weeks prior to the Board's next meeting date. Board meeting dates are noted on the Degree Authorization website.

Institutions may contact the Board Secretariat for assistance if it is not clear whether a proposed change is of sufficient magnitude to be classed as a new degree program.

## Board Assessment of Submission

If the Board determines that the proposed changes are so substantive as to effectively constitute a new degree program, the institution will generally be required to submit both a Stage 1 and a new degree program application (Stage 2) and undergo the new degree program review process. The Minister's consent is required by legislation of all new degree programs.

In all cases, the Board reserves the right to determine whether a peer and public review period, Stage 1 review and/or a Stage 2 review is required. Proposed program changes must not be implemented until the required reviews have been successfully completed and the Minister's consent has been granted.

## 8.2   Request for Location Change

Changes in location, including the addition of a location, are substantive material changes to the Minister's consent. The **consent holder must receive the Minister's consent before** implementing any change in location.

An institution planning changes in location must, when applying for renewal of consent:

1.  Indicate its intent in the Organization Review or the Use of the Word "University" renewal of consent application, as appropriate to the institution. Failure to do so may result in the Board's denial to review the request for changes in location.
2.  Submit a completed Location Request template.

Questions about the process may be directed to the Board Secretariat.

## 8.3   Other Substantive Changes

In addition to Ministerial consent being specific to a degree program and site, the consent holder must inform the Minister before implementation of any material change in circumstance that may impact consent including but not limited to:

-   Ownership change.
-   A change to the minimum qualifications of faculty.
-   The termination or suspension of programs that have consent.

The Minister may refer the proposed change to the Board for review against the relevant established criteria and/or operational guidelines. The Board may make recommendations to the Minister regarding changes to the Special Terms and Conditions of Consent if a proposed change is determined to constitute a change in the scope of the consent.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1.     Glossary of Terms

**Academically Qualified Faculty:** A faculty member is considered academically qualified if the person:

1) holds a doctorate in the program with:
   a) a graduate level specialization in the field in which they are teaching, or
   b) professional certification in the field of teaching, or
   c) five or more years of *current* professional experience in the field of teaching, or
2) holds an out of field doctorate with:
   a) demonstrated content knowledge of the field, such as a professional certificate in the field, and
   b) demonstrated teaching effectiveness, and
   c) demonstrated scholarly evidence considered as expert work or significant professional practice experience.

*See also Experientially Qualified Faculty.*

**Admission:** An educational institution's formal acceptance of a person to enter a program or course.

**Admission requirements**: A set of criteria an institution uses to determine a potential student's eligibility to enter a program.

**Anti-Racism**: The work of actively opposing racism by advocating for changes that promote racial equity.

**Applied Degree:** A qualification at the baccalaureate or master's level with a strong vocational/professional orientation.

**Applied Research:** The practical application of theory, knowledge, methods, or techniques to resolve a problem or serve a purpose.

**Articulation Agreement:** An agreement between two institutions that authorize studies undertaken in specific programs to be credited toward advanced standing into a specific program at the receiving institution.

**Associate Degree:** An academic qualification generally awarded after a two-year academic study (60 credits) that is transferable into a bachelor's degree program at a BC public research university.

**Asynchronous learning**: A form of educational delivery where students and instructors engage with the course content at different times that suit each individual participant's schedules. It is usually supported by technology such as computer conferencing, voicemail, and email.

**Bachelor's Degree / Baccalaureate Degree:** An undergraduate degree normally requiring four years of full-time study (120 credits).

**Blended/Hybrid**: A form of educational delivery where learning occurs both in-person and online (either through asynchronous or synchronous delivery).

**Branch campus:** Any location of an institution, other than the main campus, which is under a similar corporate and governance structure as the main campus. The branch campus is accountable to the main campus through its governance system, where the main campus provides direct responsibility for academic standards and financial oversight to ensure equivalency to the main campus.

**Calendar:** A document describing rules, regulations, policies, programs, and courses for a specific institution.

**Concentration:** A wide range of secondary specializations characterized by varying names, purposes, number of credits and recognition, such as stream, focus, option, track, etc.

- **Associate of Arts or Associate of Science concentration:** A secondary specialization within the existing Associate Degree Framework (e.g., Associate of Arts with a Concentration in Economics). Courses in the concentration must transfer as assigned course credits in the concentration subject area at a public research university.
- **Undergraduate concentration:** A *secondary* specialization *within* the primary specialization of the degree (e.g., BSc in Geography with a Concentration in Resource Management). Normally, the range for a concentration is 12-15 upper-level credits.
- **Graduate concentration:** A *secondary* specialization *within* the graduate field of study (e.g., Master of Arts in International Relations with a Concentration in Global Security). Due to the focused nature of graduate degrees, graduate concentrations always occur *within* the field of study, though they are characterized by varying names and number of credits. Normally, the range for a graduate concentration is 20-50% of the program credits.

**Consent Holder:** An institution operating under written consent of the Minister under Section 4(1) of the *Degree Authorization Act*.

**Continuing Faculty:** A type of faculty appointment that is permanent, ongoing, and has no end date. Continuing faculty may be part-time or full-time.

**Core Course:** A course required by an undergraduate or graduate program.

**Course:** A single unit of study offered by an educational institution.

**Credential (Academic):** A document provided as evidence of learning based on completion of a recognized program of study. Degrees, diplomas, and certificates are examples of academic credentials.

**Credit:** A unit used to express the value of a course or other training activity in relation to the total requirements for a degree, diploma, or certificate, usually measured in hours of study or achievement of threshold standard or both.

**Curriculum:** A systematic group of courses or sequences of subjects.

**Degree:** An academic credential awarded by an authorized degree-granting institution for successful completion of a program of academic study. A degree demonstrates recognition of academic achievement that is specified in writing to be an associate, baccalaureate, master's, or doctoral degree. Additionally, degrees must meet or exceed the degree level standards elaborated upon in the Degree Program Review Standards and Criteria.

**Degree Program:** A program of study that when completed successfully entitles the student to a degree.

**Degree-Granting Institution:** An educational institution granted by competent provincial or territorial authorities the right to confer associate, bachelor's, master's, and/or doctoral degrees.

**Directed Studies:** Credit courses for degree completion offered outside normally scheduled courses that supplement rather than replace regular modes of delivery. In undergraduate programs, directed studies courses are normally limited to highly capable third- and fourth-year students. Normally, no more than two directed studies courses may be taken in an undergraduate degree program.

**Discipline:** A branch of knowledge, learning or scholarly instruction that forms the basis for organizing educational programs.

**Distance Education:** An instructional system in which the learner is separated from the institution organizing the instruction by space and/or time. Includes blended learning, correspondence courses, distributed education, e-learning, synchronous/asynchronous learning, and learning facilitated by information and communications technology.

**Diversity:** The presence of difference within any group of people. Race, ethnicity, identity, class, socioeconomic status, gender identity/expression, sexuality, age, ability, religion, political beliefs, and ideology are examples of areas of diversity. The term is aligned with *Intersectionality*, or how different aspects of identity combine to create different positions of advantage or disadvantage.

**Doctoral Degree:** A graduate degree that is one level higher than a master's degree.

**Elective Course:** A course selected by the student from a range of courses *outside* the major or concentration in an undergraduate or graduate program.

**Entrance Requirements:** A set of criteria stipulating education and other types of training or experience for eligibility to enter an educational program. May include minimum levels of achievement and/or scores on examinations.

**Equity:** The quality of being fair, impartial, and just in policy, process, and results. It requires recognizing that not everyone starts from the same circumstances and has the same access to opportunities. Equitable outcomes may require differential treatment and resource redistribution to achieve a level playing field among individuals and communities.

**Experientially Qualified Faculty:** A faculty member is considered experientially qualified if the person:

1) is A.B.D. (completed all course work toward a doctorate and passed all qualifying and comprehensive exams to attain candidacy status) with a specialization in the field in which they are teaching; or

2) holds a master's degree in a related field with a specialization in the field in which they are teaching or a professional certification in the field in which they are teaching; or

3) holds a master's degree in the field in which they are teaching, and:

   a) has extensive and documented successful teaching experience in the area they are teaching in and demonstrated involvement in meaningful research; or

   b) has five or more years of current professional and management experience in the field in which they are teaching; or

   c) is recognized by professional peers as exemplary in the profession.

4) has documented experience of at least 10 years or more in the field teaching and is recognized by peers as exemplary in the field (e.g., an outstanding fine arts practitioner teaching in a fine arts program); or

5) is recognized by their community for the wisdom, spiritual and cultural knowledge, and skills that they hold (e.g., Indigenous Elders and Knowledge-Keepers).

*See also Academically Qualified Faculty.*

**Faculty Plan:** A demonstration of anticipated numbers of continuing, term, and sessional faculty over the next three years for a specific degree program. In some cases, a Faculty Plan will include a Hiring Plan, which demonstrates how numbers of continuing, term, and/or sessional faculty will increase with anticipated enrollment growth.

**Faculty Qualifications:** *See separate entries for Academically and Experientially Qualified Faculty.*

**Foundational Research:** Exploratory, original research that may form the basis of generating new knowledge. The term is used broadly in the Degree Program Review Standards and Criteria to include curiosity-driven and fundamental/basic research that may or may not result in discovery.

**Graduate Field of Study:** A *primary* specialization (e.g., Master of Engineering in (the field of) Engineering).

**Graduate Studies:** Studies at the master's or doctoral degree level that lead to the completion of a master's or doctoral degree. Graduate studies do not include post-baccalaureate certificate/diploma or post-graduate certificate/diploma programs taken after a baccalaureate degree that do not lead to a master's or doctoral degree.

**Honours:** An undergraduate degree program providing intense specialization in a field of study and open only to students with high academic standing. Normally, an honours degree requires a minimum of 36-48 upper-level credits in the specialization, and often includes a research thesis.

