

2022/23 QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS AUDIT COLLEGE OF NEW CALEDONIA

The Summary was prepared by the Degree Quality Assessment Board Secretariat using the Institutional Report, the Expert Panel Report, and the Response to the Expert Panel Report. The College of New Caledonia was one of four post-secondary institutions to undertake the Quality Assurance Process Audit in 2022/23.

Introduction

The Terms of Reference for the Degree Quality Assessment Board establish that audits will be based on information provided by public post-secondary institutions to ensure that rigorous, ongoing program and institutional quality assessment processes have been implemented.

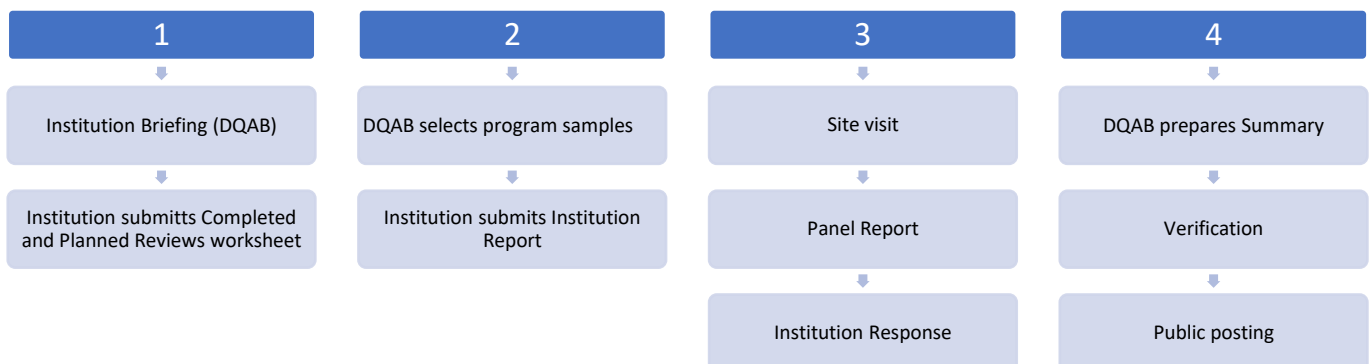
The main objectives of the quality assurance process audit (QAPA) are to ascertain that the institution:

- a) Continues to meet the program review policy requirements outlined in the DQAB's *Exempt Status Criteria and Guidelines* and the *Degree Program Review Criteria and Guidelines*, as applicable to the institution;
- b) Has and continues to meet appropriate program review processes and policies for all credential programs; and
- c) Applies its quality assurance process in relation to those requirements and responds to review findings appropriately.

The QAPA assessment is focused on answering questions in two categories:

1. Overall process
 - a. Does the process reflect the institution's mandate, mission, and values?
 - b. Is the scope of the process appropriate?
 - c. Are the guidelines differentiated and adaptable to respond to the needs and contexts of different units, e.g. faculties or departments or credential level?
 - d. Does the process promote quality improvement?
2. Review findings
 - a. Were the responses to the sample program review findings adequate?
 - b. Does the process inform future decision making?
 - c. Are the review findings appropriately disseminated?

Figure 1: QAPA Process



College of New Caledonia – Institutional Context

The College of New Caledonia (CNC or “the College”) is a regional college serving a geographical region of 117,500 sq. km with a population of approximately 150,000 people in the north central interior of the province. CNC consists of six campuses of varying sizes. Located on the traditional and unceded territory of the L’heidli T’enneh, the largest of CNC’s campuses is based in the City of Prince George, the metropolitan centre of the region with a population of approximately 76,000. The next largest campus is in the City of Quesnel with a population of just under 10,000. The remaining regional campuses are in Vanderhoof, Mackenzie, Burns Lake, and Fort St James respectively. The College region includes 22 First Nations, nine municipalities, and three school districts.

CNC is a comprehensive community college offering a wide range of developmental, career and vocational, trades and technologies, continuing education, and academic programs leading to a variety of credentials, including associate-certificates, certificates, diplomas, associate degrees, post-diplomas, and post-baccalaureate diplomas.

CNC’s Institutional Mandate is directed by the *College and Institute Act*. Under the Act, Education Council has the power to set curriculum content for courses leading to certificates, diplomas, or degrees. Education Council also advises the College Board on the draft implementation of courses and programs and the evaluation of programs and services.

