2019/20 QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS AUDIT
DOUGLAS COLLEGE

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. Douglas College was one of four public post-secondary institutions to undertake the Quality Assurance Process Audit in 2019/20.

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.
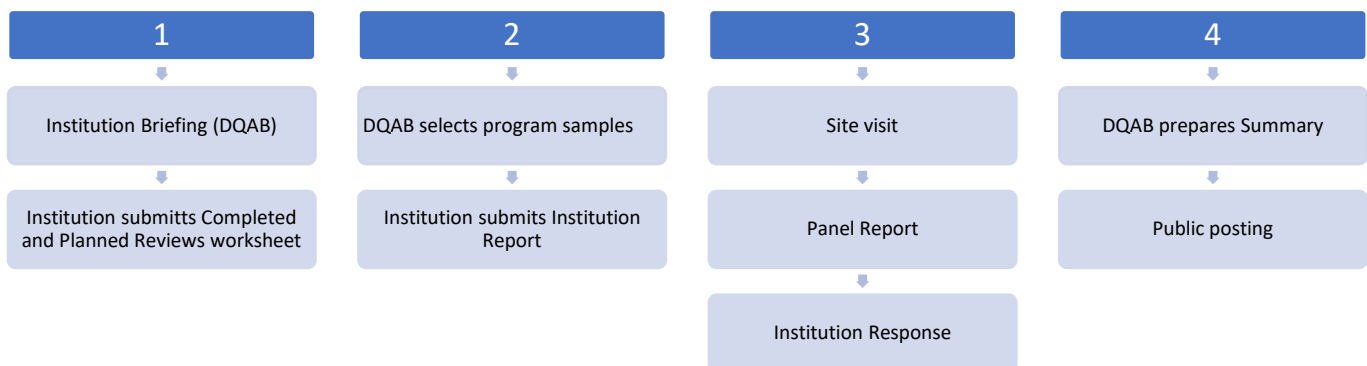
The main objectives of the quality assurance process audit (QAPA) are to ascertain that the institution:
   a) Continues to meet the program review policy requirements outlined in the DQAB's *Exempt Status Criteria and Guidelines* and the *Degree Program Review Criteria and Guidelines,* as applicable 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

1	2	3	4
Institution Briefing (DQAB)	DQAB selects program samples	Site visit	DQAB prepares Summary
Institution submitts Completed and Planned Reviews worksheet	Institution submits Institution Report	Panel Report	Public posting
		Institution Response	

Douglas College – Institutional Context

The mission of Douglas College (Douglas, the College) is to inspire its students to do what they love and be good at it. Douglas provides educational experiences that challenge and enlighten, and that open doors to lives of passion and purpose. Its Vision is to be recognized as providing the most inspiring and relevant undergraduate educational experience in BC, filling a niche between universities and colleges by combining the academic foundations of a university with the employer-ready skills of a college.

Table 1: Student enrollment (2018-2019)

	Undergraduate	**Graduate**	**Degree Programs**	**Non-Degree Programs**
Full-time equivalent (FTE)	11,345	0	1,537	9,808

The College delivers programming across two campuses in New Westminster and Coquitlam as well as through five training centres.

Table 2: Program offerings (2018-2019)

Credential Type	# of Programs
Post-Graduate Diploma	3
Post-Baccalaureate Diploma	8
Post-Degree Diploma	17
Bachelor's Degree	12
Associate Degree	31
Diploma	31
Advanced Certificate	4
Certificate	35

Institution Self-Study

The Douglas QAPA review was initiated with an Institution Briefing on May 1, 2019 at the New Westminster campus. The Institution Briefing provides an overview of the QAPA process and the documentation institutions are requested to submit.

At its meeting on July 31, 2019, the Quality Assurance Audit Committee reviewed the Completed and Planned Review worksheet submitted by Douglas and selected three program reviews for sampling. The selected samples are those that the DQAB considers to be representative of various areas of the institution's educational activities. The program reviews selected were: Youth Justice Diploma; Creative Writing Department; and Sign Language Interpreting Diploma. Douglas submitted its Institution Report on October 29, 2019.

