ORGANIZATION REVIEW
Self-Study

CRITERIA

**FOR
ALL PRIVATE POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS
AND
OUT-OF-PROVINCE PUBLIC
POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS**

November 2006

Acknowledgements

The Organization Review Self Study Criteria was established and published by the Minister of Advanced Education in November 2006.

This version, which outlines the criteria for undertaking an organization review self study, has been prepared with advice from stakeholders and quality assessment experts.

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Modifications to Policies, Criteria, and Guidelines

The board recommends to the Minister of Advanced Education 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 of Advanced Education 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.

ORGANIZATION REVIEW

The purpose of the organization review is to assess the institution's policies and practices against the established criteria to demonstrate that the institution has the capacity to deliver degree programs.

When is an organization review required?

All first time applicants by private post-secondary institutions and out-of-province public post-secondary institutions may be required to go through an Organization Review Self-Study. For subsequent applications by private post-secondary institutions and out-of-province public post-secondary institutions, the Degree Quality Assessment Board (the board) will assess whether an organization review should be required, and if so, whether any prior accreditations can be recognized as satisfying all or part of British Columbia's organization review criteria.

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

How an organization review will be conducted

If the board determines that an organization review is required, the board will select three external experts from the board's list of qualified external experts to review an applicant institution against the established organization review criteria. External experts 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 behaviour, or assessment and evaluation.

External experts appointed to an organization review must possess the following characteristics:
- have an advanced academic credential (normally at the doctoral level);
- be committed to quality assurance in post-secondary education;
- be recognized by their peers for having a broad outlook, open mind, and sound judgment;
- provide full disclosure and be free of any actual or perceived conflict of interest regarding an applicant/institution, in accordance with the board's policy; and

- have demonstrated oral and written communication skills, preferably including conducting reviews and writing formal reports to strict deadlines.

The institution making the application may provide their nominations for external experts to the board. The board takes the institution's suggestions under consideration, but reserves the right to make the final determination and will select the experts.

The board will advise the institution of the external experts selected to conduct the review. The cost of the external experts' site visit will be paid for by the institution being reviewed.

The external experts will contact the institution to arrange a site visit, during which they will assess whether the institution meets the organization review criteria. Following the site visit, the external experts will provide a written report to the board. The board will provide the external experts' written report to the institution for their response or comment.

The board will review the institution's application, the external experts' report and the institution's response to the external expert's report and determine whether the institution has demonstrated that the established organization review criteria have been met.

Note: In conducting the organization review, external experts and/or the board will be guided but not limited by the organization review criteria outlined in this document.

How an organization can prepare for an organization review

As described previously, in conducting the quality assessment processes, the board may require institutions to undergo organization reviews to inform its assessment of an institution's degree program proposal. To prepare for an organization review by external experts, institutions will develop a self-study prior to making its degree program application.

During the self-study, institutions should refer to the organization review criteria when preparing their organization for review. It is the responsibility of the institution to make information available to the external experts that is necessary to determine whether the institution meets the organization review criteria.

Submission Guidelines

The length of the submission may vary, but should be approximately 6,000 words (additional information may be added to the submission in the form of appendices). A submission for an Organization Review must provide information and discussion in a format that adheres to the order and headings below. The submission will be assessed in the following categories against criteria described in this document:

1. Organization Overview
2. Mission
3. Governance and Administrative Capacity
4. Financial Capacity, Facilities and Learning Resources
5. Faculty
6. Academic Policies and Standards
7. Student Policies and Services

Note: It is the responsibility of the submitting institution to provide the external experts with the information they need to conduct the assessment.

Previous Assessments

The board is committed to an assessment process that is comprehensive, effective, efficient, objective and non-discriminatory. Private and out-of-province public institutions that have successfully undergone a previous quality assessment, such as institutional or program accreditation, and have authority to operate programs and confer degrees outside British Columbia, may choose to submit this documentation to the board for consideration. It is the responsibility of the applicant institution to put forward a rationale as to how previous assessments meet fully, or in part, the board's criteria.

