Ontario College Quality Assurance Service

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

COLLEGE QUALITY ASSURANCE AUDIT PROCESS (CQAAP)

AUDIT REPORT

NIAGARA COLLEGE

DATE OF SITE VISIT: May 3 to May 5, 2022

PREPARATION DATE: June 10, 2022

SUBMISSION DATE: July 19, 2022

PREPARED BY: Sandra Bailey

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APPROVAL OF THE AUDIT REPORT

This report represents the findings of the College Quality Assurance Audit Process for Niagara College

This report has been prepared, reviewed, and accepted by all parties to the Audit, including the college President, members of the audit panel, and the Chair of the OCQAS Management Board. The signatures of the representative parties demonstrate their acceptance of the content of this report.

COLLEGE PRESIDENT

Signature:	Date: November 4, 2022

CHAIR- OCQAS MANAGEMENT BOARD

Signature:	Date: September 23, 2022

AUDIT PANEL MEMBERS

Chair Sandra Bailey Signature:	Date: July 4, 2022
Panelist Don Duclos Signature:	Date: July 4, 2022
Panelist Lindita Prendi Signature:	Date: July 4, 2022

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. **Conclusions**
   General comments and summary of the findings of the audit panel.

Niagara College submitted a comprehensive Self-Study and provided the requested additional supporting evidence. The evidence suggests that the college has committed significant effort and resources to achieve the current level of quality assurance. The college has indicated areas identified as requiring improvement and have made affirmations related to those particular requirements.

As a result of the site visit, the panel found that, in most cases, actual practice lived up to the information provided in the self-study. The audit team took into account the evidence provided through the self-study, additional supporting evidence and site visit when determining their findings. As a result, the audit panel has deemed that all six standards have been "Met" and that Niagara College's overall effort is "Mature".

The college through its thoughtful self-assessment identified specific affirmations and the audit panel agree with these and encourage continued efforts towards these as well as continued progress towards recommendations and affirmations from the previous audit.

The audit panel commends the work of the college specifically; The new and expanded role of the Academic Affairs and Strategic Enrolment Committee (AASEC) with Program Review reports, action plans and program suspensions; the work done with training of the Board of Governors and the Focus Spotlights; and the concept of the Curriculum committees in each program that were led by students. Also noted was that the Centre for Academic Excellence (CAE) has played an essential role in quality assurance, program development and renewal, professional development, as well as teaching and learning activities.

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2. **Results**
   a. **Audit Results**

Standard	Result		
1	☒ Met	☐ Partially Met	☐ Not Met
2	☒ Met	☐ Partially Met	☐ Not Met
3	☒ Met	☐ Partially Met	☐ Not Met
4	☒ Met	☐ Partially Met	☐ Not Met
5	☒ Met	☐ Partially Met	☐ Not Met
6	☒ Met	☐ Partially Met	☐ Not Met

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Audit Decision: *(select one)*

☒ Mature Effort
☐ Organized Effort
☐ Formal Effort

STIPULATIONS

1. **Commendations**
   Provide clear statements that articulate areas where the college has shown exemplary or leadership in the field of quality assurance and improvement. These are mechanisms that are especially good and may be worthy of emulation by other colleges in the system.

The Audit Panel was impressed with the new and expanded role of the Academic Affairs and Strategic Enrolment Committee (AASEC) with Program Review reports, action plans and program suspensions. These practices were very well received at all levels of the institution. The work that this committee has done to engage internal stakeholders along with work by the Program Change and Development Committee (PCD) to streamline program changes are great examples of continuous improvement.

The full day onboarding, emphasis and support of the College Ontario Board training, and the Focus Spotlights are activities that the Board of Governors praised and enrich the relationship of the college with their Board..

The concept of the Curriculum committees in each program that were led by students really seemed to be making an impact on curriculum for the future cohorts.

It was evident that the Centre for Academic Excellence (CAE) has played an essential role in quality assurance, program development and renewal, professional development, as well as teaching and learning activities. Training and professional development offerings were greatly appreciated by faculty. The CAE website is robust and houses a wealth of resources.

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2. **Affirmations**
   Provide clear statements that articulate areas where the college itself has found a weakness, identified the weakness, and intends to correct it (a plan of action has already been articulated). In effect, this is affirming the college's judgment and findings of its own self-study.

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The audit panel affirms the college's judgment and findings that were identified during the college's self-study.

1.2 - Update the program modification policy to better reflect the language used in the program modification process on the Centre for Academic Excellence webpage

1.5 - Modify the Program Review self-study template by adding a section for programs teams to complete a fulsome analysis of past actions, with discussion on the impact the action item had on continuous improvement within the program.