Self-Evaluation Approach

Lead responsibility for evaluating the College's readiness to undergo the QAPA process was assigned to Meg Stainsby, Special Projects Officer (SPO) within the Office of the President. The SPO worked on an ad hoc basis with members of the Office of the Vice President, Academic and Provost (VPA), including the VPA, Dr. Thor Borgford, his Executive Assistant (EA), Anne Gapper, and members of VPAC, particularly the Faculty Deans and Associate Deans, the Associate Vice President (AVP), Academic and Student Affairs, Sarah Dench, and members of the College's Office of Institutional Effectiveness, particularly the Manager of Business Intelligence and Data Analytics, Dawn Bains. The SPO submitted periodic progress reports to the College's SMT.

This Self-Study was written by the SPO, with input from members of VPAC; AVP, Academic and Student Affairs; AVP, Human Resources, Rebecca Maurer; VPA; President Dr. Kathy Denton.

To assess the effectiveness of the College's QA mechanisms, members of the VPAC team were engaged at several meetings in a detailed review of the existing (2010) Program and Service Review Policy and related procedures, leading to an extensive overhaul of both. The SPO also met individually with most Deans/Associate Deans, to verify and discuss recently completed Comprehensive Reviews in their Faculties; to assess where reports prepared for external accreditation/licensing bodies complemented and/or diverged from internal Comprehensive Review requirements, as appropriate; and to document the status of follow-up actions arising from completed reviews. A comprehensive inventory of programs and credentials, developed by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, was converted to a Schedule for Comprehensive Program Reviews by the EA, Office of the VPA, with support from the SPO. For baccalaureate programs, original Ministerial approval dates and expected program review timelines were confirmed via the DQAB (PSIPS) website.

Quality Assurance Policy and Practices

The College's quality assurance (QA) mechanisms, including several policies and procedures that apply to all credentialed programs and academic departments offering credit courses. Key policies include the following:
- *Curriculum Development and Approval Policy*
- *Program Approval Policy for New and Revised Credit Programs*
- *Program and Service Review Policy* (2010); now *Program Review Policy* (2019)
- *Program Advisory Committee(s) Policy*

The following initiatives also support quality assurance and practice:

- faculty professional development;
- scholarship and research initiatives; and
- student and program outcomes.

Program Development

The *Program Approval Policy for New and Revised Credit Programs* outlines the consultation and approval stages involved in developing new credit programs at Douglas College. Education Council has approval authority over the policy and the VPA has responsibility for its implementation.

New program development for non-degree and degree programs begins with a Concept Paper. The Concept Paper addresses labour market demand, budget implications, fit with institutional mandate, program mix and strategic directions, as well as fit with Ministry priorities. The Concept Paper also includes advice from industry, as warranted, although the requirement for a formal Concept Paper may be waived if industry/labour market demand for a new program is self-evident or the Ministry or another regulatory/funding body has requested the program. VPAC assesses the Concept Paper (or the rationale for its being waived) for fit with institutional mandate. With the support of VPAC and the VPA, the Concept Paper is submitted to SMT for consideration and approval.

Following approval at the Concept Paper stage, new program development moves to the Full Program Proposal (FPP) stage. Where development work is significant, time release and other resources are provided by the Office of the VPA. Faculty subject-matter experts undertake the work of program design and curriculum development, consulting with colleagues in other DDPs as necessary. Once the curriculum is mapped out and delivery methods are established, the program developers work with the Dean to determine the operational and capital resources required to offer the program. The Dean then consults with the VPA and members of the Finance Department to prepare a detailed budget. When this development work is done, the FPP (excluding the budget) moves first to its home department for feedback and support; then to Faculty Education Committee for feedback and support; then to the Faculty Dean for approval; then from the Faculty Dean to VPAC and Education Council (which may occur simultaneously), for input and approval. VPAC also receives the detailed budget for approval. Education Council considers input on program admission requirements via its Standing Committee on Admissions and Language Competency, and input on any new course content via its Curriculum Committee. With VPAC's support, the VPA moves the FPP and the budget to SMT for approval of the new program and the budget. Finally, with the approval of both SMT and Education Council, the College Board is asked to approve the creation of the new credential. Only after all necessary approvals are secured may a new program be launched and marketed.