The board has sole discretion to recognize the findings of another reviewing body in conjunction with its organization and/or degree program reviews. In making its determination of whether any previous assessment can satisfy all or part of its requirements, the board will consider how recent the review is, the credibility of the reviewing body, the criteria, standards and procedures used in the review, and the qualifications, standing and objectivity of the external reviewers involved. The board may also require a site visit and/or evaluation of institutional headquarters and operations in British Columbia to ensure that the basis for accreditation in other jurisdictions is applicable to operations British Columbia.

De Novo Institutions

The board recognizes that for de novo institutions, it may be difficult to provide information required under the organization review on institutional structure and processes that may not yet be in place. In this situation, the board will look for a thorough planning process and evidence that the institution will have in place the institutional capacity, resources, facilities and personnel to meet the standards and criteria of the review.

In the case of de novo institutions, the board may recommend that specific terms and conditions be attached to ministerial consent to ensure that the institution develops appropriately.

Branch Locations and Collaborative Partnerships

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.

Private and out-of-province public institutions should refer to Appendices 1 and 2 in the *Organization Review Self Study* 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 with headquarters in British Columbia that also wish to operate a satellite or branch location outside British Columbia and grant British Columbia degrees, the organization review criteria will be applied to operations both inside and outside British Columbia, as appropriate.

Governance and Ownership Information

All institutions are asked to provide information on governance and ownership.

Out-of-province public institutions are asked to provide the basis on which they meet the definition of a public institution.

To fulfill its obligation to make informed recommendations to the minister, the board requires that the applicant disclose complete information regarding the owners, directors and/or officers of the institution, and any relationships that those persons may have with other post-secondary institutions and approval bodies governing those institutions.

Collection and Use of Personal Information

The *Personal Information Protection Act* (PIPA) applies to private and out of province public institutions. The purpose of PIPA is to govern the collection, use and disclosure of personal information by organizations in a manner that recognizes both the right of individuals to protect their personal information and the need for organizations to collect, use or disclose personal information.

In addition to other obligations, PIPA requires that organizations develop and follow policies and practices that are necessary for an organization to meet its obligations under PIPA. Good privacy practice often depends on the context in which personal information is handled and the expectations of the individuals interacting with an organization. As well, where student records are stored in a location outside of the province, the institution must demonstrate that they have policies in place to inform students that legislation from that out-of-province jurisdiction may apply. For more information regarding PIPA, please refer to the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner for British Columbia at: http://www.oipcbc.org/ .

1. Organization Overview

The purpose of the Organization Overview is to provide the key information to enable an informed recommendation to the Minister regarding the Applicant as a corporate and legal organization.

1.1 Organization Information

Criteria that will be used in assessing Organization Information:

- Key information about the organization, specifically including:
  - ➢ Full legal name of organization
  - ➢ Operating name of organization
  - ➢ Common acronym of organization (if applicable)
  - ➢ URL for organization homepage (if applicable)
  - ➢ Addresses for the head office, the main campus and all other operating sites, as well as telephone, facsimile, and email contact information
  - ➢ number of employees (faculty, administration and staff) indicating whether full-time or part-time
  - ➢ number of students enrolled, indicating whether full-time or part-time
  - ➢ written confirmation of the authorization of the representative of the applicant institution to enter into a binding application (including name, title, address, telephone and email address)
  - ➢ written confirmation of the authorization of the institutional contact person to represent the institution throughout the application process (include name, title, address, telephone and email address)

1.2 Corporate Structure and Legal Character

To fulfill its obligation to make informed recommendations to the Minister, the Board will require that all institution applicants disclose information regarding the owners, directors and officers of the organization, and any relationships that owners may have with other post-secondary institutions and/or approval bodies governing those institutions. In addition, the institution will identify any instances of non-compliance with legislation governing those institutions and any relevant regulatory bodies. To enable this, all applicants will be required to provide written authority for the Board to enter into communications with third parties, including accrediting bodies.