Table 1: Student enrollment

	Undergraduate	Graduate	Degree Programs	Non-Degree Programs
Full-time equivalent (FTE)	3,223	N/A	508	2,715

Table 2: Program offerings

Credential Type	# of Programs
Diploma	17
Advanced Diploma ¹	3
Certificate	22
Developmental Certificate	16
Apprenticeship	14
Non-credential Program	3
Post-degree Program ²	1
Trades Foundations	13
Bachelor Degree ³	1
Associate Degree	11

- Notes:**
1. Encompasses post-Diploma credentials
 2. Encompasses Post-Baccalaureate Diploma credentials
 3. The Northern Collaborative Baccalaureate Nursing Program is offered in partnership with the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC), and the credential is issued by UNBC.

CNC is also guided by the province's mandate letter, the *2021-26 Strategic Plan*, and its new 2022 Academic Plan. These foundational academic pillars define and provide guidance for quality assurance mechanisms at CNC. This work is housed in the Centre for Teaching & Learning under the portfolio of the Vice President Academic.

CNC's Strategic Vision is grounded on the shared principles of Learning together, changing lives, creating futures:

- Ihulh whuts'odutel'eh (we will learn together);
- Ihk'enazdulkat (we change ourselves);
- nus'uztelelh (we will create the future).

Institution Self-Study

The QAPA review was initiated with an institution briefing on April 11, 2022. The briefing was conducted virtually by video conference. The briefing provides an overview of the QAPA process and the documentation institutions are requested to submit. At its meeting on July 22, 2022, the Quality Assurance Audit Committee reviewed the Completed and Planned Review worksheet submitted by CNC and selected the following for sampling: Dental Hygiene Diploma; Northern Collaborative Baccalaureate Nursing Program; and Aboriginal Studies (Associate of Arts and Certificate credentials).

Self-Evaluation Approach

The main issues on which CNC has focused in preparation for the QAPA include:

1. Understanding the current state of both the institutional and program-level quality assurance work happening across the institution;
2. Identifying strengths and opportunities for improvement in the existing policy framework;
3. Identifying opportunities to improve alignment and coordination across academic quality assurance work and existing institutional practices, including the clarification of roles and responsibilities;
4. Identifying strategies to support movement toward the desired future state.

At the direction of the Vice President Academic, the Centre for Teaching & Learning established an Academic Quality Assurance team. A formal Academic Quality task force was created to lead the development of a new Academic Quality policy framework and corresponding process documents. This group has taken a collaborative, consultative approach to self-study, as demonstrated through its engagement with executive, educational administrators, directors, faculty, and staff.

A QAPA Steering Committee was set up in the Spring of 2022 to guide and provide meaningful feedback and insight into the development of Academic Quality processes and practice at CNC in anticipation of QAPA. The membership includes:

- Vice President Academic (Chair);
- Dean, Teaching & Learning;
- Acting Regional Principal, Quesnel campus - Regional Campuses;
- Director, Student Services;

- Education Council Chair;
- Interim Director, Policy & Planning;
- Academic Advisor;
- Associate Dean, Arts & Social Services;
- Faculty, Aboriginal Studies;
- Executive Director, CNC Student Union;
- Manager, Planning & Institutional Research;
- Acting Registrar;
- Dean, School of Health Sciences;
- Project and Quality Assurance Coordinator; and
- Project Planner, Programs & Quality.

Quality Assurance Policy and Practices

All policies at CNC are developed under the two guiding Policy Frameworks for Administration and Education Council, respectively. CNC's quality assurance process is under re-development to more strongly reflect CNC's mission to provide access to lifelong learning and to facilitate the achievement of educational and personal goals. To support robust academic quality assurance work, CNC is taking a threefold approach:

1. Renewed commitment to the work, as shown by Quality Goal 1 in the *CNC Academic Plan 2022-2027*: "Develop and implement processes for curriculum creation and review that are responsive, agile, efficient, and considerate of the range of responsibilities and resources across the College."
2. Expansion of Academic Quality Assurance resources in the form of new positions added to Planning and Institutional Research and the Academic Quality Assurance team in the Centre for Teaching and Learning.
3. Ongoing consideration of resource requirements to lead and support the work.

The *Program/Discipline Area Review Policy* and Procedures were approved in 2015, and the *New Program Development Policy* was approved in 2005. While these policies exist, they have not been consistently applied as institutional standards across all schools/programs. Strong work has taken place through program-level practices. Program areas at CNC have independently taken part in quality assurance activities such as program self-studies, stakeholder and partner engagement and consultation, articulation committee work, accreditation activities, and ongoing data collection and analysis to inform decision-making.

As CNC builds on the direction in the new Academic Plan to provide relevant, quality, accessible, and flexible programming through a culture of innovation, collaboration, and support, CNC is actively looking for ways to improve program quality processes in a coordinated and collaborative way with faculty. Faculty scholarship at CNC informs teaching quality practices and relevant program updates and provides a foundation to support learning outcomes and student progress assessment. Faculty regularly engage in activities that both strengthen their practice as educators and enhance their subject-matter expertise.

