DEGREE PROGRAM REVIEW

CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES

February 2017

Acknowledgements

The Degree Program Review Criteria and Guidelines was established and published by the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Training in November 2006.

The criteria and guidelines, which outlines the requirements for submitting a proposal for a new degree program, and the assessment criteria for giving or refusing consent or approval, has been prepared with advice from many stakeholders and quality assessment experts.

The Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training and the Degree Quality Assessment Board (the board) acknowledges with thanks the many individuals and organizations that shared their experience and expertise.

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Modifications to Policies, Criteria, and Guidelines

The board recommends to the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Training policies, criteria and guidelines that will apply for the purposes of giving or refusing consent/approval or attaching terms and conditions to consent.

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

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

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I. BACKGROUND

A. Role of the Ministry

The Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training (AEST) has the mandate to ensure that the post-secondary education system in British Columbia is of high quality, relevant and responsive to changing economic, technological and social forces in the province. AEST's role is to promote an efficient and integrated post-secondary education system that enhances student choice and maximizes the economic and social benefits of investing in the future. This includes ensuring that British Columbia has a well-prepared workforce for the 21st Century and that its citizens have the skills and knowledge necessary to respond to a rapidly changing environment.

B. History of Legislative Changes

On April 11, 2002, the *Degree Authorization Act* (the Act) was introduced into the Provincial Legislature. The Act received Royal Assent on May 9, 2002, and was brought into force by regulation on November 7, 2003.

With the passing of the Act, the British Columbia post-secondary education system underwent significant change. For the first time in British Columbia, private and out-of-province public institutions have the means to legally grant degrees in British Columbia and use the word "university" in their name without having their own statute. The consequential amendments to the Act expanded the degree granting authority of British Columbia public institutions to provide the opportunity for public colleges to grant applied baccalaureate degrees and public provincial institutes to grant applied master's degrees.

The degree approval process was revised to accommodate the expanded system. The Degree Program Review Committee was replaced by the Degree Quality Assessment Board (the board), an independent advisory board appointed by the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Training to conduct reviews and make recommendations to the minister.

A quality assessment process for determining which institutions are eligible to grant degrees in British Columbia, including private institutions and public institutions located outside the province, has been established to ensure that a high standard is maintained across all degree programs offered in the province.

II. LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS

A. Private and Out-of-Province Public Post-secondary Institutions

The Act applies to all private and out-of-province public post-secondary institutions. It does not apply to British Columbia public post-secondary institutions.

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

- grant or confer a degree in British Columbia;
- provide a program in British Columbia which leads to a degree that is conferred inside or outside British Columbia;
- advertise a program offered in British Columbia leading to a degree that is conferred inside or outside British Columbia; and,

- sell or offer for sale a diploma, certificate or other document that implies the granting or conferring of a degree.

The Act provides that the minister may give an applicant consent if the minister "is satisfied that the applicant has undergone a quality assessment process and been found to meet the criteria" established under the Act for the purposes of giving or refusing consent. The board is responsible for the quality assessment process and for determining whether applicants have met the criteria.

Under the Act, the minister may attach terms and conditions to a consent, including a termination date after which the consent will cease to be effective unless renewed by the minister. The scope of consent is identified in the terms and conditions of consent for each program. Consent is normally for five years after which time, applicants may apply for renewal of consent. Private and out-of-province public institutions should refer to Appendix 8 for the *Guidelines for Renewal of Consent*.

The minister cannot give consent unless:

- the minister is satisfied that the applicant has given financial security to protect the interests of students, if security is required by the regulations in respect of the person seeking consent; and,
- the applicant has made adequate arrangements to protect student transcripts.

B. British Columbia Public Post-secondary Institutions

Under the *University Act*, British Columbia 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 British Columbia public colleges and baccalaureate degree programs and applied master's degree programs at British Columbia public provincial institutes.

The Ministry requires new degree program proposals (other than proposals from institutions with exempt status) to be reviewed by the board before proceeding to the minister for approval under the *University Act* and the *College and Institute Act*.

Public colleges proposing to offer applied baccalaureate degrees and public provincial institutes proposing to offer applied master's degrees must receive ministry approval for the proposed degree program prior to submitting a full program proposal to the board. Information on submitting applied degree proposals may be found on the Degree Granting Authorization web site:

http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/post-secondary-education/institution-resources-administration/degree-authorization/assessment-criteria-process/new-degree-programs

The ministry will review all new degree program proposals from public institutions (including proposals from institutions with exempt status) from the perspective of system coordination and labour market issues following the peer review process. The minister reserves the right to determine if the new degree program proposal is in keeping with the ministry's mandate of ensuring that the post-secondary education system in British Columbia is integrated, relevant and responsive and maximizes the economic and social benefits of investing in the future.

C. Institutions with Exempt Status

Institutions with proven track records (ten years' history in enrolling students in programs at a particular degree level in British Columbia) and appropriate governance mechanisms in place may apply for "exempt status" to a specific degree level. For example, if an institution meets the ten-

year prerequisite period for baccalaureate degrees **and** satisfies other criteria for exempt status, the institution could apply for exempt status in respect of new baccalaureate degrees.

An institution with exempt status has demonstrated that it has rigorous, ongoing program and institutional quality assessment processes, both internal and external. When an institution has been granted exempt status to a certain degree level, proposals submitted for new degree programs at or below that level would go directly to the minister for decision following the 30-day public review period and the ministry review for system coordination and labour market issues. The board will not review the proposal unless the minister has concerns about it. The minister reserves the right to refer new degree program proposals from exempt institutions to the board.

For the submission format for new degree programs for institutions with exempt status, please refer to Section IV, B "*Submission Format – Degree Proposals from Institutions with Exempt Status*."

Further information on obtaining exempt status may be found on the Degree Granting Authorization web site. The Criteria and Guidelines for Exempt Status are posted on the Degree Granting Authorization web site:

http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/post-secondary-education/institution-resources-administration/degree-authorization/assessment-criteria-process/exempt-status

D. Branch Operations and Collaborative Partnerships

For institutions headquartered outside of British Columbia that wish to operate a satellite or branch location in British Columbia or through a collaborative arrangement with another institution, the degree program review criteria and guidelines will be applied to the institution's operations in British Columbia and may include a review of how these degree offerings vary or are the same as degree offerings in the home jurisdiction.

Private and out-of-province public institutions should refer to Appendices 1 and 2 for the:

- *Operational Guidelines for the Review of Out-of-Province Institutions Operating in British Columbia through Branch Operations;* and
- *Operational Guidelines for Out–of–Province Institutions Operating in British Columbia through Collaborative Arrangements.*

For institutions headquartered in British Columbia that also wish to operate a satellite or branch location outside British Columbia and grant British Columbia degrees, the degree program review criteria and guidelines will be applied to operations both inside and outside British Columbia, as appropriate.

III. OVERVIEW OF THE QUALITY ASSESSMENT PROCESS

A. Degree Quality Assessment Board

Degree Granting Authorization Web Site

Institutions should refer to the Degree Granting Authorization web site for complete information on the submission, review and approval processes for new degrees: http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/post-secondary-education/institution-resources-administration/degree-authorization

Quality Assessment Process

The board conducts the quality assessment process to ensure that new degree programs meet consistent and high-quality standards. The quality assessment process is initiated with a 30-day public review of the full program proposal. The proposal is posted on the Degree Granting Authorization web site which is publicly accessible. This enables the general public (including academic experts from inside and outside British Columbia) the opportunity to review the full program proposal and provide comments to the submitting institution and the board.

In conducting the quality assessment process, the board may require institutions to undergo a program review to inform its assessment of the institution's degree program proposal. Although the quality assessment process may vary depending on the nature of a submission, the board is committed to a quality assessment process that is streamlined and efficient and works towards meeting an average approval timeframe of six months. Institutions are encouraged to submit proposals 12 – 18 months prior to the planned start-up date of the program to allow sufficient time to undergo the quality assessment process and allow sufficient time for the institution to market and recruit for the program should the minister grant approval or consent.

Prior to or during the submission process, the ministry will consult with the Ministry of Health in regards to new degree programs in the health field. The provincial government is the key employer in the health field. As such, the ministry consults with the Ministry of Health to ensure the province's current and future health human resource needs are met.

In addition to a program review, private and out-of-province public post-secondary institutions may be required by the board to undergo an organization review. In such cases, the board will determine whether prior assessments can be recognized as satisfying all or part of British Columbia's organization review criteria. See Appendix 3 for the *Operational Guidelines for Recognizing Prior Assessment and Accreditations*. If an organization review is required, the board will select the review experts, and the institution submitting the proposal will be invoiced for any costs associated with the review.

British Columbia public post-secondary institutions will not be required to undergo an organization review.

All degree proposals submitted or referred by the minister to the board will be reviewed by external experts through a desk audit[1] of program materials or a site visit. The board determines the type of review required based on the level and quality of information available from the applicant.

Use of External Experts

If the board determines that a review by external experts is required, it is expected that external experts will have:

- 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);
- relevant academic experience in areas such as quality assessment (e.g., as appraisers for accrediting bodies or as reviewers of degree programs), curriculum design, teaching and learning, and administration;
- required or desired professional credentials and/or related work experience.

Please refer to Appendix 4 for the complete policies on *Use of External Experts* and Appendix 5 for the *Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Policy – Board Members and External Experts*.

