

## 2017/18 QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS AUDIT OKANAGAN 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. Okanagan College was one of five public post-secondary institution volunteers to test the new Quality Assurance Process Audit during the pilot (2016-2018).*

### 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.

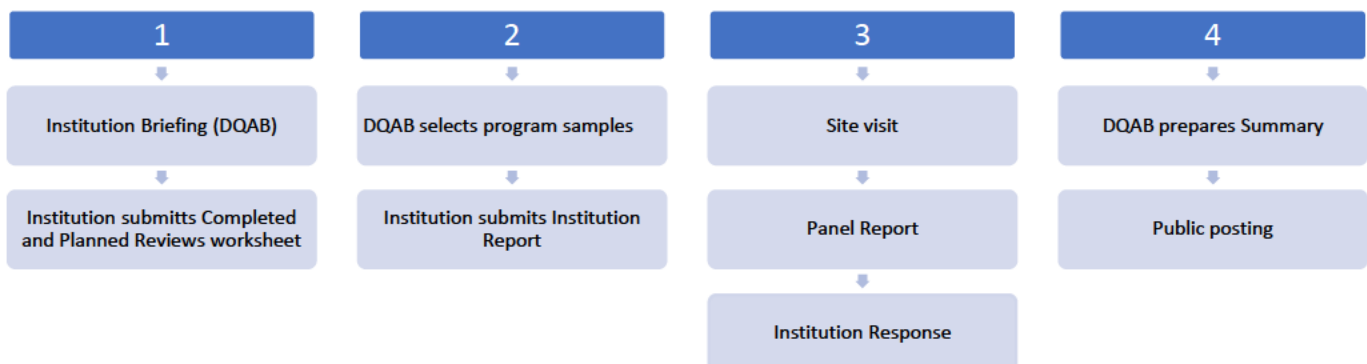
The main objectives of the quality assurance process audit (QAPA) are to ascertain that the institution:

- 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**



## Okanagan College – Institutional Context

OC is the largest college outside the lower mainland, with four unique campuses in the interior of the province including: Penticton, Kelowna, Vernon and Salmon Arm.

**Table 1: Student enrollment (2016-2017)**

	<b>Undergraduate</b>	<b>Graduate</b>	<b>Degree Programs</b>	<b>Non-Degree Programs</b>
<b>Full-time equivalent (FTE)</b>	8,432.4	n/a	764.3	7,668.1

OC offers a range of continuing education, developmental, career and vocational, trades and technologies, and academic programs leading to certificates, diplomas, associate degrees and applied bachelor degrees. It is one of B.C.'s largest trades training institutions.

**Table 2: Program offerings (2016-2017)**

Credential Type	# of Programs
Apprenticeship	22
Certificates and Diplomas	100
Associate Degree	2
Baccalaureate Degree	2
Total	126

## Institution Self-Study

The Okanagan College (OC) QAPA review was initiated with an Institution Briefing on April 3, 2017 at the Kelowna campus. The Institution Briefing provides an overview of the QAPA process and the documentation institutions are requested to submit.

At its meeting on May 24, 2017, the Quality Assurance Audit Committee reviewed the Completed and Planned Review worksheet submitted by OC and selected three program reviews for sampling. The programs reviews selected were: Bachelor and Diploma of Computer Information Systems; Culinary Arts; and Recreation Vehicle Service Technician. On August 31, 2017, OC submitted its Institution Report.

### Self-Evaluation Approach

At a Deans Forum meeting, the Vice President Education and the Director of Learning and Applied Research discussed the importance of collectively providing input and feedback related to the content of the self-study document. This feedback would allow for the varying perspectives from the four portfolios to be included in the self-study. The Director of Learning and Applied Research guided the process for the self-study for the QAPA. Key internal stakeholders from across the institution (the deans, associate deans, directors, Registrar, Manager of Institutional Research, library staff, Vice President Education, Vice President Students, and employees responsible for program development) were consulted to gain a

broad perspective on the policies and practices used in program development and review. Stakeholders also provided feedback on the opportunities for further development and on the strengths of the current program quality review processes.