**Inclusion:** An intentional, active process aimed at reducing and removing barriers to access and participation for qualified students and staff and building a respectful and diverse community that is welcoming to all.

**In-Person Education**: A mode of program delivery where all elements of learning are accessed only in-person. Technology may still be used to enhance learning or provide course materials.

**Interdisciplinary Studies Degree**: A degree program of study that normally involves the combining of two or more disciplines to solve a specific problem.

**Language Requirement:** A stipulated requirement for applicants to demonstrate listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills to demonstrate general comprehension at a required level prior to entry into an educational institution.

**Learning Outcome:** The specification of what a student should learn, know, or be able to do as the result of a period of specified study.

**Main Campus:** The campus of the degree-granting institution that is designated as its primary location in BC. The main campus is responsible for the central administration of a branch campus location.

**Major:** A primary specialization in an undergraduate degree (e.g., BSc (with a Major) in Geography. An undergraduate applied or professional degree is considered a primary specialization (e.g., Bachelor of Business Administration). Normally a major or primary specialization requires, at minimum, 30 upper-level credits.

**Master's Degree:** A graduate degree that normally follows an undergraduate degree and takes one to three years of study.

**Minor:** A secondary specialization taken in a subject area *outside* the primary specialization (e.g., BSc in Geography with a Minor in Sociology). Minors normally comprise 20-30% of the courses in a full degree program with 12-15 upper-level credits in the field/subject area of the minor.

**Online Education**: Courses offered by post-secondary institutions in a completely virtual environment, using synchronous or asynchronous methods. The student is not required to attend learning activities or assessments in person in order to be able to complete the course.

**Prerequisite:** A course or other requirement that must be satisfactorily completed before enrolment will be permitted into an advanced or succeeding course.

**Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR):** A process to assess and recognize all learning from all sources.

**Program:** An integrated group of courses and learning activities leading to learning outcomes in a particular field of study.

**Quality Assurance:** The planned and systematic review process of an institution or program to determine that acceptable standards of education, scholarship, and infrastructure are being met, and to aim for continuous improvement.

**Recognition:**

1) Formal acknowledgement and/or acceptance of prior academic, professional, or vocational training, work experience, or academic credentials, and the granting of full or partial credit for the training, experience, or credentials with respect to entry into an academic institution (academic recognition) or a trade or profession (occupational recognition).

2) Formal acknowledgement of the status of an institution, accrediting body, or regulatory body, usually as a result of legislation or an accreditation process.

**Registration:** The process of formally assigning and recording enrolment into an educational institution.

**Regulated Occupation/Profession:** An occupation controlled by provincial and territorial (and sometimes federal) law and governed by a regulatory body. About 20 percent of jobs are in regulated occupations. These include regulated professions (e.g., nurses) and skilled trades (e.g., plumbers).

**Regulatory Body:** An organization that has legislated and exclusive authority to determine eligibility for, and to issue, licenses to practice a specific occupation or set of occupations. Regulatory bodies set the minimum standards of practice for many professions.

**Required Course:** A course that all students following a particular program of studies are required to take.

**Residency:** A specific amount of time that must be spent or number of courses or credits that must be completed by a student at a specific institution in order to receive a credential from that institution.

**Research:** The systematic study of a subject to discover new facts or information about it. The emphasis on applied or foundational research will differ for colleges, polytechnics, teaching universities, and research universities.

**Scholarship/Scholarly work:** A broad range of creative, research, and professional activities that result in a product that is shared with one's peers in a written, oral, visual, or performance presentation, and is subject to critique or review.

**Sessional Faculty:** A type of faculty appointment that is temporary, adjunct, non-permanent, or non-regular for a duration of two years or less.

**Syllabus/Course Outline:** A description of the essential features of a program of study and its courses, including objectives, subject content, teaching, and assessment strategies.

**Synchronous:** A form of educational delivery that happens at the same time for the instructor and the learners, meaning that there is real-time interaction between them (e.g., video conferencing, teleconferencing, live chatting, live streaming, etc.).

**Term Faculty:** A type of faculty appointment with a defined end date of at least the length of the program or three years, whichever is longer. These appointments may be full-time or part-time and have no expectation of renewal.

**Terminal Degree:** A degree that does not normally lead to a more advanced credential; e.g., doctoral degrees and some professional or applied degrees at the baccalaureate or master's levels.

**Transcript:** An official document that identifies courses taken (title and course number), credits and grades achieved, and credentials or qualifications earned.

**Transfer of Credits:** The acceptance or recognition of credits by a receiving institution on the basis of successful completion of courses at another educational institution in order to minimize the duplication of learning. Also called credit transfer.

**Undergraduate Studies:** The first level of studies toward a bachelor's degree.

**Underrepresented Group**: A subset of the population that holds a smaller percentage within an institution than the subset holds in the general population of the BC region that the institution serves. Underrepresented groups in an institution vary by academic discipline, geographic location, or other circumstances, and may refer to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people, visible minorities, people with disabilities, and in some domains, women.

**Upper-Level Courses/Upper Division Courses**: An undergraduate program's course work that takes place during the third and fourth year and builds on the foundational knowledge and skills gained through first and second year (Lower Level/Division) courses that lead to a bachelor's degree.

**Work-Integrated Learning:** A model of experiential education that formally and intentionally integrates a student's academic studies within a workplace or practice setting. Various types of work-integrated learning include applied research projects, co-op education, field placements, internships, practicums, and work experience.

# Appendix 2.　　Degree Categories and Degree Level Standards

*The following descriptions of degree categories are intended to capture the most salient general aspects of the three principal degree levels offered in Canada as well as the associate degrees offered in BC. They apply to a broad spectrum of disciplines, program types, and program lengths.*

**Associate Degree Framework**

The Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees are designed to provide an educational experience that prepares students for life as an educated person, and to lay a solid foundation for further study. The requirements specified below are intended to provide breadth of exposure to a variety of disciplines in both Arts and Sciences.

The associate degree curriculum comprises two years of university-level study in a variety of academic areas. Students are required to complete a broad range of course offerings balanced with in-depth study in specific disciplines. The requirements are sufficiently flexible to enable students to complete the required prerequisites for upper-level course work in their intended major if they wish to pursue a baccalaureate degree.

Students will be exposed to a program of study that seeks to develop:
- an interest in and curiosity about the world around them;
- an understanding of the global context in which they live and work;
- an appreciation of intellectual thought and human creativity;
- an openness to a variety of viewpoints;
- a capacity for and interest in self-directed life-long learning; and
- acceptance of the social responsibilities that come with the benefits of advanced learning.

In addition, the program of study should develop and improve those skills essential for academic success at an advanced intellectual level. They include but are not limited to:
- advanced reading comprehension;
- effective written and oral communications;
- mathematical and scientific reasoning;
- computer and technological literacy;
- research and evaluative skills;
- analysis, synthesis, and integration of knowledge;
- critical thinking and problem solving;

- application of theoretical understanding to practice; and
- working collaboratively.

All associate degrees, regardless of where they are offered, must follow the guidelines as set forth below.

Requirements for both Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees:

1. All general and specific requirements must be met but an institution may set higher standards or additional requirements over and above these general and specific requirements.
2. No course will be used to meet more than one of the specific requirements.
3. An average overall grade of "C" (cumulative GPA of 2.0 or its equivalent) calculated on all courses counting towards the associate degree must be achieved.
4. The number of credits awarded for any course will be determined by the institution granting the associate degree. Although the number of credits awarded for any course may vary from institution to institution, it is expected that a student will have completed the equivalent of approximately twenty 3-credit courses to fulfill the degree requirements.

## Associate of Arts

### General Requirements

60 semester credits of first- and second-year courses. These must include a minimum of 18 credits in Arts at the second-year level taken in two or more subject areas.

### Specific Requirements

a) 6 credits in first-year English; and
b) 9 credits in Science which shall include at least:
- 3 credits in Mathematics, or Computing Science, or Statistics (Statistics courses taught in subject areas such as Business, Commerce, Economics, Psychology, etc. may also be used to meet this requirement).
- 3 credits in a laboratory science, and
c) 36 credits in Arts which shall include:
- 6 credits in the Social Sciences.
- 6 credits in Humanities (including the Creative and Performing Arts) other than English.
- 24 additional credits in Arts, and
d) 9 credits in Arts, Science, or other areas.

## Associate of Science

**General Requirements**

60 semester credits of first- and second-year courses. These must include a minimum of 18 credits in science at the second-year level taken in two or more subject areas.

**Specific Requirements**

a) 6 credits in first-year English; and
b) 6 credits in Mathematics which shall include at least 3 credits in Calculus; and
c) 36 credits in Science, which shall include at least 3 credits in a laboratory science; and
d) 6 credits in Arts other than English (excluding Mathematics and Laboratory-based Science courses); and
e) 6 credits in Arts, Science, or other areas.

**Concentrations**

- An associate of arts or associate of science **concentration** is a secondary specialization within the existing Associate Degree Framework. Courses in the concentration should transfer as assigned course credits in the concentration subject area at a BC public research university (e.g., Associate of Arts with a Concentration in Economics).

**Definitions**

1. A course may be defined by any subject for which it is granted transfer credit at a BC public research university.
   - Any course in a subject area for which there is a Baccalaureate of Arts degree at a BC public research university may be defined as an Arts course for the purposes of the associate degree.
   - Any course in a subject area for which there is a Baccalaureate of Science degree or Baccalaureate of Applied Science degree at any BC public research university may be defined as a Science course for the purposes of the associate degree.
   - The requirements specified above are intended to provide breadth of exposure to a variety of disciplines in both Arts and Sciences. In some instances, there may be some ambiguity as to whether a course is in the Humanities or Social Sciences and is an Arts course or a Science course. While those determinations are left to the discretion of the institution granting the associate degree, it is expected that such courses as Human Geography and most Psychology courses would be designated as Arts courses, whereas courses in Physical Geography and Mathematics would be designated as Science courses.