Program Review

Updating of the 2010 Administration policy Program and Service Review and related procedures began in 2017 as a routine matter of scheduled review. In 2018, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, in consultation with members of the Vice President's Academic Council (VPAC), undertook to develop new Annual Review reporting tools, providing DDP members independent access to College data and taking advantage of data newly available through Course Evaluation surveys launched the previous year to assess student satisfaction in every credit course offered every semester. (Survey results are sent to faculty members immediately following their submission of final grades.) New Annual Review reporting templates were piloted in 2019. Together, these tools provide an efficient, evidence-based means for Chairs/Coordinators and Deans to monitor trends in enrolments, student satisfaction

and outcomes. Over time, as longitudinal data become available, these standardized reports should provide reliable early warning signs that could trigger an early Comprehensive Review.

In January 2019, revisions to the *Program and Service Review Policy* was approved by Senior Management Team (SMT), in consultation with VPAC, providing more prescriptive guidelines and templates. After further revision—including an overhaul of the Comprehensive Review documents and integration with the new Annual Review practices—SMT approved the fully revised policy, now identified as *A38: Program Review Policy* in May 2019.

The current policy builds on the strengths of the 2010 policy with the following key refinements:
- Service areas (e.g., bookstore), contract training and continuing education courses are no longer covered by the policy, although continuing education programs leading to a credential remain within scope.
- A timeline has been added for completion of each Comprehensive Review component.
- Examination of the experiential learning opportunities available to students, and student participation in these opportunities, has been expanded and given higher profile, consistent with the College's Strategic Plan and directions.
- Programs subject to accreditation or other external QA mechanisms may no longer automatically replace a policy-driven program review with a Self-Study written to specifications of the external body; in such cases, programs are now required to do a gap analysis and provide any components required by the College and not incorporated in the externally focused document.
- An external audit of the Self-Study report is now required as part of every Comprehensive Review; in the case of degree-level programs, the audit is to be provided by an External Review Panel (ERP) of two to three subject-matter experts. Dedicated funds have been set aside to support this change.
- A written response from the Vice President, Academic and Provost (VPA) is now required within 30 days of receipt of the ERP's Report.
- The DDP under review is now required to submit a written Implementation and Action Plan (IAP) outlining its proposed follow-through on recommendations, including timelines, within 45 days of receiving the VPA's response.
- The Dean is assigned responsibility for ensuring that IAPs and one-year follow up reports are submitted and shared with the VPA as warranted.
- All recommendations (from the Self-Study, the ERP's Report and the VPA) are now posted publicly on the College website, and Self-Studies are posted in full internally, accessible to all employees.

To enhance consistency among Comprehensive Reviews, the following templates and process documents have been created, expanded and/or updated as part of the policy update:
- Flowchart: Comprehensive Review Process
- Program Review Guidelines
- Self-Study (DDP Comprehensive Review Report) Template
- Sample Surveys: Current Students; Alumni; DDP Faculty; Cross-functional Areas (employees)
- ERP Membership Criteria
- VPA Response Template
- DDP Implementation and Action Plan Template

To preserve institutional records, completed Comprehensive Review documents are now being archived centrally in the VPA's Office.

Currency of curriculum is a major focus of program reviews. Under the College's *Curriculum Development and Approval Policy* (rev. 2017), each credit course offered at the College is to be reviewed regularly (not less frequently than once every five years). Curriculum review in turn is informed and influenced by many factors, including a DDP's evolving strengths in terms of faculty subject-matter expertise; faculty scholarly and creative activity and other professional development (PD); DDP participation in provincial articulation committees; curriculum alignment with College initiatives (e.g., Indigenization), resources (e.g., adoption of new distributed learning technologies) and planning (e.g., Strategic Plans); and, in the case of applied and career program areas, regular input from industry and employers via the PACs. Student feedback on the relevance and value of credit courses has been attained since 2017 through an online Course Evaluation tool, providing anonymous, aggregate evaluative data that can be analyzed in a variety of ways.

QAPA Review

The QAPA panel conducting the assessment were Dr. Robin Fisher, panel chair, and panel members Dr. Stephanie Chu and Dr. David Veres. The site visit was held on December 12 and 13, 2019. In addition to the panel, Ms. Dao Luu, a member of the DQAB Secretariat, also attended the site visit. The QAPA panel submitted its report on January 3, 2020. Douglas provided a response on April 6, 2020.

