



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

September 2024

*QUALITY ASSESSMENT
PROCESS AND CRITERIA*

*BC 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.

Contact Information

Mailing Address:

Degree Quality Assessment Board Secretariat
Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills
PO Box 9177 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9H8

Physical Address:

Degree Quality Assessment Board Secretariat
Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills
3rd Fl, 835 Humboldt St
Victoria BC V8V 4W8

Phone: (250) 356-9734

Facsimile: (250) 387-3750

E-mail: DQABsecretariat@gov.bc.ca

Web site: <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/post-secondary-education/institution-resources-administration/degree-authorization>

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1. Introduction

This document outlines the requirements for BC public post-secondary education institutions wishing to offer a new degree in BC.

1.1 Legislation

Under the *University Act*, BC public universities must not establish a new degree program without the approval of the Minister.

Under the *College and Institute Act*, the Minister may designate by order, applied baccalaureate degree programs at BC public colleges and baccalaureate degree programs and applied master's degree programs at BC public provincial institutes.

The Ministry requires new degree program proposals (other than proposals from institutions qualified for expedited review, commonly referred to as exempt status) to be reviewed by the Degree Quality Assessment Board (Board) before and proceeding to the Minister for approval under the *University Act* and the *College and Institute Act*.

1.2 Role of the Minister

The Minister approves new degree programs under the *University Act* and the *College and Institute Act*.

1.3 Role of the Degree Quality Assessment Board

The Degree Quality Assessment Board (the Board) is appointed by the Minister to determine whether a review of the institution'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 new degree program reviews, administers these reviews, and makes recommendations to the Minister regarding approval and on further actions required to ensure quality standards are maintained.

In making assessments and recommendations, the Board's role is to ensure degree programs provide a quality education that meet the Minister's quality standards and

criteria, respond to labour market needs, protect the interests of learners, and contribute to a coherent and integrated post-secondary system.

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

Board Composition

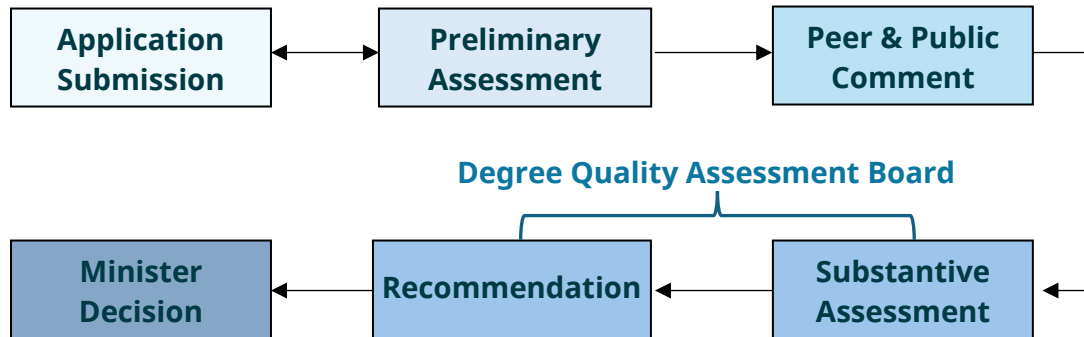
The Board is comprised of five members from BC public post-secondary institutions, two members from private post-secondary institutions, two members from business/industry, two members from the general public, and two non-voting members, one from the BC Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT), and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

2.1 Process Workflow Summary



See Appendix 9 for a detailed workflow.

2.2 Proposal

A proposal is not to be submitted for the new degree review process until the senior governance body (e.g., Board of Governors or equivalent) 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. Proposals should be submitted 12-18 months prior to the institution's desired start date.

Submissions for degree approval will be subject to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy 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:

- Stage 1 should be submitted using the Stage 1 template and should not exceed 12 pages or 4,000 words, excluding appendices.
- Degree proposals should have numbered pages and not exceed 10,000 words, excluding appendices.
- When submitting Stage 1 and Stage 2 together, use a single PDF document with Stage 1 preceding Stage 2. The appendices should form separate documents, e.g., Stage 1 appendix; Stage 2 appendix.
- 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 proposals 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

Institutions will receive an invoice when a proposal is submitted in PSIPS. If the Board determines a quality review is warranted, additional fees to cover the costs of the external review will be required.

3. Review Phases

3.1 Preliminary Assessment

The Degree Quality Assessment Board (Board) Secretariat reviews the proposal for completeness and adherence to the formatting and submission guidelines. A proposal 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 proposals in revision will be placed “on hold” after six months and withdrawn after one year.

3.2 Peer and Public Review Period

When the proposal 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 institution must respond to all comments at the end of the peer and public review period.