1.5 - Develop a user manual for the Action Item database, along with training materials and workshops to help key stakeholders use the database and understand its functions.

2.1 - Continue to implement the newly developed Vocational Learning Outcome (VLO) review/revision process in the program review cycle.

2.2 - Develop a process document for curriculum mapping by each Academic Quality Mechanism (New Program Development, Program Review, Program Modification or Standard Update).

2.2- Continue to use the curriculum mapping portal by ensuring all new maps are uploaded to the SharePoint site.

2.3 - Implement the Accessibility Hub to maturity to ensure that Niagara College and post-secondary stakeholders have access to resources that will assist faculty and staff in developing accessible content, learning materials, and learning experiences.

3.2 - Undertake a review of the language contained within the Program of Instruction Framework to ensure that the guide is conducive to College-wide compliance with relevant government requirements.

3.3 - The College acknowledges a need to review the PAC policy to better reflect the flexibility and authority given to programs to run these committees. Through this review, we will identify program and division-level best practices and share templates and exemplars that could be modified or adapted for use in other program PACs.

4.1 - As the College begins to reflect on the lessons learned from the pandemic and considering where to maintain content online, the Checklist for Course Sites will continue to be adopted as a framework to evaluate the quality of online learning experiences and digital learning materials in a course to ensure consistency, accessibility and connections to course outcomes. Recognizing that technology is an essential feature of most courses regardless of

modality, the broader applicability of the tool will also be evaluated for face-to-face and hybrid delivery.

5.2 - As a result of prioritizing processes and policy development and review due to the pandemic, there are a small number of policies that have not been reviewed according to schedule and within the five year timeframe. The college will resume the policy review schedule and prioritize the revision of policies currently outside of the five year review window.

5.3 and 5.5 - Implement the recently approved (February 2022) Admissions and Pathways policy and related procedures (Admissions Procedure, Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition procedure, Appeal of Admissions Decisions procedure, Transfer Credit - Advanced Standing procedure) to maturity.

5.8 - Implement quality assurance processes for the Private Public Partnership (Toronto School of Management) to maturity and continue to monitor program quality, consistency, and alignment with Niagara College standards to ensure that students are experiencing the same quality of services and educational experience.

6.1 - Complete an environmental scan of best practices in non-probationary faculty appraisals taking into consideration collective agreement requirements and develop plan to align both of these in a faculty review process.

6.2 - Continue to develop a process to combine the Curriculum committee structure with Courser Feedback survey data.

6.2 - In an effort to improve response rates and have a better understanding of current issues, bring forward options for a revised course feedback survey to academic leadership for discussion and decision.

6.3 - Continue to develop the metrics framework used by student services to be used in assessing the effectiveness of departments meeting student needs.

3. **Recommendations**
   Provide clear statements that articulate areas as needing improvement. Recommendations may also be made in relation to areas of concern identified by the college in its self-study, and for which no plan of action has been articulated by the college.

Recommendation #1
R2.3 Continue to implement the newly developed Vocational Learning Outcome (VLO)

review/revision process in the program review cycle and through this identify and ensure that course learning outcomes are clearly mapped to the VLOs for all programs of instruction.

Recommendation #2

R4.3 and R 6.2 The panel recommends that the college develop processes whereby the policy that ensures "prompt and constructive" feedback to students is consistently applied and monitored and that these are clearly articulated to faculty.

Recommendation #3

R5.2 The college carry out the newly developed policy review schedule to ensure that the review of outstanding policies is completed. As per the previous audit the following is included in this recommendation: Maintain the work of the College Policy and Procedure Committee in reviewing policies that are due for renewal and converting them to the policy/procedure format, as well as implementing the regular cycle for updating.

Recommendation #4

R5.8 Implement quality assurance processes for the Private Public Partnership (Toronto School of Management) to maturity and continue to monitor program quality, consistency, and alignment with Niagara College standards to ensure that students are experiencing the same quality of services and educational experience. Niagara College is to ensure their courses/programs offered in other countries have quality assurance processes and procedures that align to those of the Ontario quality assurance system.

Recommendation #5

R6.1 The panel recommends that the college fulfill its affirmation in regards to this requirement. That affirmation states: "complete an environmental scan of best practices in non-probationary faculty appraisals taking into consideration collective agreement requirements and develop a plan to align both of these in a faculty review process", and implement it.

Recommendation #6

R6.2 The faculty review process should include clear expectations of all faculty and mechanisms to determine that those expectations are being met.