



Ontario College Quality Assurance Service

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

ANNUAL REPORT

ACADEMIC YEAR
2016/2017



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MESSAGE

from the Chair of the Management Board and the Executive Director



Joy Warkentin
Chair, Management Board

It is with great pleasure that we present to you the 2016/2017 Annual Report for Ontario College Quality Assurance Service (OCQAS). As an organization, we work in the spirit of Quality, Accountability, Transparency and Consistency. This report is one more step this organization is taking towards those goals.



Karen Belfer
Executive Director

The 2016/2017 academic year was a very good year; we heard positive comments from stakeholders and enhanced communications and partnerships. College stakeholders appreciated the consistency resulting from changes that were implemented for the College Quality Assurance Audit Process. These changes also strengthened the reports from the colleges, making them easier to read and review. The partnership activities within the province with the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board, Program Standards Evaluation Unit and the Colleges Unit of the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD) supported mutually beneficial efficiencies and identified future opportunities.

This year was also a challenging year as the Ontario Colleges' Committee of Presidents decided to delay the decision to move to institutional accreditation. While this was a significant change in direction for the Ontario Public Colleges, the process that we had been working on for several years further strengthened the existing robust Quality Assurance Audit process. The Ontario Public Colleges have a Quality Assurance Audit process that is unique in Canada. Recently, other provinces have become aware of the highly developed and advanced OCQAS quality assurance model, supported by robust standards, and have now decided to follow suit.

Over the past year, the OCQAS has engaged with several groups to respond to the changing post-secondary education landscape. We see ourselves as an important link and conduit of information in the system. Specifically, the focus of OCQAS in 2016/2017 was in supporting the work of the following bodies:

Committee of Presidents (COP) Accreditation Task Force

As a resource to the Task Force, we helped coordinate much of the data gathering and analysis activities. In doing this, we shared documents and research that supported the Task Force in understanding the field of Post-secondary Education Accreditation and Quality Assurance. We supported the Task Force in the review of documents and information that helped determine the final recommendation to COP.

Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD)

As an arms-length agency to the government, we maintain communication and a strong relationship with MAESD. Across units and branches of the Ministry, we serve many purposes: consult on the review and development of program standards; assist colleges through the government's processes and decisions on funding approval of new programs; support colleges in communicating program changes to MAESD.

Heads of Quality Management (HOQM)

It has been our role to interact with the HOQM executive and members to ensure clear and open communication to all colleges. It is our mutual goal to support transparency and allow input and engagement of all stakeholders in quality assurance (QA) processes.

Curriculum Development Affinity Group (CDAG)

Throughout the year, we participated in CDAG meetings and included news items in their newsletter. We also shared best practices in curriculum development through their listserv and group meetings.

OCQAS Contract Auditors


We continue to review and update the training materials and processes for the auditors. The goal of the training is to reduce the subjective results of the peer-evaluation approach and increase consistent implementation of the OCQAS Standards.

Colleges Ontario (CO) Executive

We frequently meet with the CO Executive to keep them abreast of the work of the Management Board and the operations of OCQAS.

In the recent past, we have seen the Colleges adapt and adopt the processes we have put in place to professionalize and improve OCQAS services. Our commitment is to continue to listen, interact and communicate with all our stakeholders to ensure OCQAS is becoming better at what it does, by doing it together.

This message would not be complete without a sincere thank you to our colleagues on the Management Board of OCQAS, especially the external members that provide a fresh perspective and insight into the accreditation advantages and values.



BOARD MEMBERS

2016/2017

The OCQAS Policy on Management Board Structure and Membership defines the membership, terms and process for the Board. According to this policy, “Each member of the Management Board will be appointed for a term of three years, renewable once. For the purpose of continuity, membership will be, where possible staggered so that no more than one-third (1/3) of the members would be leaving the Board at any one time.”

To those members leaving the Board this year, thank you for your time! It has been a pleasure working with you. Some of you have been members of the Management Board for more than six years; your contributions will be missed and your continuous commitment to quality always appreciated.