The Centre for Teaching & Learning supports individual and group activities in professional development. Educational Developers, Educational Technology Specialists, and Curriculum

Developers offer individual consultations, coaching, and guidance to instructors and offer small group workshops on a variety of best practices in course design and delivery. In addition, the Centre for Teaching & Learning offers the Instructional Skills Workshop (ISW) and the Instructional Media Workshop (IMW) free of charge, both of which can be used for credit towards the BC Provincial Instructors Diploma. The addition of a Curriculum Developer, an Academic Quality Assurance team (with responsibilities for policy and procedures development and oversight and support of program/curriculum review processes), and a Work-Integrated Learning Coordinator has allowed faculty more opportunities to access expertise on course design and delivery, and to provide students a broader range of learning activities and assessments.

Program Development

The existing *New Program Development Policy* is currently under revision and development. The new policy will be an administrative policy of the Executive, not Educational Council. Currently there are two ways new programs are developed and implemented at CNC as per Education Council:

- Ministry of Advanced Education Funding
Generally reserved for targeted program areas such as Technologies and Health Sciences. It is often two to three years from conception and development of a program advisory committee to funding approval. Funding is usually approved in three stages: planning, development and implementation, and steady-state operating budget allocations. The Ministry weighs the College's request (and community/industry advocacy) against other requests from provincial institutions. Sonography is a recent example of a new Ministry-funded program.
- Internal and Cost-Recovery Funding:
The College has limited funding available for developing and implementing new programs, unless the program is designed as cost-recovery. Cost-recovery programs are developed by the School of Access and Continuing Education. The College occasionally provides development funding up-front, to be repaid by the program over time through its cost-recovery offerings.

Related to the revisions of the *Program Quality Assurance Policy* and procedures is the review of the *New Program Development Policy* and the creation of procedural documents. CNC is proposing the revision and development of:

- Program Development Policy
- Program Development Procedures
- Program Expansion Procedures
- Program Cancellation Policy

Program Review

CNC's *Program/Discipline Area Review Policy* and procedures was scheduled for review in 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic delayed the initiation of the review and revisions until 2021-2022 academic year. The existing policy and procedures show intention toward ensuring the effectiveness of programming services, responsiveness to student learning and progression, and adherence to labour market and social needs in the CNC community. The procedures outline the metrics used for the institutional assessment during a comprehensive review. Assessment areas include Content and Curriculum; Delivery; Articulation, Entry and Exit; Access, Enrollment and Retention; Faculty Professional Development; Admissions; Student

Supports; Costs; Student Outcomes; Students Satisfaction; Stakeholder Engagement; and Program Risks and Opportunities.

In addition to the actions taken by Education Council to ensure quality programming at CNC, the Office of the Vice President Academic has partnered with the Planning & Institutional Research office to develop a Program Health Indices tool. Over the past several years educational administrators have used data provided by the Planning & Institutional Research office to monitor and internally report on academic quality. The tool is now being revised as part of redevelopment processes, and it will articulate key performance metrics for CNC programs. It will complement the institutional accountability performance metrics that are published annually to the Ministry, and it will further expand the understanding of a program's performance in alignment with CNC's Strategic Plan, academic plan, and program review policy and processes.

QAPA Review

The QAPA panel conducting the assessment were Beverlie Dietze, panel chair, and panel members Laurie Rancourt and David Wells. The site visit held at the Prince George campus on November 3-4, 2022. Dao Luu, a member of the DQAB Secretariat also attended. The QAPA panel submitted its report on November 23, 2022. The panel report provided commendations, affirmations and recommendations.

Commendations are areas where the institution has shown exemplary practice. Areas of exemplary practice:

1. College of New Caledonia's Commitment to Continuous Improvement

Throughout the Self-Study document and during the site visit, the Panel observed that the College employees exhibited a sense of excitement around the new focus on continuous improvement. The Panel recognized this as a strength, particularly when considering the dispersed geographic locations of the campuses, and the ongoing work that will be required to develop the tools and provide the professional learning around quality assurance, to ensure that benchmarks are identified and evaluated on an ongoing basis across the institution. As well, there is a need to ensure that the accountability processes are implemented.