Nomination of External Experts

The institution submitting the proposal may nominate external experts by providing the board with the following information:

- Name and address of the suggested expert(s)
- Telephone number
- Fax number
- E-mail
- Academic credentials
- Professional designations
- Brief biographical paragraph on the suggested expert(s)

Institutions may provide up to five nominations. The board takes the institution's nominations under consideration, but reserves the right to make the final determination and will select the experts. The institution submitting the proposal will be invoiced for costs associated with the review. The institution will be consulted prior to the selection of any external experts to avoid any conflicts of interest. The external experts' report will be made available to the submitting institution for response or comment.

The board reviews the degree proposal, public comments, the external experts' report and the submitting institution's response and makes a recommendation to the minister on whether the degree proposal should be approved, approved with conditions, or not approved.

Differences in Submission Components and Approval Process

[1] A desk audit is a review of the submission materials by an external expert(s), but does not include a site visit to the institution.

While proposals from all institutions will be evaluated against the same set of standards, minor differences in the submission components and approval process may require a difference of focus in the drafting of proposals. Some examples of such differences are as follows:

- Private and out-of-province public institutions may be required to undergo an organization review as part of the degree program assessment. British Columbia public institutions are not required to undergo this process as a substantially similar review process took place as part of their initial establishment.

- The criteria and guidelines include requirements applicable to private and out-of-province public institutions on associate degrees and information on the scope and conditions of ministerial consent that are not part of the submission requirements for British Columbia public institutions. These are not part of the submission requirements for British Columbia public institutions as these issues are addressed through other statutes governing the operations of these institutions.
- The ministry will review all new degree program proposals from public institutions (including proposals from institutions with exempt status) from the perspective of system coordination and labour market issues following the peer review process. The minister reserves the right to determine if the new degree program proposal is in keeping with the Ministry's mandate of ensuring that the post-secondary education system in British Columbia is integrated, relevant and responsive and maximizes the economic and social benefits of investing in the future.

Public Posting

The outcomes of the quality assessment process will be posted on the Degree Granting Authorization web site:
https://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/psips/public/report/recommendationsDecisions.faces

This will include the final program proposal (if changes were made), a summary outlining the board's recommendation and rationale for the recommendation and the minister's decisions (to grant or not grant approval or consent).

Reporting and Monitoring - Institutions with consent under the *Degree Authorization Act*

Institutions with consent under the *Degree Authorization Act* are required to submit to the Ministry an annual report outlining the progress of the institution. Annual visits are undertaken by representatives of the ministry and board secretariat to the site of each institution's British Columbia operations to ensure that the quality of post-secondary education in the province is continually improving and meeting the needs of students. Site visits focus on evidence-based outcomes related to the initial applications and expert reviewers' reports. The scope of the site visit is also informed by any concerns or issues arising from the initial organization review, program review(s) and annual report and provides a means to follow up on issues that were raised during the approval process in relation to current performance. The annual report is a term and condition of consent that must be provided on an annual basis to ensure that institutions are continuing to meet or exceed performance standards under the established criteria and the minister's requirements for transcript maintenance and financial security..

The report includes information such as enrolments, faculty information and a program review summary. The report also requires information from the institution in relation to any special conditions required by the minister.

Ministry staff will monitor the collection of the annual reports and will liaise with the institution should clarification be required. The Ministry will inform the board of any issues that are identified.

B. Quick Reference Flow Charts

Please refer to Appendix 6 for workflow diagrams for the degree approval process.

C. Definition of a New Degree Program

British Columbia public institutions will submit for review all new degree programs at the baccalaureate, master's, or doctoral level.

Private and out-of-province public institutions governed under the *Degree Authorization Act* will submit for review all new degree programs at the associate, baccalaureate, master's, or doctoral level. Private and out-of-province public institutions are encouraged to contact the British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer early in the stages of developing an associate degree regarding transfer credit requirements.

A new degree program is defined as:

- An associate degree granted or provided by a private or out-of-province public institution governed under the *Degree Authorization Act*,
- a baccalaureate, master's or doctoral degree that has not been previously granted or conferred by the post-secondary institution in British Columbia, or
- a baccalaureate, master's or doctoral degree granted or conferred by the post-secondary institution in British Columbia containing one or more of the following elements:
  - a new major or field of specialization (although a new honours program in a field in which a major is currently offered will not require review);
  - an existing interdisciplinary major for which the majority of the courses are new or are substantially altered to conform to the program's objectives;
  - a joint major if one or more of the fields in the joint major is not already represented by an approved major;
  - revision of a program's major objectives resulting in significant changes;
  - a change in degree designation or credential that may be precedent-setting for the institution or the post-secondary system in the province (see Appendix 7 for the *Guidelines on Naming of Degrees*); and,
  - significant revision of a program that warrants credential renaming.

D. Determination of a New Degree Program

In some instances it may be difficult to determine whether a proposed change in program offerings is of sufficient magnitude to be classed as a new degree. If there is doubt, the institution should contact the board secretariat. The board will review the proposed change against the relevant

established criteria and/or operational guidelines. The board reserves the right to make recommendations to the minister regarding whether the change constitutes a new degree.

Institutions that are proposing a new minor in a program area for which the institution does not already have approval to offer a major, or a new concentration must notify the board secretariat of the content of the proposed new minor or concentration. British Columbia public institutions will submit for review all proposed changes that meet the definition of a new degree as outlined above. Institutions should provide:

- evidence of the institution's internal approval for the new option or proposed change;
- the program structure (e.g. number of credit hours);
- an outline of the curriculum (indicating which courses already exist at the institution and which courses will be new or changed);
- the proposed calendar description of the courses;
- how the courses and curriculum will be integrated to contribute to the intended goals of the program; and,
- the institution's rationale and details of the proposed change in regards to the established criteria and/or relevant operational guidelines.

The board will, within 45 days, determine whether the change is of sufficient magnitude to be classed as a new degree. The change must not be implemented until the board has made its determination and, if deemed a new program, until the degree program review has been successfully completed and ministerial approval granted.

In all cases, the board reserves the right to determine whether a review is required.

Note: For private and out-of-province public institutions governed by the *Degree Authorization Act*, ministerial consent will be specific to the activity, program and site described in the application. The terms and conditions of consent will clearly identify the circumstances under which consent-holders will be required to notify the minister of a material change in circumstance (i.e., ownership change, location change, material change in learning outcomes). The minister may refer the proposed change to the board for review against the relevant established criteria and/or operational guidelines. The board reserves the right to make recommendations to the minister regarding changes to terms and conditions of consent if it is determined to constitute a change in the scope of the consent.

E. How to submit a new degree proposal (Post-Secondary Institution Proposal System)

The Post-Secondary Institution Proposal System (PSIPS) is a web-based application system for the submission and review of proposals. Applicants will submit application materials electronically. PSIPS is a password-protected database and has a closed user group.

Institutions seeking to submit an application through PSIPS must first obtain a User ID and password from the board secretariat. Please refer to the web site for further information on obtaining a User ID at http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/post-secondary-education/institution-resources-administration/degree-authorization/online-application-system

The institution will be required to confirm its institutional information in prescribed data fields before submitting a Full Program Proposal in Adobe PDF format as an attachment. When creating Adobe PDF files, navigation tools such as "bookmarks" should be incorporated into the document(s) to allow the reader to navigate quickly to a particular page or section within the document. Information on navigation tools can be found in your Adobe Acrobat documentation.

Important: The Full Program Proposal will also be posted publicly on the Degree Granting Authorization web site (via PSIPS) while the submission is under review. (Appendices submitted as a separate document will not be posted on the public web site.) See "Applications Under Review" on the Degree Granting Authorization web site:

https://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/psips/public/report/applicationsUnderReview.faces

IV DEGREE PROGRAM REVIEW CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES

The new degree submissions criteria and guidelines apply to all institutions governed by the *University Act*, *Royal Roads University Act*, *Thompson Rivers University Act*, *College and Institute Act*, and the *Degree Authorization Act* that are seeking minister's approval or consent to offer, provide or grant degrees.

The proposal is not to be posted on PSIPS until the senior governance body (e.g. Board of Governors or equivalent) has approved the development of the new degree program as appropriate within the institution's plan and priorities.

A Full Program Proposal for submission on PSIPS must provide information and discussion in a format that adheres to the order and headings below. Degree programs will be assessed against the standards and criteria described in categories 2 – 10.

Institutions should provide the board with written permission to consult with any professional, accrediting or regulatory body named in the submitted documentation.

A. Submission Format – Full Program Proposal (*approximately 5,000 words*)

The length of the Full Program Proposal will vary considerably depending upon the nature of the degree program being proposed, but should be approximately 5,000 words (not including appendices).

In conducting the degree program review, external experts and/or the board will be guided but not limited by the criteria outlined for each of the following standards.

1. Executive Summary
2. Degree Level Standard
3. Credential Recognition and Nomenclature
4. Curriculum/Program Content
5. Learning Methodologies/Program Delivery
6. Admission and Transfer/Residency
7. Faculty
8. Program Resources
9. Program Consultation
10. Program Review and Assessment

When the applicant is required to provide information on institutional policies, the submission should include only a summary of the policies. Full policies should be attached as appendices or provided directly to external experts if the board requires a review.

Information that the institution considers proprietary should be included in appendices to the full program proposal. Examples of proprietary information may include referee letters, letters of support (which contain personal information such as names and addresses) and financial information.

Submission under the degree quality assessment process will be subject to the provisions of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (applicable to British Columbia public institutions and the *Personal Information Protection Act* (applicable to private and out-of-province public institutions.)