The draft report was written by the Director of Learning and Applied Research, the Regional Dean North Okanagan, and the Dean of Science, Technology and Health. As the self-study report developed, the Vice President Education provided input to and feedback on the content.

### Quality Assurance Policy and Practices

Okanagan College has established operational processes for program development and review. The operational processes are guided by the Strategic Plan, the Long Term Education Plan, Deans Forum, the Education Council Committees' Terms of Reference, and the Program Review and Renewal Process.

The Long Term Education Plan (LTEP), approved by the Board of Governors in 2011, is connected to the Strategic Plan and influences program review processes. The LTEP is reviewed annually by Deans Forum to determine its relevancy. From there, an annual review of programs and the mix of programs in each portfolio occurs, followed by the development of the Annual Programming Plan document. The Annual Programming Plan outlines programming that will remain unchanged, planned changes to programs for the coming year, programming that may be discontinued, new programming initiatives that will not require base College funding, and programming that can be offered on revenue-generating basis. As part of this review, each of the Program Deans and supporting units provide an assessment and an update of their intent for future programming relative to the mission and core values of the College. The Annual Programming Plan is presented to Education Council for review and approved by the Board of Governors.

Under the direction of the Vice President Education and Vice President Students, Okanagan College's Deans Forum is a weekly meeting of the program deans, associate deans, regional deans, the registrar, and several directors. Deans Forum uses a consultative approach and shared decision-making model and is a central forum for program consultations, feedback, and support.

There are several Education Council Standing Committees that influence the program development and renewal process: the Curriculum Criteria and Calendar Committee, the Curriculum Proposal Review Committees (one for each portfolio: Business and Commercial Aviation, Trades and Apprenticeship, Arts and Foundational, Science, Technology and Health), and the Academic Regulations and Policies Committee.

Also supporting quality assurance and practice are:

- performance management systems for college professors and vocational instructors;
- professional development for all teaching employee; and
- learning outcomes at the course level.

## *Program Development*

Okanagan College follows a procedural process for new program development based on the template requirements set forth by Education Council and the Education Council Standing Committee, the Curriculum Proposal Review Committee.

The role of the dean and the dean's office in program development varies depending on the program being developed and the established internal and external strategies established within the portfolio office. Generally, when new programs are identified for development and during the development process, the dean and the department or program team in which the program falls work collaboratively through the various phases of development. The collaborative process may include discussions or guidance on the types of stakeholder input required, strategies for identifying labour needs and industry standards, curriculum themes, infrastructure requirements, competencies that

graduates should attain, and options for employment or additional education. The dean works with the Finance department to determine the operational budget. The program dean or the Director of Continuing Studies and Corporate Development brings the program proposal to Deans Forum for discussion. They also participate with the team at the Curriculum Proposal Review Committee and at Education Council meetings.

The development of a proposal for a new program may be initiated by faculty or instructors, a department, a dean or other college administrator based on information arising from internal or external sources. The proposal is a collaborative effort amongst various stakeholders and includes background information such as labor market demand and support of community or industry needs. External organizations such as a regulatory body, community employer or various government affiliates are consulted during the process depending on the program type. Consultation is key to the process so focus groups, key employers and interest groups are included to ensure the program is addressing community, social and labor market needs.

Once a draft proposal for a new program has been completed it is circulated to stakeholder groups within the College and feedback is provided to the person responsible for the proposal. Various stakeholder groups may provide written support for the proposal. The dean reviews the proposal and provides feedback prior to signing the proposal. The proposal is then submitted to the Curriculum Proposal Review Committee (CPRC) and to Deans Forum prior to submission to Education Council (EdCo) for approval. After approval at EdCo the proposal is submitted to the Board for final approval. New degree programs are submitted to the Degree Quality Assessment Board for ministerial approval.