OCQAS MANAGEMENT BOARD

Chair external to the Ontario College system appointed by the Committee of Presidents

Joy Warkentin

Four senior academic officers from the Ontario College system; at least one will be from a French-language College

Daniel Giroux

*French College Representative
President – College Boréal*

Barbara Kelly

*CCVPA Representative
Vice President Academic – Conestoga College*

Laurel Schollen

Vice President Academic – Seneca College

Lorraine Carter

Vice President Academic – St. Lawrence College

One college president from the Ontario College system appointed by the Committee of Presidents to act in a liaison role between the Management Board and the Committee of Presidents

Ann Buller

*Committee of Presidents' Liaison
President – Centennial College*

Two Quality Assurance staff from the Ontario College system

Tracy Gedies

*Director of the Centre for Academic Excellence
Fanshawe College*

Lisa Cuncic-Pegg

*McKeil School of Business Professor
Mohawk College*

One recent graduate (three to five years out of school) from an Ontario College to provide representation for students; recommended by the College Student Alliance

Ciara Bryne

*Director of Advocacy
College Student Alliance*

Three members external to the Ontario College system representing quality assurance work in business, industry, or higher education

Mark Davies

*Director of Quality Assurance
Oxford Properties Group*

Jeff Rosen

*Vice President for Accreditation Relations
and Director of the Open Pathway
Higher Learning Commission*

Nicholas Rubidge

*Chair
Degree Quality Assessment Board (DQAB)*

MESSAGE

from the CEO of Colleges Ontario



Linda Franklin

The internationally recognized Ontario College Quality Assurance Service is central to the colleges' commitment to delivering the best programs possible to students.

The detailed work to validate new college credentials and confirm programs are meeting Ontario's high-quality standards ensures students continue to get the professional and technical expertise that is greatly valued by employers.

This work will be even more important in the years ahead as new innovations and technological advancements create an escalated demand for graduates of the career-focused programs at our colleges. Ensuring that students throughout the province attain the specialized skills and expertise to make a meaningful contribution in the workplace will be pivotal to Ontario's long-term prosperity and to creating more opportunities for people to pursue rewarding and fulfilling careers.

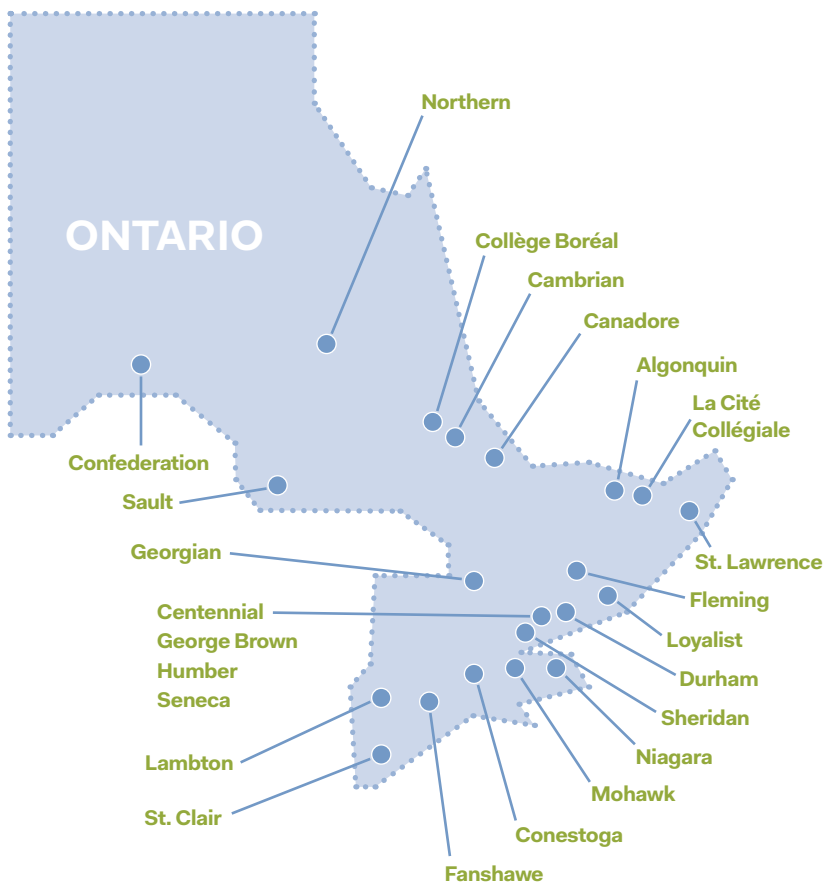
Linda A. Franklin

CONTEXT:

Ontario Public Colleges

The Ontario Public College sector consists of 24 institutions serving over 200 communities across the province of Ontario. As can be observed in the following figure, the colleges can be classified into four regions.