Appendices

Appendices should be attached to the submission on PSIPS as separate documents. Appendices will **not** be posted on the public web site.

Appendices should indicate an appendix name and number and also reference the applicable criterion/submission guideline.

THE FULL PROGRAM PROPOSAL WILL BE POSTED PUBLICLY ON THE DEGREE GRANTING AUTHORIZATION WEB SITE

via PSIPS while the submission is under review and will be open to public comment for 30 days from the date of posting.

https://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/psips/public/report/applicationsUnderReview.faces

This is intended to provide the public with an opportunity to comment on the application and to meet the board's commitment to an open and accountable process. The web site will indicate the closing date for public comment and will also indicate that comments from the public are to be directed to the submitting institution, and copied to the board secretariat.

IMPORTANT

Information that the submitting institution considers to be proprietary in nature must be submitted in separate documents in the form of appendices.

Appendices will not be posted on the public web site.

1. Executive Summary (approximately 2 – 3 pages in length)

The Executive Summary must present, in a succinct manner, the purpose of the proposal and a summary of the key objectives and outcomes of the proposed degree program and must include 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 new degree program will be offered

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

e) Anticipated program start date

f) Anticipated completion time in years or semesters

g) 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 experience/work place term is required for degree completion. If a work experience/work place term is required, provide a description of the purpose and role of the work experience within the program;
- Potential areas/sectors of employment for graduates and/or opportunities for further study;
- Delivery methods;
- Program strengths;
- An overview of the level of support and recognition from other post-secondary institutions, and relevant regulatory or professional bodies, where applicable, and plans for admissions and transfer within the British Columbia post-secondary education system; and,
- Related programs in the institution or other British Columbia post-secondary institutions. Indicate rationale for duplication, if any.

h) **Name, title, phone number and e-mail address** of the institutional contact person in case more information is required.

2. Degree Level Standard

Standard

The institution must demonstrate that the proposed program meets or exceeds the proposed degree level standard.

Associate Degrees – British Columbia Public Post-secondary Institutions

The British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer provides a definition of associate degrees on its website.

Associate Degrees (Academic) under the *Degree Authorization Act*

The *Degree Authorization Act* provides a statutory means for private and out-of-province public post-secondary institutions to offer associate degrees. New associate degree programs to be offered by private and out-of-province public post-secondary institutions governed by the Act require ministerial consent.

Currently in British Columbia, an associate degree comprises two years of university level study (60 credit hours) in a variety of academic areas and is granted transfer credit at any of the following British Columbia public research universities: Simon Fraser University (SFU), The University of British Columbia (UBC), University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC), or University of Victoria (UVIC). Graduates of an associate degree will have completed a broad range of course offerings balanced with in-depth study in a specific discipline(s). The requirements of an associate degree are sufficiently flexible to prepare students for "work, citizenship and an enriched life as an educated person, and to lay a solid foundation for further study."

Private and out-of-province public institutions are encouraged to contact the British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer early in the development of an associate degree regarding the articulation requirements. The British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer provides a definition of and stipulates the requirements for associate degrees on its website:

http://www.bctransferguide.ca/associate/requirements

The duration of consent for an associate degree offered by an institution governed by the *Degree Authorization Act* will initially be for a period of three years. The board will review, at least once a year, the progress of the institution towards the goal of offering a minimum of 20 courses (all of which must fulfill requirements for the associate degrees) and each of which must be articulated with at least one of the four public research universities in British Columbia (SFU, UBC, UNBC or UVIC).

Degree Categories

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

Degree Level Standards

The focus of the degree level standards is on the expectations of graduates at each degree. The standards stipulate the demonstrable transferable learning skills and level of mastery of a body of specialized knowledge in six dimensions:

1. Depth and breadth of knowledge;
2. Knowledge of methodologies;
3. Application of knowledge;
4. Communication skills;
5. Awareness of limits of knowledge; and,
6. Professional capacity/autonomy.

The shades of distinction between degrees are determined by the capacity of the graduate at each level to act competently, creatively and independently, and by their proximity to the forefront of a discipline and/or profession. Among other things, the degree level standards are intended:

(a) to facilitate the assessment of credentials for broad purposes of credit transfer and credential recognition,
(b) to provide clear learning outcome standards to instructional and program designers, and
(c) as a broad framework for quality assurance purposes.

The standards are intended to be cumulative - each degree level presupposes the accomplishment of an earlier one.

BACHELOR'S DEGREE

Degree Category – Bachelor Degree

Program Design and Outcome Emphasis

The credential awarded for the bachelor degree is designed to acquaint the student with the basic conceptual approaches and methodologies of the principal discipline or disciplines that constitute the program of study, to provide some specialized knowledge, and to nurture the capacity for independent work in the discipline/disciplines and field of practice.

All bachelor programs are designed to provide graduates with knowledge and skills that enable them to develop the capacity for independent intellectual work. That capacity may be demonstrated by the preparation, under 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 degree programs are intended to provide a wide exposure to several disciplines, others to provide an in-depth education in one or more disciplines (often as preparation for graduate study), and still others to provide a blend of theory and practice that equips students for entry into an occupation or profession. Despite that diversity, each bachelor degree program must meet a substantial and common set of competency outcomes, as outlined below, to justify use of the bachelor degree label. The range of bachelor programs includes:

- *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 programs in academic standing, some professional programs yield degrees with other nomenclature—e.g., D.D.S. (Dental Surgery); M.D. (Medicine); or LL.B (Law).

Preparation for Employment and Further Study

In addition to providing personal and intellectual growth, bachelor programs, in varying degrees, may prepare students for entry into graduate study in the field, second-entry professional degree programs, or employment in one or more fields.

Length of Program

Owing primarily to variations in pre-university studies among the provinces, classroom instruction is typically eight semesters or more 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 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 Degree

1. Depth and Breadth of Knowledge

(a) Knowledge and critical understanding in a field of study that builds upon their secondary education and includes the key assumptions, methodologies and applications of the discipline and/or field of practice;

(b) Basic understanding of the range of fields within the discipline/field of practice and of how the discipline may intersect with fields in related disciplines;

(c) The ability to gather, review, evaluate and interpret information, including new information relevant to the discipline; and to compare the merits of alternate hypotheses or creative options relevant to one or more of the major fields in a discipline;

(d) The capacity to engage in independent research or practice in a supervised context;

(e) Critical thinking and analytical skills inside and outside the discipline; and,

(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:

(i) evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems using well established ideas and techniques;

(ii) devise and sustain arguments or solve problems using these methods; and,

(iii) describe and comment upon particular aspects of current research or equivalent advanced scholarship in the discipline and how these are relevant to the evolution of the discipline.

3. Application of Knowledge

(a) The ability to review, present and critically evaluate qualitative and quantitative information to:
(i) develop lines of argument;

(ii) make sound judgments in accordance with the major theories, concepts and methods of the subject(s) of study;

(iii) apply underlying concepts, principles, and techniques of analysis, both within and outside the discipline; and,

(iv) where appropriate, use this knowledge in the creative process.

(b) The ability to use a range of established techniques to:
(i) initiate and undertake critical evaluation of arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts and information;
(ii) propose solutions;
(iii) frame appropriate questions for the purpose of solving a problem; and
(iv) 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:

(i) the exercise of initiative, personal responsibility and accountability in both personal and group contexts;

(ii) working effectively with others; and,

(iii) behaviour consistent with academic integrity.

MASTER'S DEGREE

Degree Category – 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 degree program. Much of the study undertaken at the master's level will have been at, or informed by, the forefront of an academic or professional discipline. Students will have shown some originality in the application of knowledge, and they will understand how the boundaries of knowledge are advanced through research. They will be able to deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, and they will show independent capacity in addressing issues and problems.

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

Profession-oriented master's programs normally admit students holding baccalaureate degrees and provide them with a selection of courses and exercises intended to prepare them for a particular profession or field of practice or, if they are already involved in the profession or field, to extend their knowledge base and skills as professionals/practitioners. Example: Master of Social Work.

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 typically from two to six semesters in duration, 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:

(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 that competence, has shown at least one of the following:

(a) the development and support of a sustained argument in written form; 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:

(i) the exercise of initiative and of personal responsibility and accountability; and,

(ii) decision-making in complex situations, such as employment.

(b) The intellectual independence required for continuing professional development; and,

(c) The ability to appreciate the broader implications of applying knowledge to particular contexts.

DOCTORAL DEGREES

Degree Category – Doctoral Degrees

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 their ability to create and interpret knowledge that extends the forefront of a discipline, usually through original research or creative activity.

Preparation for doctoral work may involve course work of varying lengths aimed at cultivating further conceptual depth or breadth. It may also involve written and oral examinations of knowledge and skills in aspects of the discipline prior to authorization to proceed to work on a dissertation.

Research-oriented doctoral programs focus on the development of the conceptual and methodological knowledge and skills required to do original research and to make an original contribution to knowledge in the form of a dissertation. In some fields an internship or exhibition component may be required, but without diluting the significance of the dissertation as the primary demonstration of mastery. Such programs lead to the award of the Ph.D. Examples: Ph.D. (Psychology), Ph.D. (Education), 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 skill, 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; and,
(c) The ability to evaluate the broader implications of applying knowledge to particular contexts.

Criteria that will be used in assessing degree level:

- The program meets or exceeds the learning outcomes specified above and the institution demonstrates how the program meets the standard.