- a course in another area is defined to be any course in a subject area for which there is a Baccalaureate degree other than in Arts, Science, or Applied Science at a BC public research university.

2. Any course that has assigned or unassigned transfer credit at the 100-level at a BC public research university may be defined as a first-year course for the purposes of the associate degree.

3. Any course that has assigned or unassigned transfer credit at the 200-level or higher level at a BC public research university may be defined as a second-year course for the purposes of the associate degree.

4. A laboratory science is one in which a substantial component of student instruction involves the study of natural phenomena, either in the laboratory or in the field. Each institution granting the associate degree will determine which of its courses satisfies this requirement.

5. For the purposes of this framework, a BC public research university includes the following institutions:
   - Simon Fraser University
   - University of British Columbia (Vancouver or Okanagan campus)
   - University of Northern British Columbia
   - University of Victoria

An institution proposing to offer its first bachelor's degree program will normally be required to undergo an Organization Review.

**Bachelor's Degree**
*Program Design and Outcome Emphasis*
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.

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 faculty supervision, of one or more essays, a terminal research paper, thesis, project, exhibition, or other research-based or performance-based exercise that demonstrates methodological competence and capacity

for independent and ethical intellectual/creative work and, where relevant, the exercise of professional responsibility in a field of practice.

Some bachelor's degree programs are intended to provide wide exposure to several disciplines, others provide an in-depth education in one or more disciplines (often as preparation for graduate study), and still others 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 includes:

- *Programs designed to provide a broad education as an end in itself* prepare graduates for employment in a variety of fields and/or for admission to second-entry professional programs. Examples: B. Hum (Humanities); General B.A., and General B.Sc. degrees.
- *Programs designed to provide in-depth study in academic disciplines* normally prepare students for graduate study in the discipline(s) and for employment in a variety of fields.
- *Programs with an applied focus* blend theory and practice, with content selected to ensure mastery of the field of practice and prepare students for employment and for advanced study in relevant graduate and professional programs.
- *Programs with a professional focus* prepare graduates to meet admission requirements and to be competent practitioners in the profession. Some of them are first-entry programs, others are second-entry programs (that is, they require some prior degree-level study or even a degree).  They normally require periods of practical experience (apprenticeship, internship, articling, clinical, etc.). The capacity for independent professional work is demonstrated by academic and practical exercises, under supervision, followed by admission tests to the profession. Though considered to be bachelor's programs in academic standing, some professional programs yield degrees with other nomenclature [D.D.S. (Dental Surgery); M.D. (Medicine); or LL.B./J.D. (Law)].

*Preparation for Employment and Further Study*
In addition to providing personal and intellectual growth, bachelor's 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.

*Length of Program*
Owing primarily to variations in pre-university studies among the provinces, classroom instruction is typically four years in duration (normally 120 credits, or the equivalent) and

may be supplemented by required professional experience (e.g., supervised practica, internships, and work terms).

*Admission Requirements*

Admission normally requires at a minimum a secondary school diploma and/or university preparatory courses, a minimum grade-point average, and other program-specific requirements. Students lacking these credentials may be admitted on a part-time or probationary basis, with continuation subject to acceptable academic achievement. Second-entry programs normally require at least two or three years of completed degree-level studies or in some cases the prior or concurrent completion of another undergraduate degree.

Degree Level Standard – Bachelor's Degree
1. *Depth and Breadth of Knowledge*
   a) Knowledge and critical understanding in a field of study that builds upon the student's secondary education and includes the key assumptions, methodologies, and applications of the discipline and/or field of practice.
   b) Basic understanding of the range of fields within the discipline/field of practice and of how the discipline may intersect with fields in related disciplines.
   c) The ability to gather, review, evaluate and interpret information, including new information relevant to the discipline, and to compare the merits of alternate hypotheses or creative options relevant to one or more of the major fields in a discipline.
   d) The capacity to engage in independent research or practice in a supervised context.
   e) Critical thinking and analytical skills inside and outside the discipline.
   f) The ability to apply learning from one or more areas outside the discipline.

2. *Knowledge of Methodologies and Research*
An understanding of methods of enquiry or creative activity, or both, in their primary area of study that enables the student to:
   a) evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems using well-established ideas and techniques;
   b) devise and sustain arguments or solve problems using these methods; and,
   c) describe and comment upon particular aspects of current research or equivalent advanced scholarship in the discipline and how these are relevant to the evolution of the discipline.

3.  *Application of Knowledge*
    a)  The ability to review, present, and critically evaluate qualitative and quantitative information to:
        *   develop lines of argument;
        *   make sound judgments in accordance with the major theories, concepts, and methods of the subject(s) of study;
        *   apply underlying concepts, principles, and techniques of analysis, both within and outside the discipline; and,
        *   where appropriate, use this knowledge in the creative process.
    b)  The ability to use a range of established techniques to:
        *   initiate and undertake critical evaluation of arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts, and information;
        *   propose solutions;
        *   frame appropriate questions for the purpose of solving a problem; and
        *   solve a problem or create a new work.
    c)  The ability to make critical use of scholarly reviews and primary sources.

4.  *Communication Skills*
The ability to communicate information, arguments, and analyses accurately and reliably, orally and in writing, to a range of audiences, to specialist and non-specialist audiences, using structured and coherent arguments, and, where appropriate, informed by key concepts and techniques of the discipline.

5.  *Awareness of Limits of Knowledge*
An understanding of the limits to their own knowledge and ability, and an appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity, and limits to knowledge and how this might influence analyses and interpretations.

6.  *Professional Capacity/Autonomy*
Qualities and transferable skills necessary for further study, employment, community involvement, and other activities requiring:
    a)  the exercise of initiative, personal responsibility and accountability in both personal and group contexts;
    b)  working effectively with others; and,
    c)  behaviour consistent with academic integrity.

**Master's Degree**

*Program Design and Outcome Emphasis*

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.

*Research-oriented master's programs* are typically for graduates of related undergraduate or professional programs in the field or students who have taken bridging studies to equip them for graduate study in the field; the focus is on developing the research, analytical, methodological, interpretive, and expository skills necessary for doctoral studies or for leadership in society. Some programs are thesis-based and require the student to develop and demonstrate advanced research skills under supervision. Some research-oriented master's programs are course-based but still require students to demonstrate the necessary research, analytical, interpretative, methodological, and expository skills in course exercises to prepare students for advanced study. Examples: M.A. programs in the humanities and social sciences; M.Sc. programs.

*Profession-oriented master's programs* normally admit students holding baccalaureate degrees and provide them with a selection of courses and exercises intended to prepare them for a particular profession or field of practice or, if they are already involved in the profession or field, to extend their knowledge base and skills as professionals/practitioners. Professional-oriented master's programs are not research-oriented and are typically terminal degrees where admission to advanced degrees is limited. Example: Master of Social Work, Master of Business Administration.

*Preparation for Employment and Further Study*

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.

*Length of Program*

Master's programs vary, normally with a minimum of 30 credits (1-2 years), depending on the field and the speed at which individuals progress through requirements.

*Admission Requirements*

Normally an undergraduate degree with an appropriate specialization, or an undergraduate degree with relevant bridging studies.

Degree Level Standard – Master's Degree

*1. Depth and Breadth of Knowledge*

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.

*2. Knowledge of Methodologies and Research*

A conceptual understanding and methodological competence that enables the graduate to have:

a) working comprehension of how established techniques of research and inquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline;

b) capacity to evaluate critically current research and advanced research and scholarship in the discipline or area of professional competence; and,

c) capacity to address complex issues and judgments based on established principles and techniques.

On the basis of this competence, graduates are able to demonstrate:

a) the development and support of a sustained argument in written form; and/or

b) originality in the application of knowledge.

*3. Application of Knowledge*

Competency in the research process by applying 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.

*4. Communication Skills*

The ability to communicate ideas, issues, and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences.

5. *Awareness of Limits of Knowledge*

A cognizance of the complexity of knowledge and of the potential contributions of other interpretations, methods, and disciplines.

6. *Professional Capacity/Autonomy*
   a) The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
      - initiative, personal responsibility, and accountability; and,
      - decision-making in complex situations, such as employment.
   b) The intellectual independence required for continuing professional development.
   c) The ability to appreciate the broader implications of applying knowledge to particular contexts.

An institution proposing to offer its first master's degree program will normally be required to undergo an Organization Review.

**Doctoral Degree**

*Program Design and Outcome Emphasis*

A doctoral program builds on the knowledge and competencies in a field or discipline acquired during prior study, usually at the graduate level. Study at the doctoral level is at the forefront of an academic or professional discipline.

Holders of the doctoral degree must have demonstrated a high degree of intellectual autonomy, an ability to conceptualize, design, and implement projects for the generation of significant new knowledge and/or understanding, and 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. It may also involve written and oral examinations of knowledge and skills in aspects of the discipline prior to authorization to proceed to work on a dissertation.

*Research-oriented doctoral programs* focus on the development of the conceptual and methodological knowledge and skills required to do original research and to make an original contribution to knowledge in the form of a dissertation. In some fields an internship or exhibition component may be required, but without diluting the significance

of the dissertation as the primary demonstration of mastery. Such programs lead to the award of the Ph.D.  Examples: Ph.D. (Psychology), Ph.D. (Education), Ph.D. (Music).

*Practice-oriented doctoral programs* are of a more applied nature, relate to a professional or creative activity and, where there is an internship or exhibition requirement, may also require a dissertation. Doctoral programs with an orientation to practice typically involve more course work than doctoral programs with a more theoretical or disciplinary focus. Such programs lead to the award of a degree designation reflecting the field or discipline. Examples: Ed.D. (Education), Mus.Doc. (Music), Psy.D. (Psychology).

