



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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What Everyone Ought to Know About Provincial Program Standards and Descriptions

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OCQAS is Looking for Auditors: Spread the Word!

With audits just around the corner we are inviting all those who have the required qualifications to apply for auditor and lead auditor contract positions.

Transparency • Collaboration • Growth • Potential
Ensuring quality and consistency across the post-secondary education system
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Continuing to Support the Colleges in Their Initiatives

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

This is an initiative that the OCQAS would like to maintain in order to offer continuous support to the colleges in their initiatives through regular and on-going practical assistance. We can offer support with our Credential Validation Service (CVS) and College Quality Assurance Audit Process (CQAAP).

We aim to tailor our support to the college's individual requirements whether it's to help to prepare for audit, submission of program applications, or simply to share information regarding our services which can be done at the college's request in the form of workshops, on-site visits or consultations with college staff.

We would like to encourage colleges to contact the OCQAS when a need is identified and we will gladly provide support that is right for your college.



College Sector's Move to Accreditation Put on Hold.

Accreditation has been delayed. The Committee of Presidents (COP) has appointed a task force to resolve outstanding issues and questions about accreditation. Within the next year, COP will determine whether or not the decision to move to an accreditation model will be reaffirmed.

In the meantime, OCQAS will continue working to address questions and concerns about the process and during this time, the existing audit process for institutions will remain in place and any colleges audited during this time will be grandfathered if the decision is to proceed with accreditation.



What Everyone Ought to Know About Provincial Program Standards and Descriptions

Did you know that there are approximately 900 programs in the Ontario college system of which 700 are program descriptions and 200 are program standards? Did you also know that the standards account for 80% of the programs in which students are currently enrolled?

Provincial program standards are developed through a broad consultation process involving a range of stakeholders with a direct interest in the program area, including employers, employees, regulatory bodies, professional associations and program graduates working in the field, in addition to students, faculty and administrators at the colleges themselves, and universities or secondary schools when required. The input of participating stakeholders is used to identify the essential learning that all program graduates should have achieved.

These standards and descriptions are the starting point for program development and review across the college system. Program development using provincial program standards requires a full alignment with all of the binding elements articulated in the standard: the program title, vocational learning outcomes and elements of performance, essential employability skills and general education requirements. Individual colleges offering the program of instruction can determine the specific program structure, delivery methods and other curriculum matters to be used in assisting students to achieve the outcomes articulated in the standard.

Under the Credentials Framework the provincial program standard represents the minimum provincial requirement for credentials to be awarded. Individual colleges can determine whether additional learning outcomes will be required to reflect a specialty in the field of study for which they can request the use of a modifier to identify this. Local learning outcomes can also be added to reflect specific local needs and/or interests, but colleges cannot edit the original title or outcomes articulated in the standard.

As for provincial program descriptions, the title can be modified but must be consistent with accepted college system nomenclature, agreements (e.g. "Heads of: provincial groups) and titling protocols: consistency across the college system; truth in advertising; and field of study. Program learning outcomes can also be modified but the college must ensure that they are mapping, at minimum, to the existing programs elements/ dimensions/ themes.

Provincial program standards are published on the MTCU website, whereas provincial program descriptions cannot be accessed publicly but colleges may contact the CVS and request them.



OCQAS is Looking for Auditors: Spread the Word!

The OCQAS is regularly looking for qualified auditors to conduct academic quality audits across the province's 24 colleges of applied arts and technology in Ontario.

We are inviting all those who have the required qualifications to apply for auditor and lead auditor contract positions.

Lead auditors are required to demonstrate audit experience, preferably direct experience with at least one audit of an Ontario College (either as a panel member or as an observer), as well as the required qualifications for all audit panel members. This must be external experience (out of the CAAT system for at least five years and outside the province).

All candidates are asked to submit a cover letter and resume to OCQAS sending their applications to belfer@ocqas.org. Please note that the Job ID must be included in the e-mail subject and cover letter upon application.

All applicants that meet the job requirements will be invited to participate in an information session. Those still interested will be asked to participate in a compulsory auditor training session. Those selected will be required to complete an assessment of a self-study. All sessions are offered via teleconference.

For this upcoming round of audits the information sessions will be held via teleconference between November 30th- December 4th 2015, and the auditor training sessions will be taking place between January 4th-8th; 11th-15th 2016.

A detailed job description and information on how to apply online can be found here:

English- http://ocqas.org/?page_id=9490

French- http://ocqas.org/fre/?page_id=9734

For a complete overview of the audit process and to further understand the role, responsibilities and duties of the auditor, refer to the *Guidelines and Framework* document on the OCQAS website:

http://ocqas.org/?page_id=9295.