Submission Guidelines

Describe how the proposed program meets the knowledge and skill level requirements of the program degree level.

3. Credential Recognition and Nomenclature

Standard

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. Where appropriate, the program, courses or curricular elements are designed to facilitate credential recognition by other post-secondary institutions and by employers, both within the province and other jurisdictions.

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 is the value to graduates of having a professional credential recognized by appropriate licensing and accrediting bodies as the basis for entry to practice.

Criteria that will be used in assessing credential recognition and nomenclature

- Evidence that the institution is making provisions for credential recognition and course transfer, and that the institution will advise students of any changes to credential recognition or course transfer in a timely manner.
- Evidence that employers, relevant occupational and professional groups, regulatory bodies and other post-secondary institutions will recognize the credential and their assessment of whether the credential will contribute to the professional advancement of the graduate.
- For programs leading to a profession that is subject to government regulation, the learning outcomes and standards and other requirements for graduation take into account 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.
- Degree name is consistent with the *Guidelines on Naming of Degrees* (attached as Appendix 7).

Submission Guidelines

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

b) Where applicable, describe the consultations undertaken to ensure the credential and learning outcomes will be recognized by and meet the standards of industry/employers and regulatory, licensing or credentialing bodies. In an appendix, provide the regulatory, licensing or credentialing body's current requirements or standards and copies of letters from licensing or regulatory bodies indicating that the credential and learning outcomes will be recognized.

c) In some instances regulatory, licensing or credentialing bodies do not recognize or accredit programs but require individuals to meet the certification requirements (e.g. certification exams). If applicable, describe the role of the regulatory, licensing or credentialing body and the steps the applicant has taken to ensure individuals will be eligible to meet the requirements of the regulatory, licensing or credentialing body.

   In an appendix, provide evidence of the regulatory, licensing or credentialing body's current requirements or standards.

d) In an appendix, provide a copy of the policies and procedures pertaining to notifying students of credential recognition and/or transfer.

4. Curriculum/Program Content

Standard

The management structures and methods of the program are well defined and permit 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 rigour 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.

Criteria that will be used in assessing program content:

- Approval by the institution's senior academic governance body (i.e., Senate, Education Council, or equivalent), or an academic planning and priorities committee to which it has delegated authority and which has sufficient qualifications to ensure that the curriculum is current and reflects the state of knowledge in the field and the needs of the field in practice.
- If an external review is undertaken before submission of the degree proposal, the external review committee's report is included in an appendix.
- Learning outcomes and standards for the program demonstrate how graduates will be prepared with a sound basis in theory, as well as the intellectual, communications 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.
- 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 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 and allow for confirmation that a student is progressing normally through the program.
- For degrees with an applied or professional focus - work experiences, field placements etc., have appropriate articulated learning outcome goals and a method for joint instructor and employer evaluation leading to the assignment of a grade.
- For new technology-related degrees at the baccalaureate level, proposals must either demonstrate that there are co-operative education opportunities, or other work integrated

learning components, available for students, or provide a satisfactory reason why not (BCTECH Strategy 2016).

Submission Guidelines

a) Describe the program structure and the length of the program (number of credit hours) and proposed student evaluation.

b) Identify the prescribed set of core and prerequisite courses. Course descriptions included in the full program proposal should be of the level of detail found in the academic calendar. Provide full course outlines in an appendix.

c) Identify which courses already exist at the institution and which new courses will be implemented as a result of the program.

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

e) If an external review of the proposed program is undertaken before submission of the degree proposal, in an appendix, please provide a copy of the external review committee's report.

f) Where work experience or field placements are a component of the program, describe the institution's plans to develop placement opportunities for students and the level of support the institution will extend to students seeking placements.

g) Where applicable, describe the anticipated outcomes of the work experience or field placement associated with the program, how the experience offered will provide the opportunity to put the stated learning outcomes into practice, and how the students will be evaluated during their placements.

5. Learning Methodologies/Program Delivery

Standard

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 and ensure its effectiveness. In some cases, it may be more appropriate for the institution to demonstrate that it has a realistic plan to put the necessary expertise and resources in place.

Criteria that will be used in assessing learning methodologies/program delivery:

- The delivery method(s) and quality assurance policies are appropriate to course content, the students involved and the proposed learning outcomes.
- Evidence that 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 provides processes for students' feedback); and ensures its effectiveness or demonstrates a viable plan to put the necessary expertise and resources in place.
- Where applicable, policies pertaining to technology-based, computer-based and web-based learning and modes of delivery ensure:
  - student and faculty preparation and orientation;
  - reliable, and sufficient course management systems;
  - accessible technical assistance for students and faculty;
  - appropriate hardware, software and other technological resources and media; and,
  - well-maintained and current technology and equipment.

Submission Guidelines

a) Explain the learning methodology/methodologies to be used.
Indicate which of the following methodologies will be incorporated into the learning environment of the new degree program, and how they will be used:
   - Experiential learning (e.g., co-operative education, clinical, work term or simulated work experience);
   - Distance education;
   - Independent study, computer assisted instruction, etc.;
   - Lectures, labs, tutorials; and,
   - Other.

b) In an appendix, include any policies pertaining to technology-based, computer-based or web-based learning and modes of delivery.

6. Admission and Transfer/Residency

Standard

The institution should demonstrate that the program is designed to provide flexible admission and transfer arrangements. 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.

Note: The British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT) administers the *British Columbia Online Transfer Guide* that provides information on course or program articulation agreements between institutions. Institutions are encouraged to contact BCCAT early in the development of new degree program proposals for information on admissions and transfer in British Columbia. Further information on admissions and transfer is available on BCCAT's website: http://www.bctransferguide.ca/.

Criteria that will be used in assessing admission, transfer and residency:

- Evidence that the institution has clearly established policies and procedures on admissions consistent with the level of the degree program (including policies on direct entry and mature students) and will inform students of these provisions and any changes to these provisions.
- The institution has admission requirements for the proposed program that are consistent with the post-secondary character of degree-granting organizations and where appropriate ensure appropriate forms of assessment of prior learning for admission to programs.
- Evidence that the institution has clearly established policies and procedures on transfer consistent with the level of the degree program and will inform students of these provisions and any changes to these provisions.
- The institution's policy on admissions and transfer indicates a willingness to consider applicants to undergraduate, graduate and professional programs from any post-secondary institutions.
- Appropriate residency requirements.

Submission Guidelines

a) Describe the admission requirements for this program. In an appendix, provide a copy of the policies and procedures on admissions.

b) Describe the existing practice or proposed policy for the granting of transfer credit for equivalent courses and/or programs completed at other institutions that will satisfy the requirements for this program. Include a copy of the policy in an appendix.

c) Institutions are encouraged to have in place a policy and process that provides students credit for previous post-secondary studies so that they are not required to repeat comparable courses they have previously completed. If applicable, describe the policy and practice for granting credit toward meeting requirements for this program based on prior learning assessment. If applicable, include a copy of the policy in an appendix.

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

e) Describe existing arrangements or plans for establishing articulation agreements so that transfer credit will be granted for courses completed in this program toward meeting requirements for credentials offered at other institutions.

Note: information on 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/.

7. Faculty

Standard

The institution must demonstrate that it has the human resources necessary to develop and deliver a quality degree program. In some cases, it may not be feasible for an institution to hire faculty until it receives program approval. In these cases, the institution should provide the specific faculty selection criteria that will be used to ensure new faculty hires have the necessary qualifications for the degree level being offered and program being proposed.

Criteria that will be used in assessing faculty qualifications:

- Faculty and instructors are in sufficient numbers, and with the appropriate credential to develop and deliver the degree level being offered and program being proposed. Staff resources must be sufficient to ensure the coverage required within the discipline for the proposed program.
- Evidence that the institution's policies and practices on the type of academic appointment of faculty (e.g. continuing/regular appointments) are 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/professional credentials; the regular review of faculty performance; the means of ensuring that faculty knowledge of the field is current; teaching, supervision and student counselling loads; and professional development of faculty.
- Faculty have an appropriate level of scholarly output and/or research or creative 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.
- Faculty teaching graduate courses will normally have the terminal academic degree credential in the field in which they are teaching.
- Faculty providing doctoral supervision are expected to have an active research program in their discipline or field of study.
- For any proposal involving human research, a statement that a Research Ethics Board is in place.
- For any proposal involving animal research, a statement that an Animal Care Committee is in place.

Submission Guidelines

a) Please indicate the number of faculty and instructors (present and future) and other staff required to mount this program and the qualifications required.

   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 staff (faculty, technical, teaching assistants, etc.) assigned to the program.

   Indicate if any of these positions will be new to the institution. In cases where new faculty will be hired, provide the specific faculty selection criteria that will be used to ensure new faculty hires have the necessary qualifications for the disciplinary and specialty areas and degree level being offered.

b) Provide any 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.

c) Provide the institution's policies and practices on the type of academic appointment of faculty specific to this program (e.g. continuing or regular appointments and temporary appointments).

d) In an appendix, provide the curriculum vitae of faculty members and instructors, specific to the program, that demonstrates that they possess an appropriate balance from amongst the following requirements:
   - Academic credentials appropriate to the degree level being offered. Faculty teaching baccalaureate degrees with an applied or professional focus have an appropriate balance of professional qualifications, academic credentials and experience;
   - Any required academic and/or desired professional credentials; and,
   - A demonstration of current involvement in research and professional activity that represents an appropriate balance of research and intellectual leadership in the discipline and the field of specialization.