*Preparation for Employment and Further Study*
Holders of doctorates will have the qualities needed for employment requiring the ability to make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields, and innovation in tackling and solving problems.

*Length of Program*
A doctoral program is typically three to six years in length, depending on the field and the speed at which individuals progress through requirements.

*Admission Requirements*
Normally a master's degree with an appropriate specialization, or a master's degree with appropriate bridging studies.

Degree Level Standards - Doctoral Degree
*1.   Depth and Breadth of Knowledge*
A thorough understanding of a substantial body of knowledge that is at the forefront of their academic discipline or area of professional practice.

*2.  Knowledge of Methodologies and Research*
A conceptual understanding and methodological competence that provides the graduate with the ability to:
   a) conceptualize, design, and implement research for the generation of new knowledge, applications, or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the research design or methodology in the light of unforeseen problems;
   b) make informed judgments on complex issues in specialist fields, sometimes requiring new methods; and,

c) produce original research, or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, and to merit publication.

3. *Application of Knowledge*

The capacity to:
  a) undertake pure and/or applied research at an advanced level; and,
  b) contribute to the development of academic or professional skills, techniques, tools, practices, ideas, theories, approaches, and/or materials.

4. *Communication Skills*

The ability to communicate complex and/or ambiguous ideas, issues, and conclusions clearly and effectively.

5. *Awareness of Limits of Knowledge*

An appreciation of the limitations of one's own work and discipline, of the complexity of knowledge, and of the potential contributions of other interpretations, methods, and disciplines.

6. *Professional Capacity/ Autonomy*
  a) The qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex situations.
  b) The intellectual independence to be academically and professionally engaged and current.
  c) The ability to evaluate the broader implications of applying knowledge to particular contexts.

Applications for doctoral programs will only be considered 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. An institution proposing to offer its first doctoral degree program will normally be required to undergo an Organization Review.

Institutional Considerations for Graduate Degrees Proposals
- Institutions planning to offer graduate level degree programming must have a policy and process for graduate supervision (e.g., qualifications of advisers, committee members, interim advisers, co-supervision, mentoring new supervisors, number of students to be supervised, monitoring of student progress).

- Institutions planning to offer graduate level programming have continuing 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.).
- Institutions must demonstrate sufficient numbers of administrative staff to manage the increased complexity of policies and procedures associated with offering graduate-level programs. The institution is committed to the timely program completion of its graduate students and to their financial support through various means such as teaching assistantships, scholarships, bursaries, faculty research grants, research contracts, etc.
- Institutions whose work involves Indigenous peoples have developed agreements that uphold Indigenous data collection processes and collaborative research design, including the principles of ownership, control, access, and protection to avoid cultural appropriation.

Institutions applying for graduate degree programs must meet the Degree Program Review Standards and Criteria and the Organization Review or Use of the Word "University" Standards and Criteria.

# Appendix 3.    Guidelines on Naming Degrees

The following guidelines have been adopted by the Degree Quality Assessment Board (Board) to assist institutions in determining the name of the credential they offer. Institutions proposing new degree names should indicate the basis for selecting a degree name. This should be determined within the institution's overall approach to degree nomenclature and reflect historical practice in BC and, where there are no similar BC-based degrees, within the broader Canadian and international context.

1) Credentials for new academic programs should ordinarily be selected from degree names that are widely used and generally understood in BC.

2) A generic degree name that already incorporates a broad range of academic disciplines or subject areas is preferable to a multitude of specific degree names. Examples include the Bachelor of Arts at the undergraduate level and the Master of Science at the graduate level. In the case of more specialized institutions, the standard credential awarded could be reflective of the overall mission of the institution (e.g., technical institute, Bachelor of Technology).

3) The name should be descriptive of the general area of study, which usually corresponds to a particular faculty or school. For example, the Bachelor/Master of Arts is normally used for programs in arts and humanities and most areas of the social sciences; the Bachelor/Master of Science normally refers to programs in the natural and physical sciences, technology, and mathematics. The nomenclature conventions in BC, while consistent with Canadian norms, may differ from some international jurisdictions. In such cases, the norms in BC will take precedence as the conventions are commonly understood by students, employers, and post-secondary institutions. The emergence of interdisciplinary (including multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary) studies has led to a number of departures from this practice. The current understanding of an interdisciplinary studies degree normally involves the combining of two or more disciplines to solve a specific problem.

4) The name should be appropriate for adoption by other BC post-secondary institutions with similar programs. Comparable, but not necessarily identical, programs should lead to equivalent credentials. To a certain extent, the system has already demonstrated its flexibility. The two clearest examples are the degrees of Bachelor of Applied Science and the Bachelor of Engineering as engineering credentials and the Bachelor of Commerce and the Bachelor of Business Administration as business credentials. While the degree designations differ, the credentials are seen to be equivalent.

5) In BC, the use of associate degrees is restricted to the Associate of Arts and the Associate of Science degree.

6) The above principles apply to both undergraduate and graduate programs.

**Indicate Specialization in the Degree Name**

The Board assumes that the principal reason for proposing a distinct degree is to indicate an academic area of specialization. Where appropriate the subject of specialization could be included as part of the degree name. Majors and areas of concentration are already identified on the transcript. In some instances, honours are shown as part of the degree. In addition, the specialization or major is sometimes shown on the parchment as a matter of institutional preference, but that does not mean it needs to be incorporated into the name of the degree.

New degrees, which identify an area of specialization, should fit into one of the following categories:

a) Bachelor/Master of Science in _____. There is a clearly identified and specialized field of study that finds its roots in science but derives its distinctiveness from being located in a separate academic unit. Examples include agriculture, dietetics, forestry, kinesiology, nursing, and pharmacy. From the examples given, it is clear that there is a strong link to a particular profession. While the degree names follow a standard pattern, the degree initials do not. Examples are B.Sc. (Agr.) and B.S.N. Either format is appropriate.

b) Bachelor/Master of _____ Science. This approach is similar to the previous method. In this instance a descriptive adjective is used to distinguish the branch of science. Examples include Bachelor of Applied Science and Bachelor of Health Science. Again, recognized academic units offer the degree and there is a connection with a particular profession.

c) Bachelor/Master of Arts in _____. While not as common as the comparable degree in science, there are a few instances where this approach has been adopted, e.g., Bachelor of Arts in Child and Youth Care. To warrant a separate degree name, the number of courses required in the field of specialization should exceed that required for a major. There should also be some demonstrated link with a particular profession or occupation.

d) Bachelor/Master of Education (Elementary). This approach to indicating specialization is achieved by showing the specialty in parentheses after the generic degree. In BC it has been used primarily to distinguish various kinds of education degrees. Unlike the previous examples, these degrees are offered by a single faculty. The Education

degree is also a professional degree, and the designated distinction has obvious implications for employment. Other faculties offering specialized professional programs may consider this option: an example is the Bachelor of Arts (Criminal Justice).

e) Bachelor/Master of _____ Studies. The word "studies" is used in instances where there is a well-defined academic program but where the course offerings are provided by a number of academic units or faculties. In interdisciplinary programs, there is often a tension between choosing a more generic degree (e.g., B.A. (Canadian Studies)) versus a Bachelor of Canadian Studies. The former is the more widely recognized and recommended approach.

f) Bachelor of Technology (_____). These degrees refer to academic programs grounded in the study of the practical application of technology in a variety of subject areas and prepare graduates for technical professional occupations (e.g., technicians, technologists). The field of specialization, if necessary, can be shown in parentheses following the general degree, as is the practice in the education field.

g) Bachelor of/Bachelor of Applied _____. Degrees that indicate a specific discipline and prepare students for a particular profession or field of practice (e.g., Bachelor of Business Administration). These degrees place a stronger emphasis on practical applications and are generally created in response to industry demand for graduates. As the Bachelor of Applied Science is already identified with engineering, its use should be limited to such programs to avoid confusion.

h) Master of _____. Professional degrees may indicate a specific discipline. Profession-oriented master's are normally course-based and intended to prepare students 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 (e.g., Master of Social Work).

i) Doctor of Philosophy in _____. This credential is widely used for doctoral programs regardless of the faculty or school to which the program belongs. Specializations tend to denote the disciplinary field of study (e.g., PhD in Political Science). PhD programs are research based.

j) Doctor of _____. There are a very small number of professional doctorate programs in BC. Professional doctorates are typically oriented to practice, usually involving 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 (e.g., Doctor of Psychology in Clinical Psychology (Psy.D.)).

# Appendix 4.   Guidelines on Degree Majors, Minors, and Concentrations

"**Degree**" means recognition or implied recognition of academic achievement that:

a) is specified in writing to be an associate, baccalaureate, masters, doctoral or similar degree, and

b) is not a degree in theology.

(From the *Degree Authorization Act*)

Additionally, degrees must meet or exceed the degree level standards elaborated upon in the Degree Program Review Standards and Criteria (see Section 5).

"**Course**" may be core to the degree program (i.e., a required course) or an elective course.

- "**Core/Required Course**" is a course needed to graduate in the major or concentration. These courses include course options that students are required to choose from in the major or concentration.
- "**Elective Course**" is a course selected by the student from a range of courses <u>outside</u> the major or concentration in an undergraduate or graduate degree program.

"**Degree Specialization**" means a distinct grouping of courses within a degree program. Specializations may be primary or secondary. Some secondary specializations may be defined more precisely as a sub-specialization within a primary specialization.