3.3 Degree Quality Assessment Board Substantive Assessment

The Board will review the proposal following the end of the peer and public review period and will determine the next steps:

- 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 in the proposal. The Board may contract external expert reviewers

to conduct:

- Degree Program Reviews that focus on the quality of the degree program; and,
- Qualified for Expedited Reviews, commonly referred to as Exempt Status, that focus on the institution's governance and quality assurance mechanisms.

The institution is required to provide the Board with three nominations of qualified external experts for the Board's consideration. Qualifications required of external experts are outlined in Appendix 7. 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 8). The Board has the final decision over the contracting of expert panel members.

The institution 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 proposal, and if an external review is undertaken, the External Review Panel report, and the institution'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.

During its deliberations, the Board may call the External Review Panel chair to seek further clarification on the review and/or the 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 proposal meets or does not meet the standards and criteria and any follow-up actions.

3.5 Minister's Decision

The Minister makes the final decision regarding new degree programs under the *University Act* and the *College and Institute Act*. The decision is provided by a letter that is also publicly posted on the Degree Authorization website.

4. Type of Review

4.1 Health Program Review

All post-secondary institutions in British Columbia 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 proposal 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 proposal in PSIPS. The CIP 51 Review Policy is available on the Degree Authorization website.

4.2 Degree Program

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

Stage 1

All new degree programs 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.

Stage 1 and Stage 2 may be submitted together or separately. 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 proposal proceed to the Stage 2 review of degree program quality.

Stage 2 Degree Program Quality Review

The Stage 2 Degree Program Quality Review is an assessment to ensure the proposed degree program meets high-quality standards. The review process, submission requirements, and assessment criteria for giving or refusing approval are outlined in the Degree Program Review Criteria and Guidelines described in Section 5.

The quality assessment process is initiated with the peer and public review of the full program proposal 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 degree proposal.

Collaborative Partnerships

For a BC public institution wishing to deliver a new degree program through a collaborative arrangement with another institution, the Degree Program Review Standards and Criteria will be applied to the institution and the partner. Additionally, partner institutions that are private or out-of-province public institutions may be required to undergo a quality review of its operations (see Appendix 6).

Degree Proposals from Institutions Qualified for Expedited Review (Exempt Status)

Institutions with exempt status wishing to submit a degree proposal should follow the "Submission Guidelines for Institutions Qualified for Expedited Review (Exempt Status)" at the end of Section 5. Proposals submitted for new degree programs are posted for public review and comment. Following the peer and public comment period, the Board will review Stage 1 and make its recommendation to the Minister. The program proposal is expedited through the Stage 2 review, proceeding directly to the Minister for decision. The Minister may refer the proposal to the Board for a Stage 2 review as outlined in the Qualified for Expedited Review Standards and Criteria.

4.3 Qualified for Expedited Review

An institution qualified for expedited review, commonly referred to as exempt status, has demonstrated that it has a rigorous, ongoing institutional and program quality assessment processes, both internal and external. The Qualified for Expedited Review Standards and Criteria are under review. The current standards and criteria are available on the Degree Authorization website.

5. Degree Program Review Standards and Criteria

This section describes the degree program review standards and criteria for Stage 1 and Stage 2 that are used to assess proposals from BC public institutions.

Health programs must complete the CIP 51 Review before proceeding to the Stage 1 Review (see Section 4).

5.1 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.

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) Expected number of students at launch and at steady state;
- h) 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).
- i) Name, title, phone number, and e-mail address of the institutional contact person if more information is required.

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.

5.2 STAGE 2 EDUCATION 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.

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 British Columbia 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.

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 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).

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.

Submission Guidelines

- 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.

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). These policies and procedures 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.

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/>.

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 whether the institution has a Research Ethics Board and/or an Animal Care Committee.

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.

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.

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, employer satisfaction, advisory board satisfaction, student satisfaction, and graduation rate.
- 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.
- 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.

Submission Guidelines

- 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 conform 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.

Submission Guidelines for Institutions Qualified for Expedited Review

Institutions with exempt status proposing a degree at or below their level of exempt status submit:

1. Stage 1
2. Internal approval process documentation, including governing body approval and documents submitted to the institution's internal governing body and used in the institution's internal program approval process.

6. Determination of New Degree

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 approval before implementing the program.

6.1 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 a Stage 2 review to assess program quality in addition to the Minister’s approval 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 British Columbia 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 approval to offer a major;
- a new undergraduate concentration constituting one-third* or more of the required 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); and
- 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 approved.

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 approval 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 a new degree program proposal (Stage 2) and undergo the new degree program review process. The Minister’s approval 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, a Stage 1 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 approval has been granted.

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 coursework 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 coursework 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 British Columbia. 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

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, interpretive, 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.

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.

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.

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. Additionally, the Master of Arts/of Science require a research component, either a major research paper or a thesis. 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

“**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 outside 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).
 - 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.
 - 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. 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 6. 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 British Columbia 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.
- 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 7. 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:

- Degree Program Reviews that focus on the quality of the degree program; and,
- Qualified for Expediated Reviews, commonly referred to as Exempt Status, that focus on the institution's governance and quality assurance mechanisms.