8. Program Resources

Standard

The institution must demonstrate that it has the physical, learning, and information resources (both start-up and development) needed to assure a program of acceptable quality. These include facilities, equipment, library resources, laboratories, computing facilities, shops, specialized equipment, etc., and cooperative work placements where this is a component of the program. In some cases, an institution may not be able to ensure resources are in place until after it receives program approval. In these cases, the institution may bring forward a proposal based on a realistic plan for putting the appropriate resources in place as an alternative to demonstrating that all resources are in place.

Criteria that will be used in assessing program resources:

- Evidence that the physical plant, equipment, technology, and support services adequately support the organization's educational and student activities.
- Evidence of reasonable student and faculty access to learning and information resources (such as library, databases, computing, classroom equipment and laboratory facilities) sufficient in scope, quality, currency and type to support students and faculty in the program.
- Evidence of commitment to provide and maintain necessary learning and other resources specific to the program and to supplement them as necessary to meet standards applicable to the field.
- Submission of any agreements with other institutions where resources and services are shared.

Submission Guidelines

a) Describe the resources that will be required to mount this program including:
   i) library resources (on-site library resources relevant to the degree program area for faculty and students and other library access such as web-based or inter-library arrangements.) Include the number of holdings (print) relevant to the field of study and number of holdings (electronic) (i.e. program-specific databases);
   ii) computers and computer access;
   iii) classrooms, laboratories and equipment;
   iv) existing and shared resources at the institution or at other institutions that will be used to offer the program; and,
   v) additional resources that will be required to offer this program.

b) Provide the intended implementation schedule for the new program and evidence of the appropriateness of the schedule, given the timing of the proposal and readiness of the institution to offer the program.

c) Institutions must demonstrate that they have the necessary resources to mount and sustain a quality program at the proposed degree level or a realistic plan for putting the appropriate resources in place subsequent to program approval. Describe the institution's plans for renewal and upgrading of learning and information resources.

9. Program Consultation

Standard

The institution must demonstrate that it has consulted appropriate individuals and organizations in the development of the program proposal.

Criteria that will be used in assessing program consultation:

- Evidence that the institution has done due diligence in consulting with employers, students, program advisory committees, other post-secondary institutions, and an external review by academics within British Columbia and other jurisdictions, etc.
- Evidence of support for the program and in cases where consultation feedback results in negative comments, a clear response addressing those comments.

Submission Guidelines

a) Provide a list and brief explanation of the nature of the consultations that have occurred in the development of the degree program.

b) Attach all written comments, both positive and negative, from:
   - relevant employers;
   - relevant professional associations;
   - program advisory committees;
   - other British Columbia institutions (this will include comments provided through the peer review process on the Post-Secondary Institution Proposal System);
   - institutions outside British Columbia;
   - experts in the proposed field of study; and,
   - external academic consultants.

c) If there are other individuals or groups that have been involved, describe their roles in the collection and evaluation of information leading to the development and submission of this proposal.

d) Include a list of anticipated employment destinations for graduates of this program.

10. Program Review and Assessment

Standard

In order 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 procedure is in place.

Criteria that will be used in assessing program review and assessment:

- Evidence of a formal, institutionally approved policy and procedure for the periodic review of programs (i.e. formative and ongoing reviews and a summative review normally every five years) against published standards 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. For example, a self study takes into account:
    - the continuing appropriateness 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 (physical, technological, financial and human);
    - faculty performance including the quality of teaching and supervision and demonstrable currency in the field of specialization;
    - that the learning outcomes achieved by students/graduates meet the program's stated goals, the degree level standard, and where appropriate, the standards of any 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,
    - where appropriate, the graduate employment rates, graduate satisfaction level, employer satisfaction level, advisory board satisfaction level, student satisfaction level, and graduation rate.
  - An assessment conducted by a panel consisting of experts external to the institution that normally includes a site visit; a report of the expert panel assessing program quality and recommending any changes needed to strengthen that quality; and an institutional response to the recommendations in the report.
  - A summary of the conclusions of the evaluation made publicly available.
- The program review ensures that the program remains consistent with the organization's current mission, goals and long-range plan.

Submission Guidelines

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

In an appendix, provide copies of the formal, approved policy and procedures for periodic review of programs that address the program review elements described in the criteria above.

B. Submission Format – Institutions with Exempt Status

An institution with exempt status has demonstrated that it has rigorous, ongoing program and institutional quality assessment processes, both internal and external. The Exempt Status Criteria and Guidelines provide that when an institution has been granted exempt status to a certain degree level, proposals submitted for new degree programs at or below that level are posted for public review and comment for 30 days.

Following the 30-day review period, the Ministry will review all new degree program proposals (including proposals from institutions with exempt status) from the perspective of system coordination and labour market issues. The minister reserves the right to determine if the new degree program proposal is in keeping with the Ministry's mandate of ensuring that the post-secondary education system in British Columbia is integrated, relevant and responsive and maximizes the economic and social benefits of investing in the future. Once this review is complete, proposals will proceed directly to the minister for decision unless the minister has concerns and refers it to the board.

Program Proposal

If the institution's proposed degree is within the conditions of its exempt status, the program proposal should consist of an executive summary and the documentation that the institution used in the internal program approval process.

Part 1 - Executive Summary (2 – 3 pages in length)

The executive summary must present, in a succinct manner, the purpose of the proposal and a summary of the key objectives and outcomes of the proposed degree program. The following information must be provided:

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 new degree program will be offered
d) Faculty or school(s) offering the proposed new degree program
e) Anticipated program start date
f) Anticipated completion time in years or semesters
g) 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 experience/work place term is required for degree completion. If a work experience/work place term is required, provide a description of the purpose and role of the work experience within the program;
    - Potential areas/sectors of employment for graduates and /or opportunities for further study;
    - Delivery methods;
    - Program strengths;

- An overview of the level of support and recognition from other post-secondary institutions, and relevant regulatory or professional bodies, where applicable and plans for admissions and transfer within the British Columbia post-secondary education system; and,
- Related programs in the institution or other British Columbia post-secondary institutions. Indicate rationale for duplication, if any.

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

Part 2 - Documentation used in the institution's internal program approval process.

Include documentation that was submitted to the institution's internal governing body.

Appendices

Appendices, if any, should be attached to the submission on the Post-Secondary Institution Proposal System as separate documents. **Appendices will not be posted on the public web site.**

Information that the institution considers proprietary should be included in appendices to the program proposal. Examples of proprietary information may include referee letters, letters of support (which contain personal information such as names and addresses) and financial information.

Appendices should indicate the appendix number and appendix name.

APPENDICES

Degree Program Review Criteria and Guidelines

1. Operational Guidelines for the Review of Out-of-Province Institutions Operating in British Columbia through Branch Operations
2. Operational Guidelines for Out-of-Province Institutions Operating in British Columbia through Collaborative Arrangements
3. Operational Guidelines for Recognizing Prior Assessment and Accreditations
4. Use of External Experts
5. Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Policy – Board Members and External Experts
6. Workflow Diagrams – Degree Approval Process
7. Degree Quality Assessment Board Guidelines on Naming of Degrees
8. Guidelines for the Renewal of Consent

APPENDICES

Degree Program Review Criteria and Guidelines

April 2008

APPENDICES
Degree Program Review Criteria and Guidelines

1. Operational Guidelines for the Review of Out-of-province Institutions Operating in British Columbia through Branch Operations; and

2. Operational Guidelines for Out–of–Province Institutions Operating in British Columbia through Collaborative Arrangements.

3. Operational Guidelines for Recognizing Prior Assessment and Accreditations

4. Use of External Experts

5. Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Policy - Board Members and External Experts

6. Workflow Diagrams – Degree Approval Process

7. Degree Quality Assessment Board Guidelines on Naming of Degrees

8. Guidelines for the Renewal of Consent

The Organization Review Criteria state that "For institutions with headquarters in another jurisdiction that wish to operate a satellite or branch location in British Columbia or through a collaborative arrangement with another institution, the organization review will focus on the institution's operations in British Columbia and will include a review of how these operations vary or are the same as operations in the home jurisdictions. Additionally, the organization review will include a review of how the home jurisdiction will ensure that the branch operation or collaborative arrangement maintains quality." Unlike collaborative arrangements, the applicant seeking consent to offer degree programs as a branch operation of an out-of-province institution will control directly all aspects of the administration and delivery of the degree program.

In the context of the board's review, the division of governance, policymaking and administrative authority, and influence over organizational culture, between the branch and central operations need to be understood. As well, assurance of the equivalency of academic standards and coordination of quality assurance mechanisms between branch and central operations is a concern. Drawing on the guidelines for assessing collaborative arrangements, principles for consideration in reviewing the relationship between branch and central operations is provided below.

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

Branch Campus (Institution seeking consent to offer degree programs in British Columbia)
A branch campus is any location of an institution other than the main, but under the same corporate structure as the main campus, that:

1) is permanent in nature;
2) has a separate student body;
3) has a resident administration;
4) normally offers a full program leading to a degree; and,
5) is geographically separate from the main campus such that students may not easily avail themselves of educational and administrative services of the main campus.

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

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

3. Information for students, staff and faculty

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

4. Publicity and marketing

a) The branch campus retains effective influence to ensure the accuracy of all public information, publicity and promotional activity relating to the programs and degrees it offers, in particular when the information is published on its behalf. The branch campus must satisfy itself through active means that the public cannot be misled about the nature and standing of the degree programs offered in British Columbia.