Criteria that will be used in assessing Corporate Structure and Legal Character:

- Key information about the institution, specifically including:
  - ➢ The dates of the institution's operation;
  - ➢ the institution's corporate structure
  - ➢ the institution's legal status (sole proprietor, partnership, society, corporation)
  - ➢ the institution's legal character (e.g. articles of incorporation, bylaws, partnership agreements, charter, statutory authority or other documents) including documentation relevant to any relationship with parent, subsidiary or other corporate groups
  - ➢ organization chart(s) identifying names and position titles of owners, officers and/or board members including contact information;

  - ➢ name and qualifications of the senior educational and/or administrative officer.

- Key information about the owners, specifically including:
  - ➢ the name, address, telephone number, facsimile number and electronic mail address of:
    - o all directors and officers of the institution;
    - o all persons holding at least 10% ownership in the institution; (please indicate percentage ownership); and
    - o legal counsel to the applicant for the purposes of the application for consent.
  - ➢ Name and location of any other business carried on with or associated with the applicant, including at any other location.

(*Non-profit/charitable organizations please provide the above information for the members of the governing body.*)

If the organization is incorporated, for all persons holding at least 10 percent ownership in the organization, please provide the following information.
- ➢ the nature of any other relationship those persons may have to the applicant (e.g. president, members of the governing body);
- ➢ the names and addresses of any other post-secondary organizations owned or controlled by such persons;
- ➢ the name and address of any body that has granted approval for those organizations' operation, or was responsible for oversight of the organizations;
- ➢ a letter signed by the organization's legal representative that gives the Board the right to contact each of the approval bodies identified, and which instructs the approval body to release to the board any and all information relevant to the organization's compliance or noncompliance status with that body.

2. Mission

2.1 Mission Statement and Academic Goals

The Institution has a clearly articulated and published mission and academic goals statement, approved by the governing body, that identifies the academic character and the aspirations of the organization appropriate for a degree-granting post-secondary education institution that demonstrates the extent to which the organization is committed to the dissemination of knowledge through teaching and, where applicable, the creation of knowledge and service to community or related professions. The institution has academic policies and standards that support the institution's mission and academic goals to ensure degree quality and relevance.

Criteria that will be used in assessing the Mission Statement and Academic Goals:

- Key information about the organization, policies and programs is published in its academic year calendar and/or is otherwise readily available to students and the public, specifically including:
  - ➢ the organization's mission and goals statement;
  - ➢ the organization's history and its governance and academic structure;
  - ➢ a summary of the organization's future plans for growth;
  - ➢ a description of the type(s) of programming currently offered
  - ➢ a general description of each degree program (e.g., purpose, outcomes, length);
  - ➢ individual descriptions of all subjects/courses in these programs and their credit value;
  - ➢ the academic credentials of senior administrators; and,
  - ➢ the academic credentials of faculty
- Programs are clearly related to the organization's mission and goals.
- Appropriate academic policies are in place to support the organization's mission.
- Faculty qualifications are appropriate to the courses that the faculty are teaching.
- Resources are used to advance the organization's mission.

2.2 Institutional Evaluation and Effectiveness

The institution has a formal approved policy and procedure requiring the periodic review of all units and/or operations to occur on a cyclical basis, normally not exceeding ten years.

Criteria that will be used in assessing Institutional Evaluation and Effectiveness:

- The periodic review procedure includes, at a minimum:
  - ➢ A self-study undertaken by faculty members and administrators based on evidence relating to program performance against the criteria stated above, including strengths and weaknesses, desired improvements, and future directions;
  - ➢ 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 institutional quality and recommending any changes needed to strengthen that quality;

➢ An institutional response to the recommendations in the report; and

➢ A summary of the conclusions of the evaluation made publicly available.

- The organization has a process for conducting student outcomes reviews that indicates:

  ➢ enrolment;

  ➢ student retention rates;

  ➢ student learning outcomes;

  ➢ student completion times;

  ➢ student employment outcomes;

  ➢ graduate satisfaction; and,

  ➢ employer satisfaction.