- An **undergraduate major** (or synonymous term) is considered a primary specialization (e.g., BSc (with a Major) in Geography). An undergraduate applied or professional degree is considered a primary specialization (e.g., Bachelor of Business Administration). Normally a major or primary specialization requires, at minimum, 30 upper-level credits.
- An **undergraduate honours** is considered an intense specialization in a field of study and is open only to students with high academic standing. Normally, an honours degree requires a minimum of 36-48 upper-level credits in the specialization, which often includes a research thesis. Students must maintain high academic standing to graduate with an honours degree.
- An **undergraduate minor** is considered a secondary specialization:
  - Students typically take a minor in a subject area outside their primary specialization (e.g., BSc in Geography with a Minor in Sociology).

- o Minors normally comprise 20-30% of the courses in a full degree program with 12-15 upper-level credits in the field/subject area of the minor.
- An **undergraduate concentration** is generally considered a secondary specialization within the primary specialization of the degree (e.g., BSc in Geography with a Concentration in Resource Management). Normally, the range for a concentration is 12-15 upper-level credits.
- **Concentration** refers to a wide range of secondary specializations characterized by varying names, purposes, number of credits, and recognition. Other terms used may include stream, focus, option, track, etc.
- An **Associate of Arts or Associate of Science concentration** is a secondary specialization within the existing Associate Degree Framework. Courses in the concentration should transfer as assigned course credits in the concentration subject area at a public research university. (e.g., Associate of Arts with a Concentration in Economics).
- A **graduate field of study** (or other term) is considered a primary specialization (e.g., Master of Engineering in (the field of) Engineering).
- A **graduate concentration** is generally considered a secondary specialization within the graduate field of study (e.g., Master of Arts in International Relations with a Concentration in Global Security). Normally, the range for a graduate concentration is 20-50% of the program credits.
  - o Due to the focused nature of graduate degrees, graduate concentrations always occur within the field of study, though they are also characterized by varying names and number of credits.

See also the Determination of New Degree for substantive changes to an existing degree that may result in the degree being defined as a new degree program.

# Appendix 5.     Continuing Faculty Guidelines

From the *Degree Program Review – Stage 2 Program Quality Review – Standard 6*:
> *The institution must demonstrate that it has the ongoing human resources necessary to develop and deliver a quality degree program. The institution must have an appropriate number of continuing (permanent), qualified faculty in the department/discipline in which the degree program is offered. The institution must have faculty selection criteria that ensure new faculty hires have the necessary qualifications and add to the diversity of the unit offering the program being proposed. The institution must demonstrate that it has the appropriate level and balance of student support staff to ensure the necessary supports are in place for student success in the degree level proposed.*

From the *Organization Review – Standard 9 and Use of the Word "University" Review – Standard 10*:
> *The institution has appropriately qualified faculty and instructional staff led by a group of continuing faculty committed to achieving its mission and academic goals. The institution has policies and procedures with respect to appointment, evaluation, and employment conditions of faculty and staff, including employment equity, promotion, termination, and professional development. The institution has sufficient staff to provide an appropriate level and balance of student support services to ensure the necessary supports are in place for student success in the degree level(s) proposed or granted consent in BC.*

**Guidelines to Ensure Sufficient Numbers of Qualified Continuing Faculty**

**Principles**
- Stability, consistency, and continuous improvement of academic programs and institutional operations rely on continuing faculty to do long-term program and curricular planning.
- Governance of higher education institutions requires continuing faculty to be involved in academic decision-making for the long-standing and consistent quality of degree programs.
- Academic freedom in teaching, research, and service is most secure among faculty with continuing status.
- Continuing faculty provide service to the community at large. Service raises an institution's profile, provides reputational benefits, and facilitates collaboration and peer review.

- Continuing faculty are more able to provide students with a high-quality learning environment and experience over time, which results in better learning outcomes, better graduation and retention rates, and greater overall success.

> **Faculty plans are a vital part of these Guidelines to determine the scale of faculty requirements and ensure there is sufficient faculty in place to maintain the principles outlined above as the program evolves and reaches maturity.**

### Definitions
- ***Continuing faculty*** have permanent, ongoing appointments with no end date, or are specific term faculty who are considered permanent as they have multi-year contracts that are renewed on an ongoing basis, subject to funding and satisfactory performance.
- ***Term faculty*** have defined end dates of at least the length of the program or three years, whichever is longer. These appointments come with no expectation of renewal.
- ***Sessional faculty*** are faculty that are temporary, adjunct, non-permanent, or non-regular faculty members with an appointment of two years or less.
- ***Faculty plans*** demonstrate whether the institution has and will continue to have a satisfactory number of qualified continuing and term faculty to promote continuity of programming and ongoing quality improvement. In some cases, the faculty plan will include a hiring plan.

### Expectations of Faculty Numbers
Faculty numbers will differ by institution, category of degree program, discipline/field, program length, and degree level. Nonetheless, all institutions should meet the following expectations concerning sufficient numbers of continuing faculty, their qualifications, and the institution's policies to foster their development.

*Sufficient Continuing Faculty*
1. For new degree programs, the institution will start with a minimum of one continuing faculty member for the degree, and additional continuing and/or term faculty members for each secondary specialization, minor, concentration, etc. The continuing faculty are to be in place prior to the start of the program.

2. In addition to the above, the institution commits to, and maintains, a minimum threshold of 50 percent of the number of course sections within each degree program to be taught by continuing and/or term faculty. Some fields may require a higher minimum standard.
3. As class sizes may vary, the institution's continuing and term faculty normally comprise, at a minimum, 50 percent of all teaching staff calculated by full-time equivalents.
4. Faculty plans are to be linked to the institution's plans for growth.
5. Normally, continuing faculty refer only to those working at the BC campus(es) for which the institution has consent.
6. Institutions with a history of faculty stability that consistently demonstrate the Principles outlined above may be granted a flexible approach tailored to the institution's and the program's different needs for addressing the adequacy of continuing faculty numbers.

*Qualifications of Faculty*
7. Institutions are expected to develop and implement a faculty qualifications policy that incorporates best practices such as hiring academically qualified faculty with terminal degrees in the field in which they are teaching, hiring experientially qualified faculty recognized by peers as exemplary in the field, etc.
8. Faculty have demonstrable expertise in the courses they are responsible for teaching.[1]
9. In some specialized programs such as fine arts or Indigenous languages, faculty may be considered equally or more qualified than those with an academic degree if they are recognized as Elders or practitioners with profound knowledge of the field.
10. All faculty, continuing, term, or sessional, who are teaching at the undergraduate level should meet the Instructor Qualifications for Transferable Courses guidelines of the BC Council of Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT).
11. Continuing faculty teaching at the master's or doctoral level normally will have a terminal degree in the discipline being taught.

*Faculty Policies*
12. All continuing and term faculty are required to undertake, and will receive institutional support for, professional development, research, and/or scholarship, as defined by the individual institution. Non-continuing faculty should receive institutionally supported professional development opportunities, if available.

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[1] Demonstrable expertise could be illustrated in numerous ways such as research, specialized industry experience, graduate-level course work, etc.

13. All continuing and term faculty provide service to the institution. Service is defined as non- teaching activity that improves the quality of the program and/or the institution, such as involvement in an institution's academic governance or participation in BCCAT articulation committees within their academic discipline.
14. Faculty appointments reflect the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

## Faculty Plans

Private degree-granting institutions operating under the *Degree Authorization Act* (DAA) must submit an up-to-date faculty plan showing anticipated continuing, term, and sessional faculty numbers over the next three years with each application for a new degree program and each application for renewal of consent of an existing program. In addition, applications for new degree programs will submit a faculty plan including a hiring plan outlining how numbers of continuing, term, and/or sessional faculty numbers will increase with enrollment growth.

An institution's faculty plan and hiring plan is predicated by, and should be aligned with, the institution's financial resources and budget.

Faculty plans and hiring plans reflect goals for program growth and expansion (or contraction) for the next three years, and identify the qualifications needed of new faculty recruits.

# Appendix 6.　　　Online Delivery Guidelines

The Degree Quality Assessment Board has the option to determine if the request to shift permanently to online would be considered a new degree that would need a full quality assessment review, or assess the requests based on the following principles and guidelines.

## Definitions

*In-Person Education*: Learning occurs via in-person delivery only. All elements of learning are accessed in-person. Technology may still be used to enhance learning or provide course materials.

*Online Education*: Courses offered by post-secondary institutions that are held in a completely virtual environment, using synchronous or asynchronous methods. The student is not required to attend learning activities or assessments in person in order to be able to complete the course.

*Blended/Hybrid*: Learning occurs via online and in-person delivery consecutively. Learners are required to engage consecutively both online (synchronous and/or asynchronous) and in person.

*Synchronous*: Delivery that happens at a specific time for the instructor and the learners, meaning that there's real-time interaction between them. Examples include video conferencing, teleconferencing, live chatting, live-streaming, etc.

*Asynchronous*: All learning and assessment occur within broadly defined timelines; no requirement to participate in scheduled concurrent learning or assessment activities.

## Guiding Principles for Online Delivery

- *Accessibility* – all students, staff, and faculty, regardless of location, or physical or developmental impairment, can access and use all course materials and tools.
- *Technology Infrastructure* – the learning management system and online tools are accessible, reliable, affordable, well-maintained, and recoverable.
- *Faculty Expertise* – faculty must have the appropriate qualifications, knowledge, and skills required to support the achievement of learning outcomes in an online environment.
- *Learning Outcomes* – institutions must ensure online components of programs to ensure that students achieve program and degree level learning outcomes.

- **_Communication_** – the institution's expectations, policies, and procedures are open and transparent, and students are made aware of any issues that may impact their learning.
- **_Student Engagement_** – the institution, faculty, and support staff must communicate, collaborate, and actively involve students to ensure an enriching educational experience.
- **_Support for Students and Faculty_** – support staff for students and faculty are readily available to provide support in an online environment comparable to what would be available on-campus.
- **_Risk Management_** – technology recovery plans are in place in the event of a failure, and policies and procedures are in place to verify student identity and maintain the academic integrity of assessments.
- **_Evaluation_** – student and faculty feedback are used for ongoing evaluation and enhancement of the online delivery model and faculty teaching performance.