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. The institution 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 proposal, 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.

Qualified for Expediated Review

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

- Senior management experience 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).
- Experience in academic policies and procedures.
- Experience in organization design and behaviour, or assessment and evaluation.
- Experience in program review.
- Experience in curriculum and program development.

Appendix 8. 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 a Degree Program Review or a Qualified for Expedited 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 proposal, 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.
- 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 applications 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 regards 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 regards 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 regards 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.)

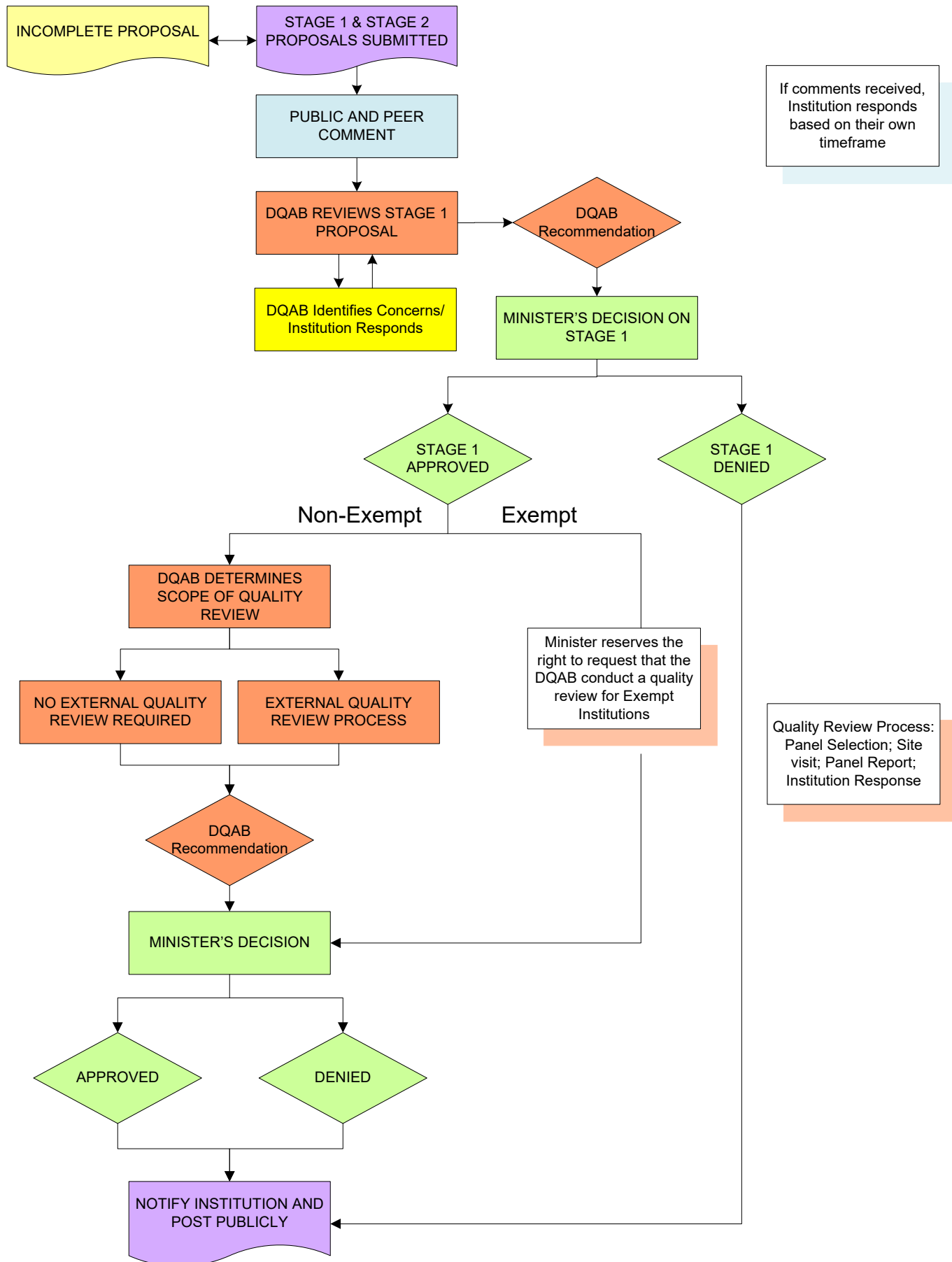
Duty to Inform

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>

Quality Assessment Review Process: WORKFLOW #1

Concurrent Stage 1 and Stage 2 Processes at BC Public Post-Secondary Institutions



Quality Assessment Review Process: WORKFLOW #2

Consecutive Stage 1 and Stage 2 Processes at BC Public Post-Secondary Institutions