5. Policies, procedures and organizational culture

a) Branch operations are managed in accordance with the formally stated policies of the central administration.
b) There are measures to ensure that the organizational culture of the main campus is transferred to the branch campus to a sufficient degree to ensure a culture appropriate to an institution offering their specific degree programs.
c) There must be adequate safeguards against financial temptations that would compromise academic standards.

In order to assure that the quality of degree-programming offered in British Columbia through collaborative arrangements is maintained, the Degree Quality Assessment Board, in its assessment of degree program proposals, requests and reviews the collaborative agreements between partners. In reviewing agreements, documents and evidence provided by applicants, the Board is guided by the following guidelines. These guidelines may also assist applicants in preparing their submissions and negotiating collaborative arrangements.

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.

Collaboration Partner
An institution that is authorized or accredited by a body that is recognized by the board, has entered into a collaborative arrangement to provide all or part of a degree program, where the degree is conferred by the degree granting institution.

Collaborative Arrangement
An agreement or partnership between a degree-granting institution and a collaboration partner whereby the collaborative partner provides administrative support and/or part of a program leading to a degree conferred by the degree-granting institution.

1. Responsibility for, and equivalence of, academic standards

a) The degree-granting institution is ultimately and solely responsible for the academic standards of all programs that lead to degrees granted in its name.
b) 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.
c) The degree-granting institution reviews regularly 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).
d) A plan for regular program review consistent with practices of the degree-granting institution's main operations exists, and encompasses programs and/or courses offered in British Columbia through collaborative arrangements.
e) The degree-granting institution is able to 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 at the degree-granting institution's main campus.

2. Assuring the quality of programs and degrees

a) The degree-granting institution is accountable for the quality and standards of all 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's main campus, or a sound rationale for any differences must be clearly identified at the time Ministerial consent is requested.
d) Where appropriate, consideration has been given to ensure the curriculum demonstrates reasonable levels of Canadian content (e.g. course in history, law, education).

e) 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.
f) The degree-granting institution retains authority to approve faculty teaching in degree programs delivered through collaborative provision.
g) There is appropriate provision for staff appointment, induction and development, to meet the requirements of the degree-granting institution for its degree programs.
h) The degree-granting institution ensures that effective measures exist to review the proficiency of staff and faculty.
i) 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.
j) Program resources available for degree programs delivered under a collaborative arrangement must be clearly identified by the degree-granting institution at the time Ministerial consent is requested and must be adequate to achieve the stated desired outcomes of the arrangement.
k) Any course transfer arrangements made between the partners inside or outside the degree program must be done through a written articulation agreement which outlines policies and procedures are in place to determine equivalency and that there is periodic review of those arrangements.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. 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 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 he or she is enrolled in.

6. 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 programs.

7. 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 Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training, 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 their specific degree programs.
e) There must be adequate safeguards against financial temptations to compromise academic standards.

8. Selecting a partner for collaboration

a) The degree-granting institution provides the rationale for its choice of partner.
b) The degree-granting institution is satisfied that the partner is in good standing, financially stable, and that the institutional missions of both institutions are compatible with respect to the purposes of collaboration before entering into any agreement.
c) 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 learning resources necessary to ensure the required quality and standard of the degree will be achieved, prior to entering into any agreement.

9. Selecting an agent

a) Where a degree-granting institution or its partner uses agents to broker or facilitate the collaboration, the degree-granting institution ensures that an agent's interests do not conflict with the institution's interests or that of the students recruited for the programs.
b) In choosing an agent, the agent's financial standing and reputation should be considered by the degree-granting institution.
c) There must be written and legally binding contracts with any agents involved with collaborative arrangements.

10. 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; and
    - The arrangements relating to 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 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.

A. Prior Assessments and Accreditations

The degree quality assessment process allows for private and out-of-province public institutions to submit prior assessments for the board's consideration. While there is no mention in the degree program review criteria of recognition for program specific assessments, the Degree Quality Assessment Board (the board) may consider program accreditations in its review at its discretion, and on a case-by-case basis. Prior assessments/accreditations are more likely to have occurred at the institutional level, thus satisfying all or part of the organization review criteria.

Where prior institutional assessments/accreditations concern policies and practices that are institution wide, success in previous assessments against established standards may satisfy many of the board's organizational requirements. However, the board's primary concern is the quality of programs that are offered through British Columbian operations, and might not be satisfied that prior assessments satisfy criteria to the extent that an organization review of British Columbia operations is wholly unnecessary.

The onus is on the applicant to describe to the board how its prior assessments satisfy the criteria, and to what extent. The applicant must also supply documentation to support its rationale. In recognition of a prior assessment, the board may choose to limit the scope of its review, through giving special instructions to expert review panels. The following guidelines are intended to assist the board in determining the scope of review necessary to assess applications where a request for the recognition of prior assessments has been made.

B. The Scope of Degree Quality Assessment Board Reviews

Where an application is made by an accredited private or out-of-province public institution to offer degree programs, for exempt status, or for consent to use the word "university" in British Columbia, the Degree Quality Assessment Board may determine that an organization review is necessary, and whether any prior accreditations can be considered as satisfying its criteria in whole or in part. Where the board chooses to recognize a prior accreditation in whole or in part, a specified approach is necessary in determining the scope of the review necessary to assess the application.

There are three types of application that the board considers: degree program, exempt status, and use of the word "university". The scope of every review, including those where prior assessments/accreditations are recognized, must be sufficient to ensure the board that an institution offering degree level programming in British Columbia provides a program that meets published standards of quality, and has the organizational capacity to deliver that program. Further description of the scope of review associated with the three types of application is provided below.

1. Degree Program Proposals

In the context of a private or out of province public institution's first degree proposal application, organization reviews are generally necessary to determine the institution's organizational capacity to operate as a degree granting institution in British Columbia. The organization review is conducted above and beyond the first degree program review not only to ensure that the proposed program meets established standards of quality, but that the applicant also has the capacity to deliver a degree program to meet those standards. An exception to this practice may be justified in the case of out-of-province public institutions from other Canadian jurisdictions applying to offer degree programs in British Columbia.

2. Exempt Status Applications

Where an application is made for exempt status, a discretionary criterion allows the board to apply any other condition it deems necessary to determine the applicant's organizational capacity. For example,

specific elements or criteria from degree program reviews, or any other condition, may be included in the scope of the exempt status review under the discretionary criterion. Through this avenue, the board may be ensured that the applicant has the organizational capacity to ensure that quality is maintained in the delivery of its programs, and that the programs themselves meet the standards of degree level education in British Columbia.

3. Applications to Use the Word "University"

Where an application is made for consent to use the word "university", criteria require that the applicant provide adequate information to the board to determine that the organizational capacity of the institution merits university status. In order to ensure that the applicant fully meets criteria for the range of programming expected of a university in British Columbia, the board has adopted the practice of requiring that a successful applicant be able to offer at least one program at both the undergraduate and graduate level. Therefore, applications for the use of the word "university" include both an organizational and program review component, and assure not only the quality of the proposed program, but the applicant's capacity to deliver it as well.

C. Operational Guidelines for Determining the Scope of Reviews of Institutions Requesting Recognition of Prior Assessments

Given that an applicant has achieved institutional accreditation/approval by a recognized accreditation/quality assessment agency, much of the organizational review criteria can be considered to be satisfied with regard to the institution as a whole. However, attention to British Columbia operations would still be required to ensure the organizational capacity to deliver quality degree programming in British Columbia.

1. Degree Program Reviews

Where an applicant is seeking degree program approval, substantial overlapping between degree program review criteria and organization review criteria allow that the quality of British Columbia programs and operations can be assured through:

1) Current and positive accreditation review from one of the six regional accrediting bodies in the United States, or other widely recognized accrediting/quality assessment agency.
2) An organization review by an appropriately configured and directed team of experts, focused on British Columbia specific criteria that are not covered in the context of a degree program review, such as:
    a. A five-year business plan for British Columbia operations
    b. Disclosure of legal or administrative actions pending against the organization
    c. Student enrollment contract and written confirmation of awareness of policies
    d. Financial resources and practices for British Columbia operations
3) A full degree program review by an appropriately configured and directed team of experts
4) Ongoing reporting and monitoring

2. Exempt Status Reviews

In the context of an application for exempt status the quality of British Columbia programs and operations can be assured through:

1) A current and positive accreditation review from one of the six regional accrediting bodies in the United States, or other widely recognized accrediting/quality assessment agency.

2) An organization review by an appropriately configured and directed team of experts, focused on British Columbia specific criteria, such as:
    a. A five-year business plan for British Columbia operations
    b. Disclosure of legal or administrative actions pending against the organization
    c. Student enrollment contract and written confirmation of awareness of policies
    d. Financial resources and practices for British Columbia operations
    e. Publications, student/faculty handbooks, academic calendars and policy documents that apply in British Columbia
    f. Planning, evaluation and review policies and procedures for British Columbia programs
    g. Governance and administration of British Columbia operations and their relations to the central administration
    h. Policies for dispute resolution that apply in British Columbia
    i. Criteria relating to faculty, limited to those faculty involved in British Columbia operations
    j. Criteria relating to Admissions, Student Recruitment and Transfer for British Columbia students
    k. Policies on academic freedom, honesty and integrity
    l. British Columbia facilities and learning resources
3) Submission of documentation from internal program reviews for one or more programs, as requested by the board.
4) An exempt status review by an appropriately configured and directed team of experts, that includes consideration of the institution's scope of programming, as well as curriculum content, learning methodologies, and degree level standards for one or more programs.
5) Upon having been granted exempt status, the submission of programs to the Minister for approval, whereupon a full program review by the Degree Quality Assessment Board can be required if any concerns arise.
6) Ongoing reporting and monitoring.