Northern Region	Central Region	Western Region	Southern Region
Collège Boréal	Centennial	Conestoga	Algonquin
Cambrian	George Brown	Fanshawe	Durham
Canadore	Georgian	Lambton	Fleming
Confederation	Humber	Mohawk	La Cité Collégiale
Northern	Seneca	Niagara	Loyalist
Sault	Sheridan	St. Clair	St. Lawrence



Mission

Ontario Colleges were founded in the late 1960s with an emphasis on vocational, technological, and general education. Since this time, the context and landscape in post-secondary education has changed. Colleges have kept pace with the changes and, at the same time, have maintained their multi-dimensional focus:

- Deliver a broad range of career-based education programs;
- Support community development and service;
- Engage business and industry through applied research and innovation activities.

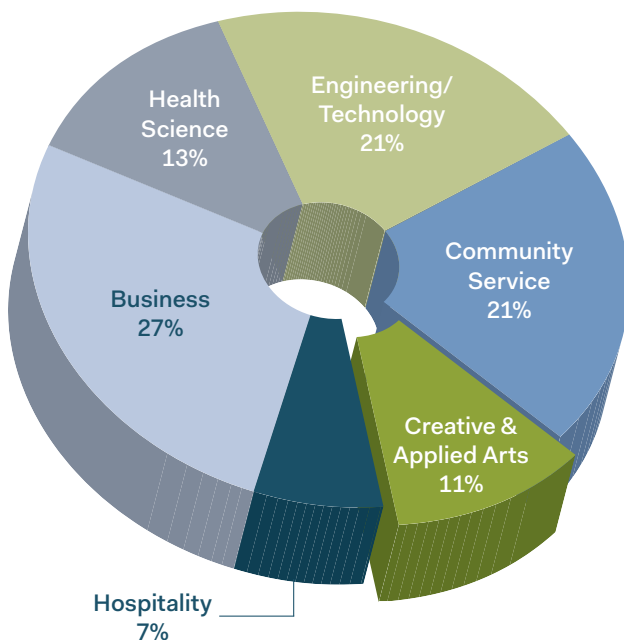
Student Population

With campuses throughout the province, the colleges mirror the diversity of the Ontario population. As a sector, the Ontario Colleges serve over 500,000 students, with approximately 220,000 full-time enrolments in 2016/2017. There are two French-language colleges, College Boréal and La Cité, located in the Northern and Eastern Regions respectively. The colleges also have many strong supports to help the provinces' most vulnerable students pursue and complete a college education.

Graduate Employment

Today's colleges offer over 900 programs in business, information technology, aviation, tourism and hospitality, advertising, skilled trades, animation, biotechnology and much more. Graduates of Ontario colleges, numbering more than 94,000 annually, have completed credentials across a range of employment sectors. In 2015, the top three sectors were business (27 percent), community service (21 percent) and engineering/technology (21 percent).

COLLEGE GRADUATES BY SECTOR (2015)



Source: 2015 Employment Profile (AESD); Colleges Ontario

Ontario needs a highly qualified workforce for the years ahead. Ontario's colleges will play an essential role in strengthening the province's economy and helping more people find rewarding careers.