- The organization has an accountability process in place (including appropriate reporting mechanisms) to account for the type and level of funding received from any public sources (e.g., tuition and ancillary fees, federal or provincial government funding).

2.3   Program Evaluation and Effectiveness

The Institution has a plan, policies and processes in place for assessing the effectiveness of its educational programs and services, and for continuous growth and improvement.

Criteria that will be used in assessing Program Evaluation and Effectiveness:

- Description of the organization's internal processes for developing and approving degree programs;
- Regular cycles of internal review are in place for all programs, including evidence of faculty participation in the evaluation of programs.
- For programs where credentials are awarded externally or where industry standards require review, reports from any appropriate external review bodies which indicate that the organization meets or exceeds the standards.

3.   Governance and Administrative Capacity

3.1   Governance and Administrative Capacity

The Institution has the legal characteristics and the leadership, through a governance structure and administrative capacity, necessary to organize and manage a reputable, effective and high quality degree-granting institution in British Columbia. The structure normally includes a body competent to either make decisions or give advice in academic matters. It has capable administrative staff, policies with respect to strategic planning, an adequate information system to gather and analyze data needed for planning and decision-making, and procedures for the development of curricula and academic policies which include participation by academic staff and consultation with students.

Criteria that will be used in assessing Governance and Administrative Capacity:

- The institution has an appropriate governing structure such as a governing board that is the legally constituted body responsible for managing the activities of the institution and maintaining the purpose, viability and integrity of the institution; achieving institutional policies and goals; selecting administrative leadership and providing the appropriate financial, facilities and human resources.
- The institution's reporting structure clearly indicates the relationship between owners, and governing and managing bodies.
- Governance and decision-making structures are clear and consistent with the institution's academic purposes.
- The institution has a qualified chief executive officer who is accountable to the governing board and whose full-time or major responsibility is the administration of the institution.
- The institution has sufficient and qualified senior administrative staff, with clear lines of responsibility, decision-making authority and accountability necessary to conduct the affairs of the institution.
- The institution is able to demonstrate how administrative policies and practices ensure that business practices and decisions support the academic integrity of programs and protect student interests.
- Development of curriculum, academic policies and standards includes appropriate participation by qualified academic staff, and appropriate forms of consultation with students.

3.2   Institutional Conduct
The Institution values and upholds integrity and ethical conduct as an administrative organization as demonstrated by the policies and practices by which it proposes to conduct its business and, if applicable, by its past performance within and/or outside of the jurisdiction.

Criteria that will be used in assessing Institutional Conduct:

- An acceptable statement by the governing board, administrative officers and other representatives of the organization, of the ethical standards relating to fair and honest business practices, including a policy on conflict of interest that will guide its conduct in the course of operations in British Columbia, and in other jurisdictions.
- a list and explanation of any instances of non-compliance by the organization with legislation governing those organizations such as the British Columbia Student Assistance Program (BCSAP), Private Career Training Institutions Agency (PCTIA); or other legislation such as the *Society Act*, *Company Act*, and *Securities Act*.
- Disclosure of any legal or administrative actions pending against the organization, or any of the owners, officers, administrators or instructors, by any law enforcement agency.

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

3.3   Dispute Resolution

The Institution has policies and procedures for dealing with disputes between the organization and its students, the organization and faculty, and between faculty and students, where complaints, grievances, and/or disputes of students, faculty, staff and administration are dealt with in accordance with the principles of natural justice and are fair, reasonable and effective.

Criteria that will be used in assessing Dispute Resolution:

- The Institution has policies and procedures through which students' academic appeals, complaints, grievances and/or other disputes are dealt with in accordance with the following principles of natural justice:
  - ➢ Individuals have a right to:
    - a fair and expeditious resolution of disputes with reasonable deadlines;
    - know and understand the charges or complaints made against them; and,
    - be heard in response to charges or complaints made against them, before any disciplinary decision is taken.
  - ➢ Institutions have an obligation to:
    - deal with complaints or grievances according to clear and reasonable deadlines; and,
    - establish and operate according to administrative processes that deal with disputes fairly and expeditiously at the informal level.
    - prior to registration, confirm that the information provided to students regarding policies and procedures pertaining to: (1) academic policies and standards; (2) student support and services and (3) withdrawal, dismissal and refund policies.
- Students and employees are informed about the policies and procedures for dispute resolution. To these ends, the institution's policies ensure that:
  - ➢ charges or complaints against an individual are stated clearly and in writing;
  - ➢ there is an administrative person(s) responsible for dealing with complaints, and to whom complaints may be directed and who may facilitate the informal and satisfactory resolution of disputes;
  - ➢ there is a process for and an officer charged with reviewing disputes and examining the evidence; and,
  - ➢ there is a provision for a final internal review by a person, or body of persons, not involved in the dispute in any way.

4.   Financial Capacity, Facilities and Learning Resources

4.1   Financial Capacity
The institution demonstrates financial capacity sufficient to assure stability and the financial resources to provide a stable learning environment and to ensure that the number of students assumed in the business plan can complete the degree program in the event that revenue falls short of the business plan or costs exceed the estimated allowances. The institution has a credible strategic and business plan, including procedures for the regular audit of the institution's financial methods and records, performance and stability by an arm's-length professional accountant, and has methods to protect student financial investment in the case of cessation of activity.

Criteria that will be used in assessing Financial and Management Capacity and Capability:

- The institution must provide a credible short- and long-term business plan (at least five years) that includes a best case / worst case scenario that addresses the applicant's future educational, enrolment, physical and fiscal growth in British Columbia. The business plan should include the organization's academic, financial, facilities, marketing and human resource plans and should demonstrate that the organization has the administrative organization and capacity to effectively manage a degree-granting institution. The business plan should also detail the programs to be offered in British Columbia and demonstrate the organization's commitment to academic quality of program content and delivery.
  - ➢ Financial information contained in the business plan indicates that the organization has a financial base adequate to support activities consistent with its mission and educational objectives, and the required financial resources for start-up and ongoing operating costs associated with the delivery of the proposed program(s). The institution demonstrates financial capacity sufficient to assure stability and the financial resources to provide a stable learning environment and to ensure that the number of students assumed in the business plan can complete the degree program in the event that revenue falls short of the business plan or costs exceed the estimated allowances. (The financial information should include an audited financial statement. For newly established organizations, a pro forma financial statement prepared by a qualified independent accountant [e.g., CA, CGA, CMA] should be available.)
- The institution has identified the source of funds to be invested.
- The institution has a policy requiring the regular audit of the applicant's financial methods, performance and stability by a qualified third-party accountant in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices.
- The institution has evidence of methods to protect student financial involvement in the case of the cessation of activity.
- The institution subscribes to an annual reporting format that will allow the ministry to be assured that the criteria described above are being met.

4.2   Facilities and Equipment
The Institution has the facilities and equipment, including laboratories, classrooms, library, technology and specialized equipment, to support the educational objectives of a degree-granting institution and of the degrees offered (or proposed to offer) or demonstrates the availability of adequate learning resources and learning support for students where alternate means of delivery are employed.

Criteria that will be used in assessing Facilities and Equipment:

- Description of the physical plant or facilities, including locations (at any campus or satellite operations);
- Evidence that the physical plant, equipment, technology and support services adequately support the organization's educational and student activities.
- Submission of any agreements with other institutions where resources and services are shared.
- The organization has safety and emergency preparedness policies that ensure a safe environment for students, faculty and employees, and that demonstrate the organization is prepared to respond to emergency situations and critical incidents.

4.3   Learning Infrastructure
The Institution has libraries and learning resources (physical and electronic) appropriate to its mission and objectives as a degree-granting institution. The institution has available for students and faculty appropriate information services and learning resources to support the academic programs. The review normally considers how priorities are established with respect to their acquisition and the institution's commitment to maintaining and supplementing them.

