



Ontario College Quality Assurance Service

*Service de l'assurance de la qualité des
collèges de l'Ontario*

Program Quality Assurance Process Audit

**Final Audit Report –
Executive Summary**

MOHAWK COLLEGE

March 2009

This report represents the findings of the Program Quality Assurance Process Audit for Mohawk College; the on-site portion of the audit was performed during the period **March 4-6, 2009**.

This report has been prepared, reviewed, and accepted by all parties to the Audit, including the college personnel, members of the Review Panel, and the Management Board of the OCQAS. The signatures of the representative parties demonstrate their acceptance of the content of this Report.

For the College:

Signature

Date

For the Review Panel:

Signature

Date

For the Management Board:

Signature

Date

Review Panel Membership

Chair: Hans van der Slagt / Consultant, Hans van der Slagt
& Associates Consulting Services

Members: Marti Jurmain / Director, Research and Innovation,
Niagara College

Kevin Asselin / Consultant

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. CONCLUSIONS

The Audit Team finds that Mohawk College has, substantially and satisfactorily, met all five PQAPA criteria. A great number of factors have helped to bring this about:

- A commitment to student success and program quality throughout all levels of the College
- A comprehensive set of policies, procedures and systems to support the continuous enhancement of student success and program quality
- A willingness to introduce new and innovative systems
- A commitment of human and financial resources to support quality assurance processes
- A willingness to accept and acknowledge gaps coupled with a desire and plans to rectify those gaps

The College's audit process itself was extremely well organized and executed both for College staff and for the Audit Team. Participation among College staff was both deep and broad with enthusiastic participation by students, plus academic, support and administrative staff, governors and Program Advisory Committee (PAC) members.

Requests for additional, clarifying information were met promptly and with enthusiasm. It was almost always the case that the College provided information and support material that went beyond the expectations of the Audit Team.

The Gap Analysis (issues that needed to be strengthened) and the Work Plans (what, who, how, when) to support them demonstrated the College's commitment to an ongoing, vibrant and future-looking approach to quality assurance at the College.

During the course of the audit, the team identified a number of innovative measures; these are described in the Commendation section below.

B. OVERALL FINDINGS OF PANEL

Criterion	Met	Partially Met	Not Met
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Criterion 1	X		
Criterion 2	X		
Criterion 3	X		
Criterion 4	X		
Criterion 5	X		

C. COMMENDATIONS

The Audit Team identified a number of areas where Mohawk showed exemplary practice and leadership in the field of quality assurance and improvement. A number of these would be worthy of emulation by other colleges. A short description of each follows:

- Centre for Teaching, Learning and Research: A resource serving staff on a college-wide basis including Curriculum Development (Program and Curriculum Renewal, Program Mapping, etc.), Faculty/Teaching and Learning Professional Development (group and individual activities), E-Learning, Staff Professional Development and Applied and Institutional Research.
- Learning Excellence Project: This project focused on the development of a program map and the on-line course outline repository (CORE) for all postsecondary programs balancing standards, accreditation, outcomes, key performance indicators feedback, program hours and financial resources; the development of curriculum expertise to support course and program quality was also the focus of this project.
- Mohawk College Program Review Process Chart: A multi-coloured chart that summarizes the four stages of Program Review at Mohawk including Curriculum Development, Environmental Scan, Program Assessment, Report Summary; team members felt the chart represented an excellent visual aid for a complex process that could, otherwise, be overwhelming to staff members
- Curriculum Development Team: The College has put together an impressive New Program Development process that combines the skills of subject and curriculum design experts; a detailed guide outlines an eight-

COMMENDATIONS, continued

step process that begins with the development of “Program Concept Reports” and ends with “Finalize Marketing Strategy and Program Launch”

- Mohawk-McMaster Collaborative Programs: As indicated in Part I, Section, B, Mohawk developed its Mohawk-McMaster Institute for Applied Health Sciences

as a center for a number of certificate, diploma, graduate certificate and collaborative degree programs. Two of these programs, Medical Radiation Sciences and Nursing, are offered as joint diploma/degree and degree programs respectively, through a collaborative arrangement between the College and McMaster University. There was every indication from both Mohawk and McMaster staff that the collaborative processes are working extremely well from all perspectives – program, staffing, facilities and administration.