Ontario College Quality Assurance Service (OCQAS) **MANDATE**

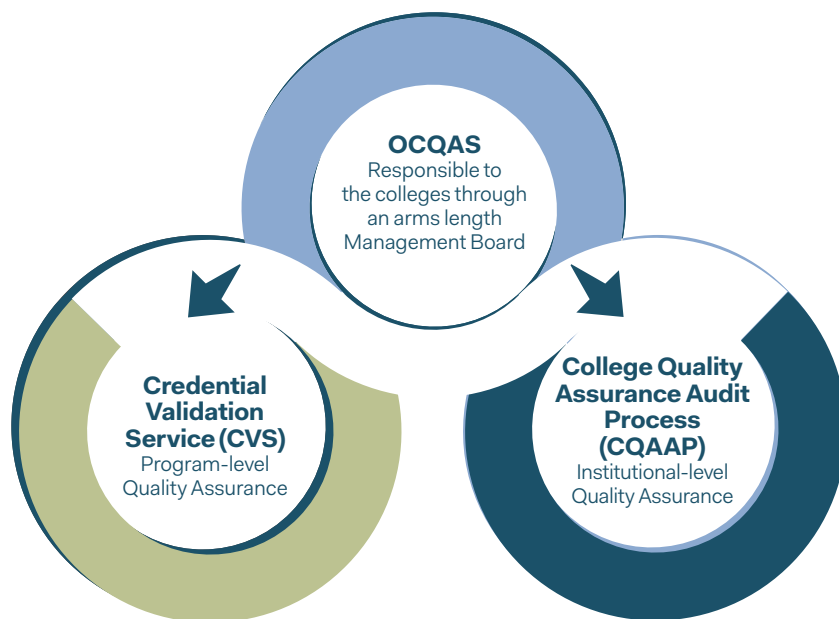
History

In 2002, Ontario government legislation gave Ontario colleges the responsibility for autonomous program approval and development with the requirement that quality assurance processes be in place to ensure that the colleges consistently meet quality standards.

In response to this legislation, the Ontario College Quality Assurance Service (OCQAS) was established in 2005 to provide efficient tools to ensure specific quality and consistency standards are met by the Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (CAAT) in Ontario.

Who we are

The OCQAS is responsible for ensuring quality at both the program level through the Credential Validation Service (CVS) as well as at the institutional level through the College Quality Assurance Audit Process (CQAAP).



Mission

To deliver credential validation and quality assurance processes for the public college system in Ontario to assure students, graduates, employers and the public of the quality of the system's comprehensive programs and services.

Vision

To be the leading post-secondary education quality assurance agency in Canada and to provide guidance and direction to improve the overall excellence of post-secondary education as we move Ontario's colleges to a standard of quality assurance recognized on the global stage.

Credential Validation Service (CVS) ACTIVITY

The Credential Validation Service (CVS) objective is to maintain the integrity of the credentials offered by the colleges, province-wide. To that effect, we work closely with the colleges supporting them in the validation of new program proposals and with different units of the Ministry validating new programs and Provincial Program Standards.

Validation of College Program Proposals

Over the last 12 years, we have averaged 188 validations (which include both the average Program Validations (156) and average Title Modifications (32)). The total number of validations this year (176) is slightly below the 12-year average.

Credential Validation Summary by Process (September 2016-August 2017)

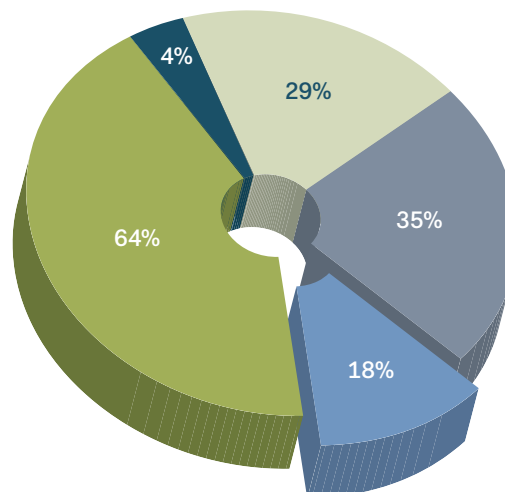
This academic year, the Title Modifications represented 14 percent of the CVS validation requests, which is lower than the 12-year average of 17 percent.