3. Use of the Word "University" Reviews

Where an applicant is seeking consent to use the word "university", the performance of both a degree program review and an organization review criteria allow that the quality of British Columbia programs and operations can be assured through:

1) Current and positive accreditation review from one of the six regional accrediting bodies or other recognized accrediting/quality assessment agency.
2) An organization review by an appropriately configured and directed team of experts, focused on British Columbia specific criteria that are not covered in the context of a degree program review, such as:
    a. A five-year business plan for British Columbia operations
    b. Disclosure of legal or administrative actions pending against the organization
    c. Student enrollment contract and written confirmation of awareness of policies
    d. Financial resources and practices for British Columbia operations
3) A full degree program review by an appropriately configured and directed team of experts
4) Ongoing reporting and monitoring

USE OF EXTERNAL EXPERTS

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

1. Organization Review, focusing on the characteristics of the institution; and/or
2. Degree Program Review, focusing on the specifics of a proposal for a particular degree-level and discipline/area of study.

External experts appointed to either an organization or degree program review panel must possess the following characteristics:

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

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

Organization Review Experts

If necessary, the Board will establish an organization review panel of qualified external assessors (normally three) to review an applicant organization against the established criteria. Panel members may have expertise in one or more of the following areas:

- Senior management experience in a post-secondary institution;
- Accounting expertise and certification with experience in corporate financial management;
- Experience in the admissions and registrar functions at a post-secondary institution, including admissions policies and academic records management;
- Experience in managing learning resources and/or infrastructure; and,
- Private sector consultants specializing in organization design and behavior, or assessment and evaluation.

Degree Program Review Experts

Where necessary and deemed appropriate, the Board will appoint one or more qualified external subject matter experts to review a degree program application against the established criteria. Since the panel's main purpose is to conduct a quality assessment of a 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);
- Relevant academic experience in areas such as quality assessment (e.g., as appraisers for accrediting bodies or as reviewers of degree programs), curriculum design, teaching and learning, and administration;
- Any required or desired professional credentials and/or related work experience.

Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Policy
Board Members and External Experts

This policy applies to members of the Degree Quality Assessment Board (the Board) and to external experts engaged to conduct an organization review or degree program 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 postsecondary 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 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; and/or,
- Teaching at the institution.

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

Disclosure of Conflict

Where there is an actual or potential conflict of interest, the member must disclose his/her 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 his/her 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
British Columbia Guidelines for Conduct

BC Guidelines for Conduct of Government Appointees to BC Agencies, Boards and Commissions

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 specifically 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 appreciates the efforts and willingness to serve of dedicated individuals.

It also expects all government appointees to agencies, boards and commissions to work within these guidelines.

Specific agencies, boards or commissions may have their own explicit needs, guidelines or standards. If no such standards yet exist, public bodies are encouraged 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.

When and where possible, 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 be no apprehension 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 are kept separate and distinct from any responsibilities held as a member of an agency, board or commission.
- Activities undertaken as a member of an agency, board or commission are kept separate and distinct from 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 remain distinct from work undertaken in the course of performing their duties as public appointees.

Attachment 1
British Columbia Guidelines for Conduct

- 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.)·

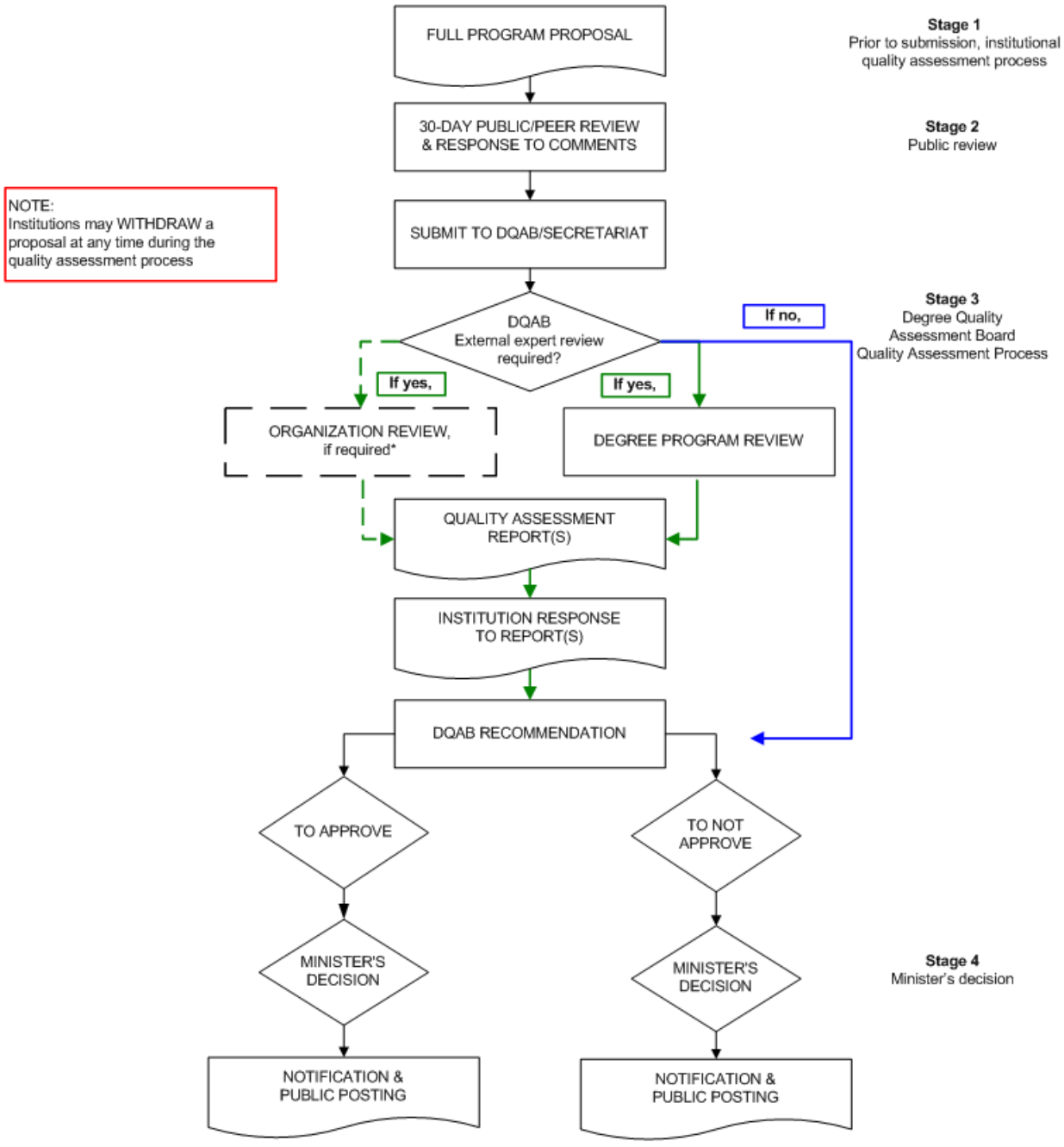
- *Duty to Inform*

  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: http://www.fin.gov.bc.ca/abc/infopages/guidecond.htm