The panel concluded that the College has done a "great deal of work, and made real progress over the last several years, to develop and refine its quality assurance policies and processes. The recent new policy on program review is a marked improvement and the College is developing the processes to ensure that it is followed." The panel also noted its "overall positive impression of the commitment, collegiality and hard work that characterize Douglas College's approach to quality assurance and program review." The panel report provided commendations, affirmations and recommendations.

Commendations are areas where the institution has shown exemplary practice. Areas of exemplary practice:
- The College has developed policies and related procedures around program quality assurance. As an evolving process, reviews have involved increasing amounts of data and are more evidence based.
- The policies and procedures are being applied on the ground, as programs at Douglas College are going through the process of program review with, as would be expected, different programs at different stages in the process.
- We applaud the College for revitalizing and conducting annual reviews of all programs. The administration has worked to ensure that they are not terribly time consuming, as they are largely fact based, and that the annual reviews feed into the comprehensive reviews.
- Based on our conversations with them, faculty members at the program level appear to be engaged and see the review process as beneficial.
- We also saw positive, open relationships between faculty members and the administration (for example, in their shared responses to program reviews) in support of common goals.

- The college has developed and implemented a data-driven review process, and effectively communicated this to faculty, while providing significant support for its use.
- The work on implementing the recommendations arising from program reviews is progressing.
- We commend Douglas College's strong commitment and financial contribution to faculty development.
- Noteworthy, is the self-reflection in the self-study in which the institution is thoughtful about its work and clearly identified areas for improvement.

Affirmations are areas where the institution has identified weaknesses and intends to correct it. Areas the institution identified for improvement:
- We support the College's interest in working to make comprehensive program reviews more effective and utilizing the Annual Reviews to provide key trends and insight prior to Comprehensive reviews.
- Historic changes in personnel, communication challenges, unclear processes, omission of student input and costs, the perceived workload of program reviews, the establishment of policy, procedures, guidelines, sample surveys, templates and a program costing tool and standardized method for reporting are all concerns that Douglas College has taken steps to address future reviews. We support this approach to improvement.
- We agree with the decision to conduct a gap analysis between the requirements of accreditation reviews and College reviews of accredited and professionally approved programs. We affirm this approach as it both avoids duplication of effort and ensures that nothing is missed.
- We affirm the College's commitment, both philosophically and financially, to faculty PD. At the same time, we also agree that there could be better evaluation of the effectiveness of this program. Is it keeping faculty current in their field, is it resulting in better pedagogy and is it well aligned with the strategic plan and goals of the institution? We agree that thought should be given to assessing the outcomes of faculty PD.
- The College self-study indicates that it still has some work to do around follow up to program reviews and, where appropriate, the implementation of recommendations, establishing timelines and monitoring outcomes. We commend the College for its commitment to continue thinking about these areas.
- We support the College's interest in working to make the external reviews more effective and consistent.
- Comprehensive reviews may benefit and link to other areas within the organization (i.e. Education Council, other programs). Efforts to improve transparency of program review efforts and products to the College Community and publicly would better inform stakeholders and future reviews.

Recommendations are areas needing improvement. Areas for the panel identified for improvement:
- While committed to use of quantitative data the institution could be more systematic and less ad hoc in its data collection and use.
- The College is strongly encouraged to continue the discussion about developing a more systematic way of gathering evidence of quality assurance of teaching and learning and making the information more readily available beyond the individual teaching the course.

- We recommend that Douglas College devote some time to reducing the inconsistencies in policy development, particularly around policy review, and establish a consistent application of the policy review cycle (i.e. timeframe for review).
- Reporting and accountability of program review action plans could be more detailed and inclusive of all recommendations, accountability, performance metrics, and timelines up to the next review.
- The College should evaluate its resources, both funds and people, allocated to all the quality assurance activity and plan accordingly.
- Though initially unclear, we learned by the end of the site visit, that Douglas College has established learning outcomes at the course level. There is some variety among programs around the definition of learning outcomes. A next step would be a more systematic approach to assessing these learning outcomes.

Douglas acknowledged the recommendations in its response to the panel's report and outlined how it will address each of the recommendations.