Supporting Quality Assurance in Alberta Institutions

Campus Alberta Quality Council

Alberta Colleges and Institutes Faculty Associations
Edmonton, AB

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Peter Mahaffy and Art Quinney
CAQC Co-Chairs

Marilyn Patton

Director of CAQC Secretariat

Campus Alberta
Quality Council

- Why is Quality Assurance Important?
- Alberta Post-Secondary Institutions
- Overview of CAQC
- Recent Initiatives and Future Directions

Why is Quality Assurance Important?

1. Consistent and coherent educational program standards
2. Ensure high quality student experiences
3. Student mobility
4. Internationally competitive work force
5. Institutional reputation

A Crucial Role for Faculty!

ACIFA promotes the professional and economic well being of college and technical institute faculty in the interest of advancing the quality of post-secondary education in Alberta.

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Alberta's Six Sector Model (Publicly Funded Institutions)						Other Institutions Offering Degrees
Comprehensive Academic and Research Institutions	Baccalaureate and Applied Studies Institutions	Polytechnical Institutions	Comprehensive Community Institutions	Independent Academic Institutions	Specialized Arts and Culture Institutions	Non-resident Institutions
• Athabasca University (Athabasca) • University of Alberta (Edmonton) • University of Calgary (Calgary) • The University of Lethbridge (Lethbridge)	• Grant MacEwan University (Edmonton) • Mount Royal University (Calgary)	• Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (Edmonton) • Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (Calgary)	• Bow Valley College (Calgary) • Grande Prairie Regional College (Grande Prairie) • Keyano College (Fort McMurray) • Lakeland College (Vermillion) • Lethbridge College (Lethbridge) • Medicine Hat College (Medicine Hat) • NorQuest College (Edmonton) • Northern Lakes College (Lesser Slave Lake) • Olds College (Olds) • Portage College (Lac La Biche) • Red Deer College (Red Deer)	• Ambrose University (Calgary) • St. Mary's University (Calgary) • Burman University (Lacombe) • Concordia University of Edmonton (Edmonton) • The King's University (Edmonton)	• Alberta College of Art & Design (Calgary) • Banff Centre (Banff)	• Andrews University (Lacombe) • Cape Breton University (Edmonton) • City University of Seattle (Calgary and Edmonton) • Cornell University (Calgary and Edmonton) • Gonzaga University (various locations) • La Sierra University (Lacombe) • Simon Fraser University (Grande Prairie) • Queen's University (Calgary and Edmonton) • University of Northern British Columbia (Grande Prairie) • University of Portland (Edmonton)

Alberta's Post-Secondary Institutions:
Six Sector Model of Institutional Differentiation

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Overview of Campus Alberta Quality Council

1. Establishment of CAQC
2. Mandate of CAQC
3. CAQC Core Principles
4. CAQC Operating Principles
5. Degree Program Approval Process
6. System Coordination Review
7. CAQC Program Quality Review
8. CAQC Monitoring Role
9. Importance of Peer Review
10. CAQC Continuous Improvement

1. Establishment of CAQC

- Established in 2004 as a result of an anticipated large expansion of undergraduate degree programs in the province

- 11 person, expert panel appointed by the Minister for 3 year terms

- Members are highly respected academics from within Campus Alberta and outside the province

- Members come from diverse backgrounds and most have senior academic administrative experience

- CAQC is supported by a small secretariat

2. Roles & Mandate of CAQC

- **CAQC is an arms-length QA agency**
  - Recommends to the Minister of Advanced Education on new degree applications in Alberta
  - Legislated by the *Post-secondary Learning Act (PSLA)* and the Programs of Study Regulation (91/2009)
- **CAQC's Mandate and Roles document outlines the Minister's and Council's responsibilities and accountabilities**

2. Roles & Mandate of CAQC *continued*

- Recommend to the Minister on all new degrees to be offered in Alberta by public, private and non-resident institutions (other than degrees in divinity).

- Monitor degree programs approved on its recommendation to ensure its standards of quality continue to be met

- CAQC works proactively with institutions and sectors to support and nurture the development and implementation of robust QA processes and procedures

3. CAQC Core Principles

1. The **best interests of learners** are at the core of Council's activities as it assesses proposed degree programs and monitors the quality of existing degree programs

2. Council's **standards** are appropriate to the nature and degree level of programs and are comparable to national and international standards. Council encourages innovation and creativity in degree programming when there is a demonstrated benefit to learners.