British Columbia
Ministry of Advanced Education

Degree Program Approval Process
Workflow for Non-exempt Institutions

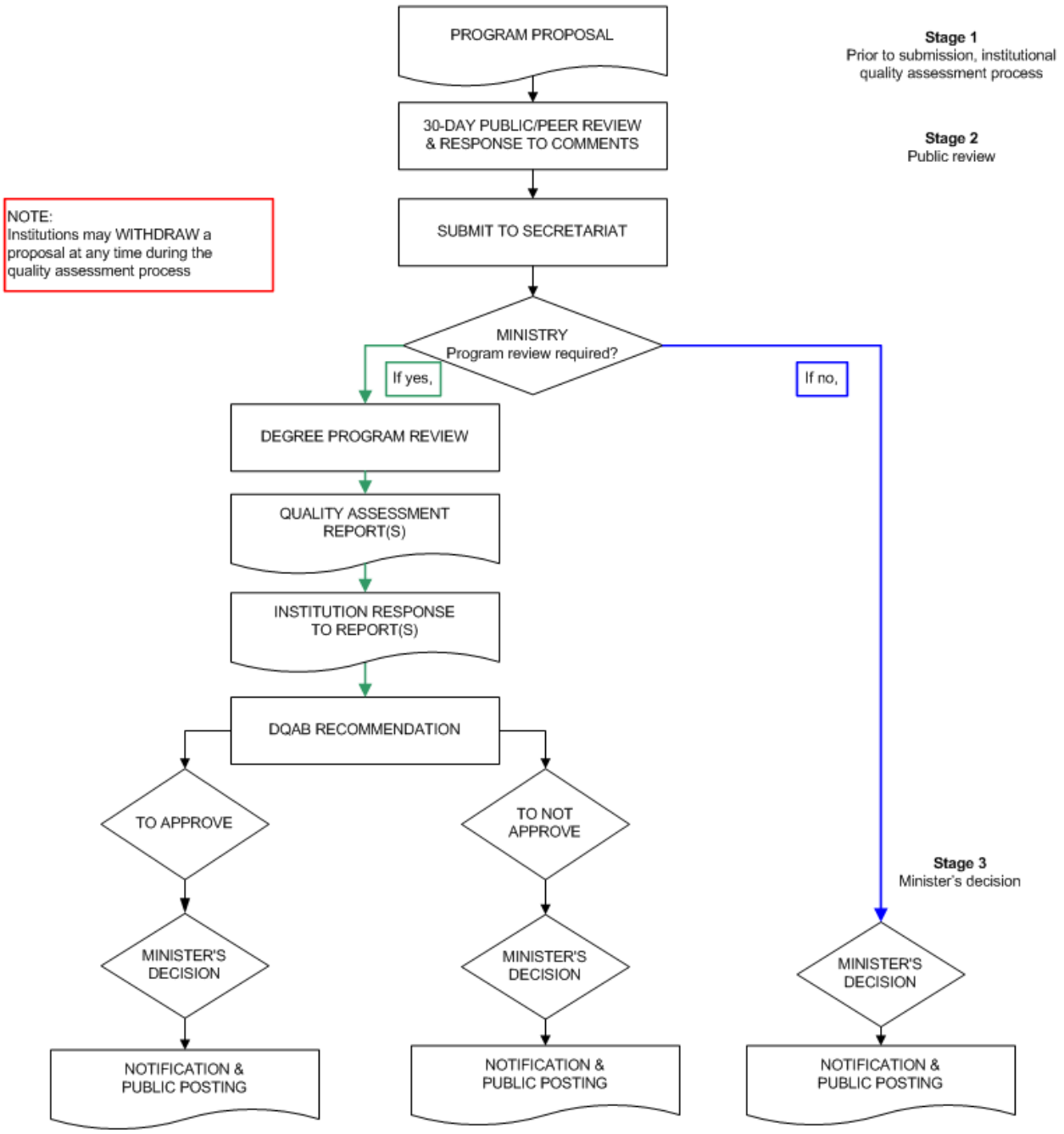


*BC public institutions are not required to undergo organization review

Effective: November 2006

British Columbia
Ministry of Advanced Education

Degree Program Approval Process
Workflow for Institutions with Exempt Status



Effective: November 2006

GUIDELINES ON NAMING OF DEGREES

April 2004

I. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

The following guidelines have been adopted by the Degree Quality Assessment Board (the "Board") to assist institutions in determining the name of the credential they will offer when they are proposing new degree programs. Institutions proposing new degree names should provide an indication on what basis a degree name has been selected. This should be determined within the institution's overall approach to degree nomenclature and reflect historical practice in British Columbia and, where necessary, within the broader Canadian and international context. It should be noted that the guidelines apply only to new degrees; existing degree names are not affected.

II. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE NAMING OF DEGREES

1) Credentials for new academic programs should ordinarily be selected from degree names that are widely used and generally understood. The list of degrees currently offered by British Columbia post-secondary institutions is already very comprehensive and normally should be able to accommodate most proposals for new academic programs.

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. Obvious examples include the Bachelor of Arts at the undergraduate level and the Master of Science at the graduate level. In the case of some of the newer and more specialized institutions, such as the technical institutes, the standard credential awarded should be reflective of the overall mission of the institution (e.g., technology, thus leading to a Bachelor of Technology).

3) The name should be descriptive of the general area of study which usually corresponds to a particular faculty or school. While degrees are conferred by a particular post-secondary institution, the degree designation is normally identified with a particular academic unit, ordinarily a faculty or school. The emergence of interdisciplinary studies has led to a number of departures from this practice.

4) The name should be appropriate for adoption by other British Columbia post-secondary institutions that develop 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. Occasionally different degree names are simply a reflection of an institutional preference and do not represent a divergence of academic programs. While the degree designations differ, the credentials are seen to be equivalent.

5) In British Columbia, the use of associate degrees is restricted to the Associate of Arts and the Associate of Science degree. Institutions proposing to offer the associate degree must ensure that the degree is consistent with the British Columbia system-wide definition. (The British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer provides a definition of associate degree on its website: http://www.bccat.bc.ca/pubs/assoc05-00.htm.)

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

III. HOW TO 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. The question then becomes how to achieve this objective, while adhering to the five general principles outlined above. Where appropriate the subject of specialization could be included as part of the degree name leading to a new genus of degrees. Institutions, as a matter of routine, already identify majors and areas of concentration on the transcript. In some instances, honours are shown as part of the degree. In addition, the subject area, or major, is sometimes shown on the parchment as a matter of institutional preference, but that does not mean that that information is incorporated into the name of the degree.

Increasing specialization is the main reason for the existing diversity and continuing expansion of degree names. While there does not appear to be any uniform practice, over time certain models have evolved. One is to include the specialization in the degree name itself (e.g., Bachelor of Science in Agriculture). Another is to indicate the specialization in parentheses after the degree name (e.g., Bachelor of Education (Elementary)). A third is the creation of new generic forms (e.g., Bachelor of Administrative Studies). New degrees, which identify an area of specialization, should fit into one of the following categories:

a) Bachelor of Science in _____. This has become a widely accepted method of indicating specialization. There is a clearly identified and specialized field of study which finds its roots in science, but which 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. What should be noted is that, 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 and does not appear to lead to confusion.

b) Bachelor of _____Science. This approach is similar to the previous method for naming degrees with a significant scientific component. 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 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 of Education (Elementary). This approach to indicating specialization is achieved by showing the specialty in parentheses after the generic degree. In British Columbia 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 wishing to develop specialized professional programs should consider this option. An example is the Bachelor of Arts (Criminal Justice).

e) Bachelor of _____ Studies. There are an increasing number of degrees with an interdisciplinary focus. As a result there is greater usage of degree names which incorporate the word "studies." This trend is found at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. The word "studies" appears to be used in instances where there is a well-defined academic program but where the course offerings are provided by a number of academic units, often including units from more than one faculty. There is often a tension between choosing a more generic degree (e.g., B.A. (Canadian Studies)) versus Bachelor of Canadian Studies (B.C.S.). The former is more widely recognized and is the recommended approach.

f) Bachelor of Technology (_____). With the expansion of the post-secondary system to include a greater variety of academic institutions, generic degrees which reflect the academic orientation of these newer institutions are rapidly emerging. In the case of technological institutes, the academic programs are grounded in the study of the practical application of science in a variety of subject areas. It is recommended that Institutes of Technology adopt the generic form of degree, Bachelor of Technology. The field of specialization, if necessary, can be shown in parentheses following the general degree, similar to the practice in the field of education. Normally this degree designation will be confined to Institutes of Technology.

g) Bachelor of Applied _____. Given that the province has encouraged the development of more applied degrees, there has been a gradual increase in requests to use the word "applied" in the title of the credential offered. The dictionary definition of applied is "used in actual practice or to work out practical problems."

With respect to new degree programs which are "applied" in nature, sponsoring institutions should give serious consideration to using a generic degree name such as Bachelor of Applied Arts (name of specialization) or Bachelor of Applied Design (name of specialization) (e.g., Bachelor of Applied Design (Interior Design)). Each designation is sufficiently broad to allow a number of specific programs under a single umbrella. Because the degree, Bachelor of Applied Science, is already identified with engineering, its use should be limited to such programs to avoid confusion. Since engineering programs are accredited by the profession, this additional requirement should be a condition of approval for degrees using the phrase Applied Science.

Under the Standard Terms and Conditions of Consent, a consent period for a degree program or for use of the word "university" is normally five years. However, the Minister can grant consent for any length of time up to and including five years. These Guidelines will apply to all applications for renewal of consent, regardless of the length of the original consent period.

The Degree Quality Assessment Board (the Board) will review applications for renewal of consent and ensure that the application undergoes a process that determines if the institution or program has maintained and will continue to maintain quality.

The quality assessment process for renewal of consent will primarily focus on evidence-based outcomes.

The Types of Degree Quality Assessment Board Reviews

There are two types of renewal application that the board considers:

Degree Programs

In the context of a private or out of province public institution's degree proposal renewal application, a review will be conducted to determine whether the program is maintaining the standards under the established criteria for degree programs in British Columbia. The quality assessment process for renewal of consent will primarily focus on evidence-based outcomes. It is highly recommended that institutions conduct an external program review prior to application for renewal of consent and submit the outcomes report along with the Degree Program Proposal to the Board.

Use of the Word "University"

Where an application is made for renewal of consent to use the word "university", criteria require that the applicant provide adequate information to the board to determine that the organizational capacity of the institution has been maintained and continues to merit university status. The quality assessment process for renewal of consent will primarily focus on evidence-based outcomes particularly in relation to the institution's commitment to research and scholarly activities and range of programming expected of a university in British Columbia.

The Scope of Degree Quality Assessment Board Reviews

The Board reserves the right to:

- determine whether an institution is required to submit an Organizational Self-Study and whether an Organization Review will be conducted in conjunction with an application for renewal of consent;
- choose to recognize prior Organization Reviews conducted on previous applications to the Board or accreditation assessments in whole or in part; and,
- determine the scope and type of review each application for renewal will undergo to ascertain if it meets the established criteria.

In making this determination, the Board will take under consideration:

- any provisions or Special Terms and Conditions of Consent attached to the original consent;
- the annual performance reporting and monitoring information; and,
- any concerns or complaints raised with the Ministry regarding the institution and/or program during the consent period.

The Board will then provide a recommendation to the Minister if consent should be renewed and/or addition or removal of any Special Terms and Conditions of Consent.