The Panel noted both in the Self-Study and during the site visit that CNC employees are realistic about their current practices, gaps, and areas of development that are required. The Panel was impressed by the authentic engagement that was demonstrated by all who were involved in the process. It would appear as though the group has strong skills in reflective practice. The CNC group clearly articulated that they are in their infancy phase of the journey and that it will take a commitment for the leadership team to work with all employees across their campuses in viewing quality assurance as part of their culture. They recognize the need for CNC to take time to develop and implement the processes, and to continue to make investments in human and financial resources to advance quality assurance processes.

2. Program Quality Assurance Policies, Processes and Frameworks

CNC is developing an array of tools, resources, and policies that are intended to support faculty and administrators in their continuous improvement processes. The Panel commends CNC for creating tools that will provide consistency for the quality assurance process across all campuses, departments, and programs.

The Panel noted the support that the Centre for Teaching and Learning extends to faculty engaged in program review and continuous improvement. It was evident throughout the site visit that the Centre for Teaching and Learning Centre employees contribute significantly to faculty development and program quality in guiding program and curricula development, program review, and in the creation of quality teaching and learning experiences. The Panel noted that the College intends to develop resources that will support faculty preparing submissions for accreditation of programs.

3. Data Informed Practices

The Panel noted that the College is adopting Student Enrolment Management (SEM) strategies, which is a best practice. We encourage CNC to continue with these initiatives.

4. Budget Allocations

During the site visit, the CNC group spoke of its intention to develop resource planning tools and processes which are consistently informed by data from the SEM and Quality Assurance processes; and to align the overall planning and budgetary processes with the SEM and QA ones. The Panel commends CNC for these initiatives and for recognizing the need to annually invest in its SEM and QA processes. Having a budget line reinforces the institution's commitment to a continuous improvement model and reinforces to faculty and the leadership team, its importance within the college culture and community. We support this direction and encourage the leadership team to continue to move this forward by making it standard practice.

Affirmations are areas where the institution has identified weaknesses and intends to correct it. Areas the institution identified for improvement:

1. Policies and Procedures

CNC identified, both in their Self-Study and during the site visit, gaps in the policies and processes. They also illustrated some internal strategies that have been initiated to begin to develop an informed, focused approach to address many of those gaps. The Panel supports this work and encourages CNC to create coordinated strategies for the development and implementation of policies across the institution.

Additionally, while the Panel recognizes that continuous improvement is always a work in progress, we encourage CNC to ensure that the end state is clear from the outset. As such, the Panel strongly recommends that CNC establish policies and goals with clear expectations of what would be required of an institution with fully developed quality assurance processes. This may mean that the institution will fall short of some of these expectations in the early years while capacity is developed. That said, the Panel believes that it is better to have definitive policies that require action, than permissive policies that need to be revised continually to align with the performance capacity of the institution.

Each policy must also clearly identify any other policies or procedures with which it shares interdependencies. The Panel recommends that a document be available for employees that illustrates which policies and procedures are dependent on each other.

2. Policy Repositories

CNC acknowledged during the site visit, that they currently have an inadequate process for cataloguing and archiving institutional policies and documentation relevant to the program lifecycle and quality assurance processes. Based on the evidence provided, the Panel agrees with this observation and encourages CNC to continue its development of a centralized

cataloguing and archiving system which will provide faculty, staff, and administrators with consistent access to a repository of current and historical documentation.

3. Program Review Cycle and Schedule

As identified in the Self-Study report and during the site visit, CNC acknowledged that establishing a formal program review cycle that includes external reviewers is beneficial to programs. This process supports faculty in examining and reviewing their programs in-depth and may potentially lead to new thinking about program delivery and content that may further enhance opportunities for program development. Having the external reviewers as part of the process provides different perspectives for faculty to consider in curriculum and program delivery.

CNC has also indicated that a developmental program review and renewal schedule is needed by the institution. This would move CNC away from a reactive change to programs that is conducted much later in the program lifecycle. This is a valuable objective for ensuring timely and equitable quality assurance processes across the institution and the Panel supports this initiative. The Panel encourages CNC to develop a review schedule that is manageable and that ensures the timely review of all CNC programs. The Panel recommends that some flexibility be built into the schedule that will allow for adjustments when issues emerge that require the occasional off-cycle review of specific programs.

4. Program Advisory Committees

As outlined in the Self-Study and during the site visit, CNC recognized the importance of having Program Advisory Committees (PAC) for all programs as they provide input on currency and relevancy of curricula, learning experiences and the necessary job-ready skills required of graduates in their respective programs. The administration acknowledged the need to implement and maintain active advisory committees across all programs and recognized that there are current gaps in this regard. The Panel encourages CNC to continue to engage in this important work and provides an additional PAC recommendation below.