- Gap Analysis and Work Plan: A key outcome of the PQAPA process at Mohawk was the preparation of a “Gap Report” outlining 15 areas requiring further work, identified either as requiring “Quick Fixes” or a “Work Plan” for resolution. The College is to be commended for being clear and open in identifying the gaps and, further, commended for developing Work Plans to address each of the identified issues. Work Plans included a description of the issue, a proposed series of steps to address them, assigned responsibility and provided a timeframe for resolution of the issue. Timeframes appeared to be reasonable and realistic in most cases (exception noted in Recommendation #3).

D. AFFIRMATIONS

As noted above, Mohawk identified 15 areas, arising out of the PQAPA process, that require further work.

The areas identified include:

- Preparing a schedule to ensure that all Ontario Credential (OC) programs have gone through a comprehensive program review process, which includes program mapping
- Ensure that all course descriptions are available on the Web
- Updating some Corporate Policies and Procedures that are outdated
- Establishing a committee to deal with exceptions to standard requirements of the new Program Promotion and Graduation Requirements Policy
- Establishing a formal annual review process informed by Program Reviews, KPI Reports and other operational planning inputs
- Ensuring that the Program Maps are updated to ensure currency
- Establish a consistent process for dealing with PLAR issues
- Ensure that all program Handbooks are prepared on a consistent basis and are available to all students

AFFIRMATIONS, continued

- Ensure that complete listings of Program Learning Outcomes are readily available to all students and applicants
- Ensure consistency in the development of Learning Plans (prepared for guidance of students)
- Ensure that all OC programs are compliant in meeting General Education requirements

- Develop a consistent and college-wide framework to provide students with consistent and early feedback leading to course evaluation
- Full implementation of the “Academic Staff Performance Feedback Program”
- Establish a plan and process to assure assessment methods are appropriate and linked to course outcomes
- Establish quality processes for OC programs run exclusively through Continuing Education

The Audit Team is in agreement with the issues raised by the College and congratulates the College for identifying these issues very clearly and for developing realistic work plans to address them.

E. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Audit Team identified several areas that will assist in improving program quality at the College. A short description and rationale for each of these items follows:

- (1) Students expressed concern about the lack of “quiet space” in the College, particularly within the Learning Resource Centre. Students felt they needed the space to pursue their own, individual studies as well as small group work which is integral to many of their programs. Audit Team Members concurred that the provision of quiet study spaces within the College is consistent with PQAPA criteria and understands and supports the need for students to do some of their “homework” on college premises
- (2) Students expressed concern about overcrowding in the open access computer laboratories and their inability to gain access to a computer within a reasonable waiting period. They observed that some students misused their computer time by accessing programs outside of the scope of their studies, e.g. Facebook. Students also noted that there is no organized “wait line” for computer resources resulting in some students waiting much longer than others. Audit Team Members concurred that the requirement to have reasonable access computer resources is consistent with PQAPA criteria. It was suggested, at the very least,

RECOMMENDATIONS, continued

that a process be put in place to monitor computer use and to establish an organized wait line process.

- (3) The Gap Report identifies that not all of Mohawk’s Ontario Credential programs are compliant in meeting General Education requirements. The associated Gap Report and Work Plan indicates a time frame of 2013/14 for implementation and also expresses reservations that budget constraints may further constrain implementation. It is the opinion of the Audit Team that the Framework for Programs of Instruction and the Credentials Framework require colleges to ensure adherence to General

Education requirements without exception. The Audit Team suggests that the College pursue a more aggressive implementation schedule and also suggests that budget constraints should not be used to delay such implementation.

- (4) One of the programs interviewed by the Audit Team indicated that they did not have a dedicated Program Advisory Committee but, rather, a school-wide Advisory Committee advising on a number of programs. It is the opinion of the Audit Team that input from the professionals that hire College graduates is essential to maintain currency and relevancy in programs and that this advice can only be provided by an Advisory Committee that is focused on a particular set of skills, i.e. a program. The College is encouraged to review its Advisory Committee structure to ensure that each program has an Advisory Committee with membership related to its area of expertise.