3. Council recognizes that the **prime responsibility** for academic and institutional quality assurance rests with degree granting institutions themselves.

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3. CAQC Core Principles *continued*

4. Council respects the foundational role of **academic freedom** in the provision of high quality degree programs.

5. **Peer evaluation** is an essential component of Council's evaluation of degree programs.

6. **Consultation with stakeholders** is an integral part of degree program development, appraisal and monitoring.

7. Council exhibits and promotes appreciation of **institutional diversity** and respect for **institutional autonomy**.

4. CAQC Operating Principles

8. Council exhibits and promotes **equity, openness, transparency, and efficiency** in all its practices and policies.

9. Where appropriate, Council applies **iterative processes** with institutions to clarify and improve degree programs.

10. Members and peer reviewers act in ways that build **trust** in Council's processes and decisions.

11. Members and peer reviewers act **autonomously** and in accordance with **ethical standards**, and abide by Council's code of conduct, which includes provisions on conflict of interest.

4. CAQC Operating Principles *continued*

12. Council is committed to the **quality assurance review** of its own activities and to sharing effective practices in degree program quality assessment.

5. Degree Program Approval Process

- Organizational Evaluations - for institutions offering degree programs for the first time, or degree programs at a new level
- Program Evaluations
  - Stage 1: System Coordination Review
  - Stage 2: CAQC Review
  - Decision by the Minister

6. System Coordination Program Review

- The Ministry reviews all credit program proposals for:

  - Fit with mandate of the institution

  - Fit with the Comprehensive Institutional Plan (CIP) and priorities in the Campus Alberta Planning Framework

  - Relationship to existing programs

  - Evidence of consultation with other institutions, professional/regulatory bodies, industry, employers, graduate studies

  - Results of student and economic demand analyses

  - Proposed financing/sustainability

7. CAQC Program Quality Review

- Faculty and staff
- Academic policies
- Resource capacity
- Credential recognition
- Program delivery
- Program content
- Program structure
- Program evaluation
- Regulation and accreditation

Mechanisms: Fully/partially expedited review

8. CAQC's Monitoring Role

- Review of reporting of implementation of new programs
- Review of annual reporting
- Conduct comprehensive evaluation after 6 years of offering first degree program
- Conduct other periodic reporting
- Review and comment on cyclical internal institutional reviews
- Audit of internal QA of CARI institutions is done in partnership with these institutions
  - Consideration being given to whether and when this might apply to institutions in other sectors in Alberta
- CAQC can recommend the rescinding of ministerial approval to offer a degree program

9. Importance of Peer Review

- CAQC itself is a peer review council of experts
- Encouragement (and guidelines) for institutions in the system to appropriately use peer review in their own QA processes. (In light of CAQC's core operating principle)
- Council recruits and selects external peer reviewers for Council reviews
- Feedback from reviewers and institutions

10. CAQC Commitment to Continuous Improvement

- Annual Feedback from all institutions and reviewers
- CAQC 360 Degree Review in 2007
- CAQC Ministerial Review in 2011
- Annual self examination of CAQC processes
- Government of Alberta agencies, boards, and committees review in 2016 - 2017

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Recent Initiatives in AB and Beyond

- ## CAQC Initiatives
  - Joint Audit Pilot Project with CARI institutions
  - Collaboration with Polytechnic and BASI institutions regarding scholarly activity expectations
  - Engaged and active learning (importance of learning outcomes)
  - QA workshop for the System, jointly organized with CARI institutions (2015)
  - Learning Outcomes Forum for the System, jointly organized with ACAT and the Ministry (2016)

Recent Initiatives in AB and Beyond

- **Monitoring Effective Practices Elsewhere**
  - Council on Ontario Universities Conference on Learning Outcomes Assessment
  - QA agencies in other provinces and international bodies
  - Council of Ministers of Education, Canada
  - International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education

Future Directions – Collaborative Initiatives

- Fuller use of learning outcomes and their assessment
- Development of indicators of teaching effectiveness
- Refine expectations for scholarly activity in different sectors (Boyer's model)
- Support QA efforts of institutions through workshops, webinars, etc.
- Audits of QA processes
- Further discussions with AB faculty & post-secondary students about QA of degree programs
- CAQC role in indigenization of programs

www.caqc.gov.ab.ca

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HANDBOOK:

Quality Assessment and Quality Assurance

First Edition - February 2009
with revisions to April 2015

Discussion - Quality Assurance: Working Together

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Thank You!

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