Recommendations are areas needing improvement. The panel identified the following areas:

1. Advancing a Shared Understanding of Quality Assurance Standards Based on the QAPA Standards Manual

As CNC acknowledged during the site visit, through the creation of their QAPA Self-Study they have developed a more in-depth understanding of their current state and have begun the work to create a strong foundation of evidence-based quality assurance practices on which to base continued improvements going forward.

The Panel recommends that CNC continue to utilize their Self-Study with the QAPA standards as a frame of reference to develop a detailed gap analysis and a related action plan for continuous improvement. The Panel recommends that the action plan identify measurable and targeted outcomes, clear timelines, and accountabilities for advancing quality assurance processes.

The Panel further recommends that CNC draw upon the content of the QAPA report over the next year, and use it (combined with new knowledge gained from the process) to develop an action plan that is used to advance the quality assurance culture across the institution. The Panel recommends that the quality assurance process be extended to service areas that influence student learning and program quality such as Student Services and IT and that the evaluation of services be included in the scope of quality assurance.

The Panel further recommends that the adopted policies and processes be implemented equally across all campuses and programs to ensure consistency in approach.

2. Data integration and committee alignment

The Panel recommends that CNC determine the types of data that will be used to inform decision making and how and why that data supports the quality assurance processes. For example, identify how data from institutional surveys such as feedback from students, employers, graduates, PACS, and BC outcomes will be used to inform program quality and continuous improvement strategies.

It will also be important to ensure strong connections and alignment among the work of the Institutional Research team, the work of the SEM related teams and committees, and the work of the Centre for Teaching and Learning related teams, to ensure consistency in processes and to avoid the potential for duplication or conflicting efforts. In line with the Recommendation below on effective communication practices, this could also include the development of schematics that illustrates how the role of each committee informs the quality assurance process.

3. Program Mapping

Program mapping is a complex process that is foundational to program development, review, and revisions. The Panel recommends that CNC develop and implement a comprehensive program mapping framework that is consistently applied across all programs. This may require CNC to invest in providing the necessary professional development on program mapping to those responsible for leading and guiding the process.

4. Repositories

Institutional repositories increase the transparency, evidence and accountability actions taken to address quality assurance practices. As outlined above, the Panel recommends that CNC design and implement archival tools and processes which ensure consistent retention and curation of policies, procedures, and reports. Furthermore, having one centralized repository will provide the means to track the consistent implementation of and compliance with quality assurance processes and timelines. The Panel recommends during the development process that a matrix be established that identifies the levels of access extended to the various employee groups.

The Panel also notes that CNC is currently examining an automated workflow (software application) to track the development, approval and maintenance of programs and curriculum. The Panel also strongly supports this initiative.

5. Program Advisory Committees

Program Advisory Committees offer colleges input on currency and relevancy of curricula, learning experiences and the necessary job-ready skills required of graduates in their respective programs. The Panel recommends that Program Advisory Committees be established or reconstituted for all programs as soon as possible. The Panel also recommends that there be a common Terms of Reference for Program Advisory Committees and it encourages CNC to create templates for agendas and minutes.

The Panel encourages CNC to maintain this commitment to ensuring that active advisory committees are in place for all programs on an ongoing basis.

6. Indigenous Ways of Being, Doing and Knowing

Based on the commitment in CNC's strategic plan to integrate specific indigenous objectives across all four of the strategic goals, the Panel recommends that CNC draw upon the expertise

of faculty in the Aboriginal Studies diploma, Indigenous knowledge-holders within the CNC team, and the Yinka Dene Council to support quality assurance policies and processes from an Indigenous lens. The Panel further recommends that advice be acquired from Indigenous groups at the onset of any new program development or policy changes to ensure that practices align with the objectives outlined in the strategic plan.

7. Communication Strategies

The process of communicating new or revised policy and process change requires an effective and comprehensive strategy so that messages are clear and consistent.

The Panel recommends that CNC create, and make accessible, user friendly resources and tools that support employees in understanding the depth and breadth of the College's quality assurance processes. As well, the Panel recommends that communication strategies identify the roles and responsibilities of all members of the college community in the advancement of quality assurance processes across the institution and in the creation of a quality culture and mindset.

8. Program Review Cycles

Establishing a schedule for program review cycles supports programs in examining aspects of their program on an annual basis that then informs the intensive review process. Having this as part of the planning process informs budgets and workloads. The Panel recommends that CNC establish the schedule of each program review. This may help to determine what is realistic for the program review cycle, given human and financial resources. The Panel recommends that an external review process (with panel membership from outside CNC) becomes part of the intensive program review and that the annual reports and actions taken are incorporated into the program review process.

CNC provided a response on March 10, 2023 that included an action plan to address the recommendations.