## *Program Review*

The Program Review and Renewal Process (PRRP) is undertaken annually using a three-tier process. The intent of the PRRP is to ensure continuous quality improvement of the certificate, diploma and degree programs offered at Okanagan College. Essentially, every program is reviewed every year, and various elements can be examined at any time during the year. The complete PRRP includes annual statistical reviews of all programs (Tier I and Tier II) as well as a more detailed and comprehensive program review through the Tier III process conducted every five years for the degree programs and as deemed necessary by the results of the Tier I and II review for other programs. As well as using the Tier I and II data to identify programs

that may benefit from a Tier III process, any program chair may request the opportunity to undergo a Tier III process.

The **Tier I** process utilizes the data available in the College QlikView Program and Outcomes Dashboard tabs available through Institutional Research. The Program Dashboard data is a compilation of information obtained from the provincial Central Data Warehouse, the College Banner system, and Student Outcomes surveys. The information from each Dashboard is entered into the appropriate Tier I Program Review worksheet where the results are then examined to determine trends over the previous years and comparisons, where possible, to a provincial average. The Dashboard can be utilized for any program at any campus, at any time of the year to provide deans and departments with up-to-date information of the program, including historical comparisons. The historical comparisons are particularly important in order to surface trends or shifts.

The **Tier II** process is a follow-up to the Tier I review. For any performance measure that either did not meet or exceeded expectations in the Tier I Program Review worksheet, further analysis, possible causes, and corrective actions are identified, including associated timelines and costs for elements that are under expectations, and assessments to determine how a program exceeded expectations. Upon completion of the analysis of Tier II, a decision is made whether a full Tier III Program Review is required and if so, the timing for it. In general, the Tier I and II process follows a statistical process control (SPC) approach. SPC has been effectively used as a high value quality control and assessment tool in industry for decades; the PRRP attempts to apply this to an educational program framework on an annual basis. By knowing how a program normally behaves, based on history as well as external benchmark comparisons, deviations beyond a certain level can be flagged for detailed investigation by the department and dean. These deviations can be either positive or negative and it is just as important to the College to understand success as it is to investigate issues.

The **Tier III** Program Review Process is what would be termed a “full program review” at most other institutions. For degree programs, as required by the initial DQAB approval, a Tier III Program Review is normally conducted at least every five years, while non-degree programs are normally reviewed as dictated by the annual Tier I/II outcomes or as determined by the College. The Tier III process begins with the program staff engaging in a self-study process that includes conducting an environmental scan that examines strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, analysis, curriculum, infrastructure, accreditations, faculty, students and graduate perspectives, and industry and competitive analysis. The Tier III process is very comprehensive and time consuming to complete, and provides valuable information, assessment and recommendations for the College to consider.

All aspects of the PRRP are facilitated by the Learning and Applied Research Unit and supported by the Institutional Research Department. The Learning and Applied Research Unit compiles the data from the Tier I and Tier II reviews and presents the overall findings to the Deans Forum by January annually for discussions and actions as required. If the Tier II process recommends that a program engage in a Tier III review, follow-up discussions with the program dean and the Director of Learning and Applied Research occur to determine timing and process. During a Tier III review process, the Director of Learning and Applied Research supports the team conducting the self-study throughout the data collection and writing process. The external review is organized by the Learning and Applied Research Unit, and the Director of Learning and Applied Research is available to the external review team as required.

## **QAPA Review**

The QAPA panel conducting the assessment were Mr. Baldev Pooni, panel chair, and panel members Ms. Laurie Rancourt and Dr. Dean Hildebrand. The site visit occurred on October 25 and 26, 2017. A member of the DQAB Secretariat, Ms. Dao Luu, also attended the site visit.

The QAPA panel submitted its initial report on November 15, 2017. Following Okanagan College's review for factual errors, the panel finalized its report on January 31, 2018. OC provided a response on April 23, 2018.

The panel concluded that "Okanagan College has policies, procedures and a good track record of program reviews and continuous improvements of programs... and has provided evidence of a culture of continuous improvement of education throughout the institution."

The panel report provided commendations, affirmations and recommendations.