Criteria that will be used in assessing Learning Infrastructure:

- 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 academic program(s) offered by the institution.
- Evidence of commitment to provide and maintain necessary learning and other resources specific to the program and to supplement them as necessary.
- Submission of any agreements with other institutions where resources and services are shared.
- If the institution is a branch or subsidiary of an out of province institution, the application should include a description of the methods and processes that will be used to transfer and maintain the philosophy and basic processes of the sponsoring institution.

## 5.	Faculty

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

Criteria that will be used in assessing Faculty and Staff:

- The institution has academic and other staff in sufficient numbers:
  - to develop and deliver the program (and in graduate programs, to develop and deliver each of the fields of specialization identified in the program);
  - to act as research supervisors, where appropriate; and,
  - to meet the demands of the projected student enrolment.
- The institution has full-time faculty in sufficient numbers to:
  - ensure quality standards are maintained;
  - ensure a high degree of consistency and continuity of curriculum development and delivery; and
  - to develop and deliver the program to develop and deliver each of the fields of specialization identified in the program;
- The academic credentials held by faculty are appropriate to the courses they are teaching.
- The institution has appropriate policies pertaining to faculty, including policies that:
  - define the academic/professional credentials required of faculty teaching all courses in the program, and where appropriate, serving as research supervisors and/or members of thesis/dissertation examining committees;
  - demonstrate that the organization's capacity for degree granting is supported by an appropriate balance between continuing or ongoing faculty appointments and temporary appointments;
  - require the institution to have an explicit policy of due diligence on hiring. For example, the organization has evidence on file of the highest academic and/or professional credential claimed by faculty members, supplied directly from the granting agency/institution to the organization;
  - require the regular review of faculty performance, including student evaluation of teaching and/or supervision;
  - identify the means of ensuring that faculty knowledge of the field is current through professional development, scholarship and research;
  - pertain to faculty teaching and supervision loads and availability to students;

➤ support the professional development of faculty, including the promotion of curricular and instructional innovation, as well as technological skills, where appropriate; and,

➤ clearly outline the duties and responsibilities, institutional reporting structure and performance standards.

6. Academic Policies and Standards

6.1 Academic Policies

The Institution has academic policies and standards that support the institution's mission and educational objectives, and ensure degree quality and relevance. The institution has published admission, continuation and graduation policies consistent with the objectives of its programs.

Criteria that will be used in assessing Academic Policies:

- The organization has appropriate academic policies to support its mission. For example, the organization has policies and procedures pertaining to:
  ➤ admission requirements;
  ➤ student withdrawal, dismissal and refund policies;
  ➤ international students, including policies that ensure that international students meet program requirements for degree completion;
  ➤ prior learning assessment;
  ➤ entrance examinations;
  ➤ other academic prerequisites;
  ➤ methods of course delivery;
  ➤ academic honesty;
  ➤ intellectual property;
  ➤ student support and services;
  ➤ scholarship and other financial assistance;
  ➤ grading;
  ➤ appeals of grades;
  ➤ student complaints and grievances; and,
  ➤ where applicable, supervision, preparation and examination of theses/dissertations.
- The development of curriculum and academic policies and standards includes appropriate participation by qualified academic staff and appropriate forms of consultation with students and external agencies.

6.2   Admissions, Student Recruitment and Transfer

The Institution has fair and ethical policies in place governing admissions and recruitment of students. The Institution has a systematic method for evaluating and awarding academic credit and clearly defined criteria for evaluating student learning and awarding course credit, and provides students with regular progress reports. The Institution has established policies and procedures that outline the process by which transfer of academic credit is awarded.

Criteria that will be used in assessing Admissions, Student Recruitment and Transfer:

- Public reports, materials and advertising are produced in a full, accurate and truthful manner, and student recruitment policies follow fair business practices including the advertisement of transfer arrangements;
- Admission policies are consistent with the organization's mission and academic goals and with the level of preparation necessary for student success at the post-secondary level in British Columbia, and are comparable to admission requirements for students entering similar degree programs at other degree-granting institutions in British Columbia;
- Policies for evaluating and awarding transfer credit are systematic and satisfy current program course requirements;
- Listing of any transfer arrangements with other institutions;
- Students are informed about the transfer credit arrangements currently in place; and,
- Policies for requesting transfer credit are systematic and consistent with those established for institutions currently within the British Columbia Transfer System.

