



Loyalist College's Response to PQAPA

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## **Background:**

On October 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> 2007, our Program Quality Assurance process was audited by a Review Panel from OCQAS, and the subsequent report provided some directions for the improvement to our internal processes, some of which were implemented in the application of the current model.

While the audit team expressed support for the “Framework for Program Review” process that Loyalist had developed and implemented in 2005-2006, the recommendations section of the audit did observe that the “existing FPR process though deemed thorough is seen as quite onerous or labour-intensive thus potentially challenging the ultimate sustainability of the undertaking. It is recommended that the process be continuously reviewed with an eye to streamlining the data gathering and analysis phases.”

The audit team recommendations also sought more formal student input, the inclusion of a role for Academic Managers throughout the process, the need for input from the various Academic Support Services, and a “more formal and consistent mechanism to utilize the various KPI data in the FPR process”.

While Criteria 1, 2, 3, were “Met” the audit team reported that a number of elements of Criteria 4 and 5, were only “Partially Met”, so there was a recognition that while we enjoyed a good deal of success in our Quality Assurance work, there was substantial room for improvement.

Given this feedback, and input from a number of program teams which had been engaged in the existing Program Review and Re-visioning processes, a recommendation for a revised approach to Program Quality Assurance Review was developed, reviewed by the Academic Management Team (AMT), with input from a number of Program Coordinators whose Program Teams were engaged in Program Review, and the College’s senior management team (MPGX), and has now been implemented for programs subject for review in 2008/2009.

In developing this revised model, we have been mindful of our requirement to meet the five (5) criteria defining exemplary college program quality assurance processes, outlined in the Orientation Manual for Program Quality Assurance

Process Audit (OCQAS, 2007), reviewed other PQAP models and some relevant literature in the field of Educational Quality Assurance.

The revised process is a reflective, evidence-based process that supports our ongoing institutional focus on student learning and student success, that is a sustainable (time-frame and financial support required) process of continual quality improvement across our academic programs and services, that is owned by the individual Divisions and program teams, and respects their understanding of their programs and disciplines, includes a broad range of stakeholder opinion (analysis of KPI data, focus groups etc.), and that leads to clear recommendations on how Divisions and teams can improve their programs according to the five OCQAS criteria on a continual and ongoing basis.

This process also recognizes that most (if not all) programs review and revise curriculum and assessment practices in accordance with formal changes to program standards and graduate outcomes, new legislation and/or guidelines, and to meet the perceived changes within their discipline or industry, on a regular and ongoing basis (typically during the May/June period). Program teams also work hard to build and maintain their relationships with their Program Advisory Committees and other stakeholders from their respective industries and disciplines, and gather a variety of feedback from students and graduates (either formal or informal). It also recognizes that several program teams, (Television and New Media, Advertising, and Broadcast Journalism) have piloted innovative Program Review and Quality Assurance models that we can regard as being examples of best practice that can be shared as we move forward.

Our goal in revising the PQA process is to recognize and support all of the excellent program review and quality assurance work done by Divisions/Schools, and Program Teams, and to provide a simple and sustainable framework for the formalization and documentation their ongoing program review and quality assurance processes, as well as guidance and support for the continual improvement of these processes.

## **The Process:**

As previously stated, the work of the Schools and Program Teams must be undertaken in the context of the five criteria “defining exemplary college program quality assurance processes”.

**Criterion 1:** Admission, credit for prior learning, promotion, graduation, and other related academic policies support program development and student achievement of program learning outcomes.

**Criterion 2:** Programs conform to the *Framework for Programs of Instruction* and the Credential Framework, are consistent with accepted college system nomenclature/program titling principles, and maintain relevance.

**Criterion 3:** Methods of program delivery and student evaluation are consistent with the program learning outcomes.

**Criterion 4:** Human, physical, financial, and support resources to support student achievement of program learning outcomes are available and accessible.

**Criterion 5:** Regular program quality assessment that involves faculty, students, industry representatives, and others as appropriate for the purposes of continual improvement is in place and happens.

Schools and Program Teams will be encouraged to prepare “Program Quality Portfolios” (PQP) of evidence in support of their Quality Assurance work. These PQPs will become an ongoing repository for their documentation of process. As well, each School will establish a Program Quality Committee under the direction of the Dean that will ensure that the process “is in place and happens” (see Criteria #5). These committees will have orientation, training, and ongoing support available from the Office of the Vice-President Academic.

Our current model has a schedule of Program Review reporting that sees each program undergo a formal Program Quality Review every five years. With our

menu of 52 programs, this means that annually 10 or 11 programs will be identified and will prepare a formal report of their Quality Assurance activities.

In this revised model, the 10 or 11 identified Program Teams will, under the guidance of their School Quality Assurance Committee, reflect on **each** of the five OCQAS criteria and provide answers to the following questions:

- 1. What are our processes?**
- 2. What is the evidence from our processes?**
- 3. What improvements can we make to our programs, processes, and learning environment based on the analysis of this evidence?**

As reflective practices and Quality Assurance activities are to be ongoing within the Divisions/Schools, the preparation of this report will not be onerous either in terms of time or financial commitment, and should easily be prepared within a four to six week window during the May/June period.

### **Process Oversight and Support:**

To oversee and manage this process college-wide an **Academic Program Quality Assurance Process Review Committee** under the auspice of the Office of the Vice President Academic will be established. Chaired by the VPA or delegate, this will be a small committee of 3 or 4 individuals who have a demonstrated interest, and experience in Program Quality Assurance.

The APQAPRC will receive and review the School and Program Team reports and portfolios on an annual basis. This committee will grant “internal accreditation” of a program or schools quality assurance processes and reporting, based on established standards and most importantly will provide formative feedback on the school and program team’s quality assurance processes, to close our Quality Assurance loop. This committee will also oversee the production of future documentation and validation required by the Ontario College Quality Assurance Service, and will provide an annual report to MPGX on our College’s program quality assurance activities.

