



# Quality Break

Welcome to the OCQAS Newsletter- your triannual peek behind the quality scenes at the OCQAS with quality news, updates, resources and more!

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### OCQAS Hit the Road on a Cross-Ontario College Tour

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### OCQAS Attend the 2015 INQAAHE Biennial Conference

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### Colleges Complete a Second Round of Audits

Ontario's colleges have completed another successful round of audits. It has provided an opportunity for OCQAS to pilot the new Quality Standards and procedural requirements of the audit process.



### Supporting Colleges in Providing Program-Level Quality Assurance

Ontario's colleges are responsible for ensuring that their vocational program learning outcomes (VLO's) are consistent with the credential framework, communicated and purposeful. To help colleges fulfill this responsibility, the Credentials Validation Service (CVS) follows an outcomes-based credentialing model to review all VLO's.

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Ensuring quality and consistency across the post-secondary education system  
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## OCQAS Hit the Road on a Cross-Ontario College Tour

OCQAS got a first-hand look at Ontario's colleges this fall during a tour that gave them the opportunity to learn about the colleges and for colleges to discuss the functions and services of the OCQAS with its new staff.

"It was a very successful tour and terrifically worthwhile. We got a great welcome from the colleges, a real openness, and a real sense of ambition", said Karen Belfer, the Executive Director of the OCQAS. "The trip has allowed us to see first-hand how the college's closeness to the industry and major focus on innovation, job creation and contribution to the economy inform their program development and quality assurance activities."

Both Karen Belfer, Executive Director, and Geneviève Paquette, Quality Assurance Associate, spent three months visiting 24 colleges throughout the province. The tour concluded in January 2015.

The tour has come at an important time since Ontario's colleges will be moving to an institutional-level accreditation process for each institution, which will become effective in January 2016.



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The International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) is a world-wide association of over 200 organizations active in the theory and practice of quality assurance in higher education.

INQAAHE has developed a set of internationally accepted standards for quality assurance agencies. Due to OCQAS's requirement that the quality assurance service for Ontario's colleges be consistent with international best practice, its model has been aligned with INQAAHE's *Guidelines of Good Practice* in quality assurance. In 2011, the OCQAS received recognition from the INQAAHE as being an agency that meets the guidelines.



## Colleges Move New Accreditation Process (Delayed to January 2016)

Ontario's colleges will be moving to an institutional-level accreditation process for each institution (College Quality Assurance Accreditation Process- CQAAP), which will become effective in January 2016.

The Ontario public colleges, through the work of the OCQAS have developed a strong, well-received, and effective quality assurance system since 2005. However, with a desire for more international outreach and a need for greater credibility of Ontario public colleges, the colleges are adopting an accreditation system. Following the external review and evaluation of the current quality audit model (PQAPA) by Dr. John Randall et al using international validated criteria it was obvious that the OCQAS already has the structure and processes that are required to be a viable accrediting agency allowing the system to move from an audit process to a more widely recognized model of accreditation.

In preparation for the transition, the OCQAS has developed accreditation policies in the following areas: application and timelines, eligibility, and evaluation framework.

The processes related to the accreditation application and timelines are organized under the following headings:

- Stage 1- Informal Review
- Stage 2- Formal Institutional Commitment to Apply
- Stage 3- Formal Institutional Commitment Review
- Stage 4- Formal Application for Accreditation
- Stage 5- Audit
- Stage 6- Formal Accreditation Decision
- Stage 7- Formal Announcement
- Stage 8- Re-Application for Accreditation.

Colleges will formally submit their Institutional Commitment package to the OCQAS Management Board starting September each year. For the first round of applications the Institutional Commitment packages will be accepted from January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 to November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016. In addition, the Institutional Commitment package must contain a Confidentiality Agreement signed by the President of the college. Once the college has received a "Candidate for Accreditation" status from the OCQAS Management Board, it can formally apply for accreditation.

Regarding the Accreditation Decisions, for the first round of applications the draft report to the college will include both the Accreditation and Audit standing results, and the rendering of the accreditation results will be done at a system level on September, 2017.

The Evaluation Framework consists of evaluations at the requirement level (Met, Partially Met, Not Met), at the standards level (Standings: A, B, C, D) which translates to an accreditation decision (*to be determined*).

Also, as part of the continuous improvement of its own activities and in response to the transition, the OCQAS has updated existing procedures, tools and resources such as site visit and program selection requirements, and developed a self-study guidebook and an auditor training model.

We encourage the colleges to keep visiting the OCQAS website for access to regularly updated news items, resources, and tools.