## Assessment Criteria
Students
- Students have access to the resources they need to engage in online learning, including an orientation to online learning and their Learning Management System which identifies and addresses barriers to accessing technology and internet connectivity.
- All additional costs, beyond tuition and ancillary fees, associated with online or distance learning aspects of course and program delivery are transparent and communicated to students.
- Students have the opportunity to contact and interact with faculty (e.g., office hours).
- Students have access to support staff and that student support is adequately resourced to meet learner needs, often through extended hours.
- Online components of programs are organized in such a way that students can achieve program and degree level learning outcomes within the prescribed period of study.
- Student engagement will be maintained throughout the delivery of the course for a meaningful learning experience, including peer-to-peer interaction, faculty-to-student interaction, and student academic support.
- Adequate and diverse online library resources are available to students and physical space for students to engage in online learning on campus if necessary.
- Expectations for any required face-to-face, on-campus or off-campus work components (e.g., work-integrated learning, specialized laboratory work) are stated clearly and well in advance.

Faculty and Staff

- Support services and training for faculty or staff are available for the changed delivery mode to ensure they have the appropriate knowledge and skills required to support the achievement of learning outcomes.
- Faculty have access to the learning technologies to deliver online.
- Courses include provisions designed to meet the accessibility needs of diverse learners.
- Faculty have a common baseline for learning and teaching success using effective practices in online pedagogy. For example, promoting and encouraging principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL).
- Faculty teaching, supervision loads, and availability to students are adequate in the context of online course development and teaching, whether synchronous or asynchronous.
- Remuneration for faculty is consistent with institutional policies, internal equity, and address additional workload for adapting courses to online delivery.
- Exams and assessments are fit for purpose, clearly communicated, effectively moderated, and allow students to demonstrate learning outcomes.
- Student engagement and interaction will be monitored to ensure students are engaged in and undertaking the required learning.
- Staff are in place to assist in developing and delivering the online programs (e.g., instructional designers, developers, Learning Management System support staff, and/or their equivalents).
- New faculty have a right and/or guidelines to be able to revise an existing course before being asked to teach an online course.

Institutional Policies and Procedures

- Appropriate risk management provisions are in place, including those that ensure that technological infrastructure is stable, reliable, well maintained, and secure, that a disaster recovery plan is available if servers or other technologies fail, and that learners will not be adversely affected.
- Institutions' risk management and mitigation plans ensure that students are offered alternatives where there is significant change or disruption to the delivery of courses, including processes for fee reduction, refunds, or deferral.
- A process is in place to verify the identity of a student, including registration, participation, and assessment, so that it can be determined with certainty that the learner turning in the work is the one who is registered for the course.

- Processes are in place to maintain academic integrity of assessments, including methods to identify verification, supervision, and proctoring of tests and exams as appropriate.
- Appropriate policies and procedures are in place to address copyright and intellectual property issues and privacy regulation compliance (e.g., digital rights management and the use of object learning repositories).
- Develop principles to guide the selection and implementation of learning tools that incorporate considerations of ethical use and how data is collected, stored, and used.
- A course with multiple sections and instructors has the same learning outcomes and periodic evaluation by students/peers/admin according to the regular cycle of evaluation.
- Appropriate goals are in place for the retention/persistence of students using online learning and the institution assesses its achievement of these goals and uses the results for improvement.
- Complaint processes are clearly defined and can be used electronically.

# Appendix 7.  Operational Guidelines for Collaborative Arrangements

To assure that the quality of degree programming offered through collaborative arrangements is maintained, the Degree Quality Assessment Board (Board) requests and reviews the collaborative agreements between partners. In reviewing agreements, documents, and evidence provided by applicants, the Board is guided by the definitions and parameters stated below, which institutions are required to follow.

## Definitions

### *Degree-granting institution*
The institution that is seeking, or holds the Minister's consent, approval, or authorization under an Act of the British Columbia Legislature to provide degree programs, and grant degrees from BC. The degree-granting institution is ultimately and solely responsible for the academic and operational standards of all programs that lead to degrees granted in its name.

### *Collaboration Partner*
- An institution that is authorized or accredited by a body that is recognized by the Board that plans to enter into a collaborative arrangement for educational purposes; and/or
- An organization that is legally constituted, experienced, and financially stable that plans to enter into a collaborative arrangement for administrative and/or student support purposes.

### *Collaborative Arrangement*
An agreement between a degree-granting institution and a collaboration partner whereby the collaborative partner provides:
- administrative and/or student support services on behalf of the degree-granting institution; and/or
- part of a program leading to a degree, conferred by the degree-granting institution. The provision of a program includes practica or other work-integrated learning placements that are a requirement for graduation.

## Expectations
Institutions are to meet the following expectations when offering degree programs through collaborative arrangements.

1.  *Selecting a partner for collaboration*
    a)  The degree-granting institution provides the rationale for its choice of partner.
    b)  Educational Purposes: The degree-granting institution is satisfied that the institution partner is in good standing, and that the missions of both institutions are compatible with respect to the educational purposes of collaboration before entering into any agreement.
    c)  Administrative and/or Student Support Purposes: The legal status of a partner organization and its capacity to contract with the degree-granting institution has been examined, together with its ability to provide the infrastructure and resources necessary to ensure the required quality and standards of the degree-granting institution will be achieved and maintained, before entering into any agreement.

2.  *Policies, procedures, and information*
    a)  The commitment and support of both the degree-granting institution and the collaboration partner's central authorities must underpin any arrangement.
    b)  Collaborative arrangements must be negotiated, agreed upon, and managed in accordance with the formally stated policies and procedures of the degree-granting institution.
    c)  The degree-granting institution ensures that the financial aspects of the arrangement are satisfactory to the BC Ministry responsible for post-secondary education and that activities are costed and accounted for accurately and fully.
    d)  There are measures to ensure that the organizational culture of the degree-granting institution is transferred to the collaborative partner to a sufficient degree to ensure a culture appropriate to an institution offering part of the degree programs.
    e)  There must be adequate safeguards against financial temptations to compromise academic standards.

3.  *Written agreements*
    a)  There must be a written and legally binding agreement or contract between the degree-granting institution and the partner signed by the appropriate senior official in each organization, including:
        *   the relationship between the degree-granting institution and the partner organization;
        *   the legal status of each organization; and
        *   the arrangements relating to administrative and/or academic responsibilities for individual degree programs and locations.

b) The agreement must include termination and arbitration provisions and financial arrangements and must specify the respective responsibilities of the two parties for administrative and student support, academic standards, and quality. The residual obligations to students on termination of the agreement must be specified.

c) The agreement must clearly delineate how funds collected from students are collected, dispersed, and accounted for between the two parties.

4. *Responsibility for, and equivalence of, academic standards*
   a) The academic standards of all degree programs provided through a collaborative arrangement are equivalent to those of other comparable programs provided by the degree-granting institution.
   b) The degree-granting institution reviews regularly (at least every 7 years) the extent to which programs and/or courses have achieved their intended objectives (i.e., meet the degree-level standards and expected student learning outcomes).
   c) A plan for regular program reviews consistent with practices of BC.
   d) The degree-granting institution can demonstrate that student achievements in programs and/or courses delivered through a collaborative arrangement are comparable to those of students in similar degree programs offered directly at the degree-granting institution's main campus.

5. *Assuring the quality of programs and services*
   a) The degree-granting institution is accountable for the quality and standards of all courses, programs, and degrees granted in its name.
   b) The policies and procedures for quality assurance must be explicit and documented and must clearly delineate the division of responsibilities and control between the degree-granting institution and the collaboration partner.
   c) The curriculum and delivery methodologies used for degree programs delivered by a collaboration partner should be substantively the same as, or of comparable quality to, those used for similar degree programs at the degree-granting institution, or a sound rationale for any differences must be clearly identified at the time of application.
   d) All faculty meet the minimum qualifications established by the degree-granting institution and those requirements must be comparable to the standard used for similar programs at its main campus.
   e) The degree-granting institution retains authority to approve faculty teaching in degree programs delivered through collaborative provision.

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f)   The degree-granting institution has sole responsibility for the financial relationship with students including collecting and refunding tuition and fees for residences.

g)   There is an appropriate provision for staff appointment, induction, and development, to meet the requirements of the degree-granting institution.

h)   The degree-granting institution ensures that effective measures exist to review the proficiency of staff and faculty.

i)   Program resources available for degree programs delivered under a collaborative arrangement must be clearly identified by the degree-granting institution at the time of application and must be adequate to achieve the stated desired outcomes of the arrangement.

j)   Any course or block transfer arrangements made between the partners inside or outside the degree program must be done through a written articulation agreement that outlines the policies and procedures that are in place to determine equivalency and that there is a periodic review of those arrangements by the degree-granting institution.

6.  *Student assessment requirements*
    a)   The examination and assessment requirements for programs provided ensure that the academic standards and grading practices are equivalent to the same or comparable programs of the degree-granting institution.

    b)   The degree-granting institution must ensure that the partner organization understands and follows the requirements for the conduct of assessments.

    c)   The degree-granting institution maintains ultimate control of admission requirements and decisions.

    d)   The degree-granting institution determines the admission requirements for students entering a program under the collaborative agreement. Particular care needs to be taken with any arrangements for the assessment of prior and experiential learning.

7.  *Degrees and transcripts*
    a)   The issuing of degrees and transcripts must remain under the control of the degree-granting institution. The words and terms used on the degree certificate should be consistent with those used by the degree-granting institution for the same or comparable programs it provides.

    b)   The transcript must note that all or part of the program was delivered by the Collaboration Partner.