6.3   Policies on Academic Freedom, Honesty and Integrity

The Institution maintains an atmosphere in which academic freedom exists and students and academic staff display a high degree of intellectual independence. The institution not only promotes a full and balanced treatment of the commonly-held academic body of knowledge, theories and opinions, but also encourages testing the limits of knowledge and communicating research findings and the implications of those findings to the academic community and beyond. Academic activity is supported by policies, procedures and practices that encourage academic honesty and integrity and respect the ownership rights of the creators of intellectual property whether faculty, employees or students. The institution has adopted formal ethical research standards as well as policies concerning the management of research funds. The institution has means and procedures for the enforcement of the above policies based on principles of natural justice.

Criteria that will be used in assessing Policies on Academic Freedom, Honesty and Integrity:

- A policy on academic freedom in which the applicant recognizes and protects the rights of individuals in their pursuit of knowledge and respects the right of individuals to communicate acquired knowledge and the results of research freely.

- When students or staff are asked to sign or adhere to a statement of faith and/or a code of conduct that might constitute a constraint upon academic freedom, a policy in which the institution:
  - ➢ notifies staff and students prior to employment or admission; and,
  - ➢ has adequate procedures in place to ensure the principles of natural justice are followed, in the event of alleged violations of any contractual arrangement concerning such required statement of faith and/or code of conduct.
- Appropriate policies pertaining to academic honesty and procedures for their enforcement.
- An appropriate plan for informing students and faculty about and ensuring their understanding of the policies and procedures concerning academic honesty.
- An appropriate policy on ownership of the intellectual property of employees and students.
- An appropriate policy on the management of research funds.
- Where appropriate, formal ethical research standards, as evidenced by policies on human research participants, the use of animals in research and the management of research funds.

7.   Student Policies and Services

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

Criteria that will be used in assessing Student Protection and Awareness:

- Prior to registration, students are provided with and confirm in writing their awareness of policies and procedures pertaining to:
  - ➢ admission requirements;
  - ➢ student withdrawal, dismissal and refund policies;
  - ➢ international students, including policies that ensure that international students meet program requirements for degree completion;
  - ➢ prior learning assessment;
  - ➢ entrance examinations;
  - ➢ other academic prerequisites;
  - ➢ credit transfer arrangements for incoming students;
  - ➢ credit transfer arrangements and recognition by other institutions;
  - ➢ method of course delivery;
  - ➢ academic honesty;

- ➢ intellectual property;
- ➢ student support services;
- ➢ scholarship and other financial assistance;
- ➢ grading;
- ➢ appeals of grades;
- ➢ student complaints and grievances;
- ➢ supervision, preparation and examination of theses/dissertations (where applicable);
- ➢ tuition refunds; and,
- ➢ arrangements in the event of institutional closure or program termination, including the financial methods the organization has selected to ensure the repayment of unearned funds (pre-paid tuition and fees owing to students).
- The student enrollment contract and related policies are consistent with the terms of conditions of ministerial consent.
- The institution has the capacity to ensure that academic records of students are secure.

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

Criteria that will be used in assessing Student Withdrawal, Dismissal and Refund Policies:

- The institution has clearly articulated and published policies and procedures regarding student withdrawal, dismissal and refund and makes them available to its students.
- The institution has policies and procedures regarding student withdrawal, dismissal and refund.

7.3   Student Life/Support Services
The Institution has the facilities, services and programs that provide support for students to be successful in their studies and to develop and grow in non-academic areas.

Criteria that will be used in assessing Student Life / Support Services:

- The institution has clearly articulated and published definitions, policies and procedures regarding student financial assistance, and makes them available to its students.
- The institution has policies, procedures and staff to administer student financial assistance programs and to assist students.
- The institution has staff who are experienced in advising students on academic performance and employment opportunities.
- The institution has other support services that facilitate student success typical of post-secondary degree-granting institutions.

Appendices

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.