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

- Three-tiered program review policy/process. The Program Review Policy calls for all programs to be reviewed using the most recent data at the Tier 1 process, which identifies areas of concerns, and areas of exemplary practice; concerns can be addressed at the Tier 2 level. Best practices can be identified, celebrated and shared with the college community. The review process uses resources effectively for continuous improvement of programs.
- Commitment to continuous improvement and quality assurance. Within the strategic plan documents and throughout the site visit it was evident that the commitment to continuous improvement and quality assurance is a shared value. From the executive level presentation in the first session, to the dialogue with faculty and other members of the Okanagan team, the passion for making sure that programs are meeting student and industry needs shone through.
- Program Advisory Committees. OC has 28 active Program Advisory Committees (PAC) that individually support one or more programs. In addition to supporting students and their success, the PACs are a means of accountability for OC for relevance, currency and quality of programs.

Affirmations are areas where the institution has identified weaknesses and intends to correct it.

Areas the institution identified for improvement:

- Deans' accountability & internet posting. Deans are accountable for reporting on progress of Tier 3 reviews via the Director of Learning & Applied Research at Deans Forum. Reports of the Tier 3 reviews are posted on the OC intranet with access to all employees. The posted programs should be extended to include programs, which have gone through external program accreditation. Finally, OC should consider posting all Tier 1 and 2 reports to the website.
- Consistency in program reviews & greater buy-in. Consistency in Program Reviews & Greater Buy-In. OC outlines areas for improvements by:
  - Providing onboarding for all from faculty to deans to gain a better understanding of the review processes and consistency in the depth of analysis.
  - Defining more consistent timelines for the self-study and dean's reporting and accountability (templates & timelines) at Deans Forum.

- Supporting faculty to become more proficient in writing course and program level learning outcomes.

Recommendations are areas needing improvement. Areas for the panel identified for improvement:

- Inconsistencies in Program Review policy and Procedure: the panel noted a few inconsistencies between the policy and demonstrated practice, which requires a review and rectification. For example, the policy and procedure are currently included in the one document “Program Review & Renewal Framework”. The Panel agrees with OC to separate the two documents. This enables fine-tuning of the procedure without having to go through a policy approval.
- Seven-Year Tier 3 Review Cycle: the Panel interprets that the Policy indicates that all programs are to be reviewed using the Tier 3 process on a seven-year cycle, except programs which undergo an external accreditation review. OC should ensure that all programs undergo a Tier 3 review on a cyclical review schedule. A draft plan for cyclical review of all programs should be created.
- Consistency of Tier 3 Reviews: the panel recommends that OC consider making mandatory the requirement to engage Learning and Applied Research unit for the Tier 3 process in order to leverage its capacity and to ensure a more streamlined and standardized review and reporting process. The panel also recommends that OC consider implementing additional standardized tools and processes to support better consistency.
- Closing the loop on the Tier 3 Review cycle: as it is currently outlined in the policy and procedure document, and as it has been implemented in practice based on the examples provided in the self-study, the Tier 3 Review process appears to end with the submission of the external review teams’ report. While follow-up on recommendations made appears to be ensured through operational processes such as annual unit planning and Deans Council planning, there is no evidence of a formal follow-up component with identified compliance monitoring processes. The panel suggests that OC articulate the review process as an ongoing cycle, rather than a process with a beginning and an end. We also recommend the addition of a formal requirement to respond to the external review teams’ report. This should include the creation of a standardized report and action plan template (with clear objectives, expected costs, accountability for completion, and timelines) that links the Self-Study Report and External Review Report. The action plan document with accompanying progress reports should be included as part of the supporting/background documentation for subsequent program review processes.
- Standardized program mapping: based on the panel’s review of the OC self-study report, programs generally have learning outcomes, but it appears that program-level goals do not exist in all cases. The panel highly recommends that OC implement a standardized program mapping process and template, demonstrating the link between program outcomes/goals to course learning outcomes. The panel further recommends that OC ensure that program mapping is in place prior to commencing any Tier 3 review process.
- New Program Development Policy: as part of the self-study, OC provided a copy of a draft new program development policy. The panel would like to stress the importance of proceeding with the formal adoption of such a program development policy.

Okanagan College acknowledged the recommendations in its response to the panel’s report and provided an action plan addressing each of the recommendations.