8. *Information for students*
   a) Information given by the partner organization or an agent to prospective students and to those registered in a program, about the nature of a program, the academic standards to be met, and the quality of the program must be approved in advance by the degree-granting institution. Such information clearly defines the nature of the collaborative arrangement and outlines the respective responsibilities of the parties.
   b) Information is monitored regularly by the degree-granting institution and updated as appropriate.
   c) Information includes directions to students about the appropriate channels for concerns, complaints, and appeals.
   d) Information given to the student cannot mislead the student as to which institution the student is enrolled in.

9. *Publicity and marketing*
   a) Effective control over the accuracy of all public information, publicity and promotional activity relating to the programs and degrees for which a degree-granting institution has responsibility must be retained by the degree-granting institution, in particular when the information is published on its behalf. The degree-granting institution must satisfy itself through active means that this control is exercised consistently and fairly, and that the public cannot be misled about the collaborative nature or about the nature and standing of the degree program.

The Board reserves the right to include the collaborative partner in its review of the degree-granting institution.

# Appendix 8.  Operational Guidelines for Branch Operations

For institutions with headquarters in another jurisdiction that wish to operate a satellite or branch location in BC, the Degree Program Review and the Organization Review and/or the Use of the Word "University" Review will focus on the institution's operations in BC and will include a review of how they vary or are the same as in the home jurisdiction. Additionally, consideration will be given to how the home jurisdiction will ensure that the branch operation maintains quality. The applicant seeking consent to offer degree programs as a branch operation of an out-of-province institution controls directly all aspects of the administration and delivery of the degree program.

For private institutions headquartered in BC that wish to grant BC degrees, the Degree Program Review and the Organization Review and/or the Use of the Word "University" Review will be applied to operations both inside and outside BC, as appropriate.

In the context of the Degree Quality Assessment Board's (Board) review, the division of governance, policymaking and administrative authority, and influence over organizational culture, between the branch and central operations need to be understood. As well, assurance of the equivalency of academic standards and coordination of quality assurance mechanisms between branch and central operations is a concern. The Board is guided by the expectations provided below when reviewing the relationship between branch and central operations.

## Definitions

*Main campus*
The campus that is responsible for the central administration of a branch campus location.

*Branch Campus*
A branch campus is any location of an institution other than the main, but under the same corporate structure as the main campus, that:
1) is permanent in nature;
2) has a separate student body;
3) has a resident administration;
4) normally offers a full program leading to a degree; and,
5) is geographically separate from the main campus such that students may not easily avail themselves of educational and administrative services of the main campus.

**Expectations**

Institutions are to meet the following expectations when operating through a branch campus.

1. *Responsibility for, and equivalence of, academic standards*
a) The academic standards of all degree programs provided through the branch campus are comparable to those of similar programs provided by the institution's main campuses.
b) A plan for regular program reviews consistent with practices of the degree-granting institution's main operations exists, and encompasses programs offered at the branch campus.
c) The degree-granting institution can demonstrate that student achievements in programs delivered through branch campuses are comparable to those of students in similar degree programs offered at the degree-granting institution's main campus.

2. *Assuring the quality of programs and degrees*
a) The policies and procedures for quality assurance must be explicit and documented and must clearly delineate the division of responsibilities and control between the branch campus and the main campus or central administration.
b) The curriculum and delivery methodologies used for degree programs delivered by a branch campus are substantively the same as those used for similar degree programs at the main campus, and any differences must be clearly identified at the time of application.
c) Where appropriate, consideration has been given to ensure the curriculum demonstrates reasonable levels of Canadian content (e.g. course in history, law, education).

3. *Information for students, staff, and faculty*
a) Information given to faculty and staff of branch campuses, and to students registered in its programs, includes directions about the appropriate channels for concerns, complaints, and appeals.

4. *Publicity and marketing*
a) The branch campus retains effective influence to ensure the accuracy of all public information, publicity and promotional activity relating to the programs and degrees it offers, in particular when the information is published on its behalf. The branch

campus must satisfy itself through active means that the public cannot be misled about the nature and standing of the degree programs.

5. *Policies, procedures, and organizational culture*

a) Branch operations are managed in accordance with the formally stated policies of the central administration.

b) There are measures to ensure that the organizational culture of the main campus is transferred to the branch campus to a sufficient degree to ensure a culture appropriate to an institution offering their specific degree programs.

c) There must be adequate safeguards against financial motivations that would compromise academic standards.

# Appendix 9.    Use of External Experts

When the Degree Quality Assessment Board (Board) receives an application, it will determine whether it is necessary to have it reviewed by a panel of external experts established to conduct a review based on published criteria:

1. Degree Program Reviews that focus on the quality of the degree program.
2. Organization Reviews that focus on the characteristics of the institution, its financial viability, and its readiness to offer degree-level programs.
3. Use of the Word "University" Reviews that focus on the institution's academic organization, policies, expertise, and financial viability.

External experts appointed to a quality review panel must possess the following characteristics:

- Have appropriate academic expertise;
- Be committed to the principles and practices of quality assurance in post-secondary education;
- Be recognized by their peers for having a broad outlook, open mind, and sound judgment;
- Provide full disclosure and be free of any actual or perceived conflict of interest regarding an applicant/institution, in accordance with the Board's policy; and,
- Have demonstrated oral and written communication skills, preferably including conducting reviews and writing formal reports to strict deadlines.

It is the Board's responsibility to appoint all external experts. An applicant may suggest individuals who might make appropriate external experts based upon the established criteria for the Board's consideration.

*Degree Program Review*
As the panel's main purpose is to conduct a quality assessment of the degree application, panels will normally possess the following specific criteria:

- An advanced academic credential related to the subject area under review (normally at the doctoral level in the discipline or terminal level if in a particular field).
- Required or desired professional credentials and/or related work experience.
- Relevant academic experience in:

- quality assessment (e.g., as appraisers for accrediting bodies or as reviewers of degree programs);
- curriculum design;
- teaching and learning; and,
- post-secondary administration.

*Organization Review*

Panel members may have expertise in one or more of the following areas:

- Senior management experience in at a post-secondary institution equivalent in type to the institution to be assessed (e.g., experience at a university if the institution under review is a university).
- Accounting expertise and certification with experience in corporate financial management.
- Experience in the admissions and registrar functions at a post-secondary institution, including admissions policies and academic records management.
- Experience in managing learning resources and/or infrastructure.
- Private sector consultants specializing in organization design and behaviour, or assessment and evaluation.

*Use of the Word "University" Review*

Panel members may have expertise or experience in one or more of the following areas:

- Senior management experience at a recognized university.
- Accounting expertise and certification with experience in corporate financial management.
- Experience in the admissions and registrar functions at a recognized university, including admissions policies and academic records management.
- Experience in managing learning resources and/or infrastructure at a recognized university.
- Private sector consulting specializing in organization design and behaviour, or assessment and evaluation at the university level.

# Appendix 10.    Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Policy

This policy applies to members of the Degree Quality Assessment Board (the Board) and to external experts engaged to conduct an Organization Review or a Degree Program Review or a Use of the word "University" review at the Board's request. This policy also applies to applicants wishing to declare a conflict of interest with an individual Board member or external expert.

Board members must also adhere to the *Guidelines for Conduct of Government Appointees to BC Agencies, Boards and Commissions* developed by the Board Resourcing Development Office. External experts are also expected to adhere to the spirit of these guidelines.

**Board members (as Ministerial appointees) and external experts (as Board appointees) must avoid any actual or perceived conflict of interest including that which might impair or impugn the independence, integrity or impartiality of the Board.  There must be no apprehension of bias, based on what a reasonable person might perceive.**

Board members and external experts must not reveal or divulge confidential information received in the course of their duties. Confidential information must not be used for any purpose outside the Board's mandate.

Except at the direction of the Chair, Board members and external experts must not make public comments concerning any application.

Board members and external experts must be committed to the principles and practices of quality assurance in post-secondary education and be recognized by their peers for having a broad outlook, open mind, and sound judgment. Individuals appointed in these capacities must possess the qualifications to engender the confidence of the Minister, applicants, the public, accrediting bodies, other degree-granting institutions, and other jurisdictions.

## Definition of a Conflict
An actual or potential conflict of interest arises when a member or expert is placed in a situation in which:
- his or her personal interests, financial or otherwise, or

- the interests of an immediate family member or of a person with whom there exists, or has recently existed, an intimate relationship,

conflict or appear to conflict with the member's responsibilities to the Board, the Minister, and the public interest. No Board member shall knowingly participate in any decision that appears to directly or preferentially benefit or disadvantage the member or any individual with whom the member has an immediate family, intimate, or commercial relationship.

Board members and external experts appointed by the Board should not have any connection to the applicant under review within the previous two years or for a period of up to three months following the completion of their duties in connection with the degree quality assessment process.  Some examples of an unacceptable connection to an applicant organization include:

- Preparing an application or providing expert advice used in developing the application, beyond information on the Board's criteria, guidelines, and procedures;
- Making public comment for or against an application or institution that might result in the apprehension of bias;
- Working for or previously employed by the institution;
- Being a student or a recent graduate of the institution;
- Working as a consultant for the institution;
- Serving in an advisory capacity or on a board or committee at the institution;
- Having financial or other business interests with the institution;
- Supervising students or employees of the institution;
- Collaborating regularly with the institution; and/or,
- Teaching at the institution.

Some Board members are appointed as representatives of private sector membership organizations that broadly represent private sector interests. A public or private institution making application to the Board may also hold membership in one of these organizations that a Board member represents. In such instances, there would not normally be a conflict of interest unless the member has been actively involved in developing, promoting, or publicly commenting on an application.

**Disclosure of Conflict**

Where there is an actual or potential conflict of interest, the member must disclose the circumstances and consult with the Board Chair. If unsure if a conflict exists, the member should seek advice from the Chair. It is the responsibility of the Board Chair to determine

whether a conflict of interest exists and to inform members of the decision. If a member has an actual or potential conflict in regard to an application under consideration by the Board, the member must withdraw from any discussion and decision-making process leading to a recommendation on the proposal.

All external experts selected by the Board shall make full written disclosure to the Board of any potential conflict of interest within the terms of this policy as soon as the individual knows the applicant's identity. Similarly, if an applicant has evidence of a conflict of interest regarding an individual appointed by the Board, then the applicant shall make full written disclosure to the Board as soon as the applicant knows the individual's identity.

## Action Required When a Conflict Exists

In accordance with this policy, the Board will exercise its discretion in determining if an actual or potential conflict of interest exists and notify the parties accordingly.

If it is determined that a Board member has an actual or potential conflict of interest in regard to an application under consideration, the member must withdraw from any discussion and decision-making process leading to a recommendation on the proposal.

An external expert with an actual or potential conflict in regard to an application must decline to serve as an expert.

## Attachment 1     General conduct principles for public appointees

Government appointees are expected to meet high standards of conduct which enhance and maintain public confidence in the operation of BC's public agencies, boards, and commissions. They must act to instill public confidence in their actions and decisions.

*Who is affected?*

These guidelines apply to anyone appointed by the provincial government to any agency, board, or commission operating in BC, unless: they are already subject to ethical guidelines created by government specifically for their particular agency, board or commission, or are appointed to act as a consequence of being a government employee.

*How do the guidelines work?*

The provincial government respects the independence of its agencies, boards, and commissions. It also expects all government appointees to agencies, boards, and commissions to act in accordance with these guidelines.

Specific agencies, boards, or commissions may have their own distinct needs, guidelines, or standards. If no such standards yet exist, public bodies are required to design their own.

The chair or registrar of an agency, board, or commission, or government itself may take action if these guidelines are breached. Such action may include dismissal, suspension, reprimand, warning, or other sanction applied to an individual board member.

When and where appropriate, appointees or their chair or registrar may seek the opinion of provincial government staff with whom their particular board works, for clarification or resolution of any matter.

*Conflict of Interest*

Appointees must avoid any conflict of interest that might impair or impugn the independence, integrity, or impartiality of their agency, board, or commission. There must not be perception of bias, based on what a reasonable person might perceive.

Appointees who are in any doubt must disclose their circumstances and consult with their chair or registrar.

In practical terms, appointees should ensure that:

- All personal financial interests, assets, and holdings are distinct from and independent of any decision, information, or other matter that may be heard by or acted upon by their particular agency, board, or commission.
- Activities undertaken as a private citizen do not create or appear to create a conflict with any responsibilities held as a member of an agency, board, or commission.
- Activities undertaken as a member of an agency, board, or commission do not create or appear to create a conflict with any activities undertaken as a private citizen.
- They remain impartial at all times toward individuals who deal with their agency, board, or commission and as a member avoid taking any action that may result in preferential treatment for any individual.

- Personal employment is not dependent on any decision, information or other matter that may be heard by or acted upon by the agency, board, or commission.
- Other memberships, directorships, voluntary or paid positions or affiliations do not create or appear to create a conflict with work undertaken in the course of performing their duties as public appointees.
- Actions taken in the course of performing duties as public appointees neither cause nor suggest the reality or perception that their ability to perform or exercise those duties has been or could be affected by private gain or interest.

**Other guidelines**

While acting as a member of an agency, board, or commission, appointees are expected to abide by the following:

*Integrity*

Appointees are expected to act at all times in good faith and with honesty and due diligence for the public interest.

*Participation and Preparation*

Appointees are expected to regularly attend meetings and to adequately prepare for the duties expected of them.

*Behaviour*

The conduct and language of appointees must be free from any discrimination or harassment prohibited by the Human Rights Code.

Appointees' conduct should reflect social standards of courtesy, respect, and dignity.

*Confidentiality*

Appointees must not reveal or divulge confidential information (defined as that which cannot be obtained from other sources) received in the course of their duties.

Confidential information must not be used for any purpose outside that of undertaking the work of the agency, board, or commission to which they have been appointed.

*Public Commentary*

Appointees must comply with the public comment protocols established by their particular agency, board, or commission.

If none exist, appointees must refer to the chair for guidance before making public comment on agency, board, or commission matters.

*Private Gain*

Agency, board, or commission work should not result in any personal or private financial or other substantive gain for public appointees. (Private gain does not include honouraria for service on an agency, board, or commission.)·

*Duty to Inform*

Appointees must inform the chair of their agency, board, or commission of any circumstance that may have a negative or harmful effect on their respective abilities to perform the duties required of their appointments.

Source:

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/bcpublicsectorboardapplications/learn/board-member-information

# Appendix 11.    Guidelines on the Renewal of Consent

Under the Standard Terms and Conditions of Consent, a consent period for a degree program or for use of the word "university" is normally five years. However, the Minister may grant consent for any length of time. These Guidelines apply to all applications for renewal of consent, regardless of the length of the consent period.

The Degree Quality Assessment Board (Board) reviews applications for renewal of consent and oversees the quality assessment process that determines if the institution or program has maintained and will continue to maintain quality.

The quality assessment process for renewal of consent considers the program's history and whether the program can maintain high quality standards should consent be renewed.

## Renewal of Consent Reviews

The Board considers two types of renewal applications:

### Degree Program

The degree program renewal review process is to determine whether the program is maintaining the standards under the established criteria for degree programs. Revisions to the degree program should be outlined in the renewal application and may only be implemented after receiving the Minister's consent. The quality assessment process for renewal of consent considers the program's history and whether the program can maintain high quality standards should consent be renewed. Applications for renewal of consent are required to follow the Renewal of Consent Submission Guidelines.

### Use of the Word "University"

Where an application is made for renewal of consent for Use the Word "University", criteria require that the applicant provide adequate information to the Board to determine that the organizational capacity of the institution has been maintained and continues to merit university status. The quality assessment process for renewal of consent considers the University's history and whether the University can maintain high quality standards should consent be renewed. Particular attention is given to the University's commitment to research and scholarly activities and range of programming.

**Scope of Reviews**

The Board reserves the right to:

- Determine revisions to a degree program are substantive enough to be considered a new degree and required the institution to submit a Stage 1 with a degree program application for renewal of consent.
- Determine that other factors may have changed where a Stage 1 review may be appropriate (e.g., system need for the program, labour market need).
- Determine whether an institution is required to submit an Organizational Review and whether an Organization Review will be conducted in conjunction with a degree program application for renewal of consent.
- Determine the scope and type of review each application for renewal will undergo to assess if the established standards and criteria are met.

In making its determination, the Board considers:

- any provisions or Special Terms and Conditions of Consent attached to the consent;
- the annual performance reporting and monitoring information; and,
- any concerns or complaints raised with the Ministry regarding the institution and/or program during the consent period.

The Board provides its recommendation to the Minister on whether consent should be renewed and/or the addition or removal of any Special Terms and Conditions of Consent.

# Appendix 12. Review Matrix Summary by Institution Category

**Table 1: Institution with Existing Consent**

| | Type of Review Required | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Health Review | Stage 1 | Degree Program | Organization Review | Use of the Word "University" |
| **Institution without consent to use the word "University"** | | | | | |
| New health degree program | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ [1] | |
| New degree program | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ [1] | |
| Health degree program (Renewal) | ✓ [2] | ✓ [2] | ✓ | ✓ [2] | |
| Degree program (Renewal) | | ✓ [2] | ✓ | ✓ [2] | |
| **Institution with consent to use the word "University"** | | | | | |
| New health degree program | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ [1, 2] |
| New degree program | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ [1, 2] |
| Health degree program (Renewal) | ✓ [2] | ✓ [2] | ✓ | | |
| Degree program (Renewal) | | ✓ [2] | ✓ | | |
| Use of the Word "University" (Renewal) | | | | | ✓ |

Notes:

1. The degree program is in a new field or at a new degree level for the institution.
2. Institution will be informed by the Board Secretariat if required.

**Table 2: New Institution Applying for Initial Consent**

| | Type of Review Required | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Health Review | Stage 1 | Degree Program | Organization Review | Use of the Word "University" |
| **Institution does not use "University" in its name** | | | | | |
| New health degree program | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| New degree program | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| **Institution uses "University" in its name** | | | | | |
| New health degree program | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| New degree program | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |

# Quality Assessment Review Process
## Stage 1 and Stage 2
## Private and Out-of-Province Public Institutions

INCOMPLETE PROPOSAL ⟷ STAGE 1 & STAGE 2 PROPOSALS SUBMITTED

PUBLIC AND PEER COMMENT

DQAB REVIEWS STAGE 1 PROPOSAL → DQAB Recommendation

DQAB Identifies Concerns/ Institution Responds

MINISTER'S DECISION ON STAGE 1

If comments received, Institution responds based on their own timeframe

STAGE 1 APPROVED

STAGE 1 DENIED

Non-Exempt          Exempt

DQAB DETERMINES SCOPE OF QUALITY REVIEW

NO EXTERNAL QUALITY REVIEW REQUIRED

EXTERNAL QUALITY REVIEW PROCESS

Minister reserves the right to request that the DQAB conduct a quality review for Exempt Institutions

Determination of Review scheduled on next Board meeting (meetings occur every 6 weeks)

DQAB Recommendation

MINISTER'S DECISION

Quality Review Process: Degree Program Review; Organization Review; Use of the Word "University"

CONSENT          DENIED

NOTIFY INSTITUTION AND POST PUBLICLY