New Program Validations		Title Modifications	
12-year Average	2016/2017	12-year Average	2016/2017
156 (83%)	152 (86%)	32 (17%)	24 (14%)

Credential Validation Summary by Credential (September 2016-August 2017)

NEW PROGRAM VALIDATIONS BY CREDENTIAL

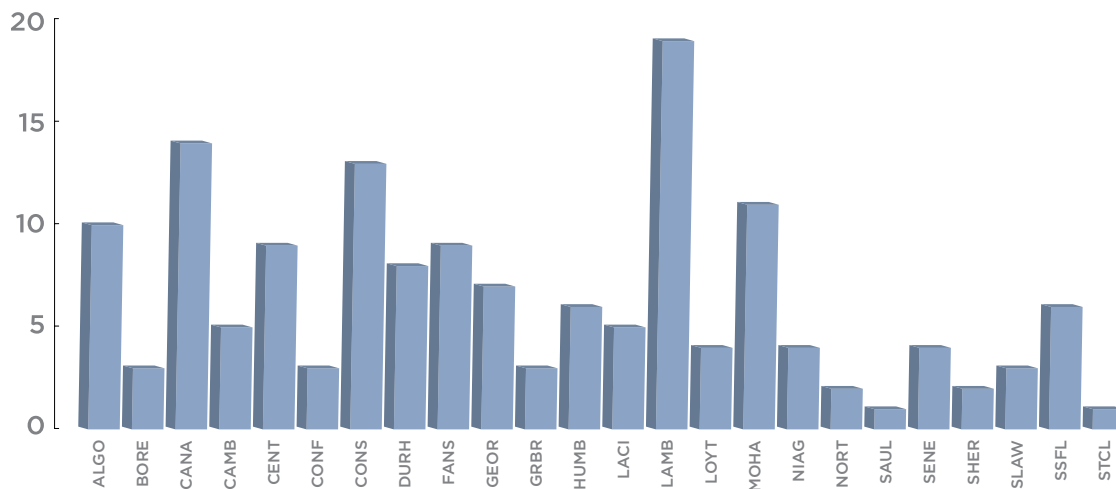
- Locally Approved Board Certificates (LBC)
- Ontario College Certificates (OCC)
- Ontario College Diplomas (OCD)
- Ontario College Advanced Diplomas (OCAD)
- Ontario College Graduate Certificates (OCGC)



Credentials				
LBC	OCC	OCD	OCAD	OCGC
6	29	35	18	64

These averages change every year. While the Locally Approved Board Certificates remain constant at 3-4 percent the proportion of the other credentials change from year to year. Before 2012, the credential which was most often proposed was the Ontario College Diploma. The credential representing the highest proportion of proposals and validations shifted since 2013 to the Ontario College Graduate Certificate.

NEW PROGRAM VALIDATIONS BY COLLEGE



The number of programs submitted to the CVS varies by college. The graphic shows data for 2016/2017, which is similar to the previous three years.

College Program Proposal Support

This year OCQAS introduced workshops for college personnel involved in developing and proposing new programs. The purpose of this training was to assist college staff in understanding the program proposal submission process. The training offered a step-by-step review of each element of the program proposal template, with rationale, expectations and examples.

In the last year 159 people (from 23 colleges) participated in at least one of the 26 workshops offered by CVS (60 percent in person and 40 percent via teleconference).

Since the majority of college staff have already participated in a workshop, OCQAS will continue to offer training via teleconference on request.

Validation of Provincial Program Standards

CVS works closely with the Program Standards Evaluation Unit (PSEU) at MAESD to review, advise and validate program standards. During the standard development process, we have a number of conversations and meetings with the policy managers and project officers related to the emerging vocational learning outcomes and titles under consideration, and provide suggestions and feedback. In this academic year, we validated 13 program standards in both English and French (e.g. Construction Project Management, Paramedic, Chemical Laboratory). This is only one-third of the number of standards we validated the year before (39). The difference in the number of validations in 2016/2017 can be attributed to a change in the process by MAESD.

“We’ve established an excellent working relationship since you’ve been at CVS. I appreciate your openness, commitment to quality and problem-solving and your wonderful warm nature.”

– Vanine Yee,
Senior Policy Officer
Program Standards and
Evaluation Unit

Program Funding Approvals

To support colleges who develop new programs, we communicate and liaise with the College Unit (CU) of MAESD to develop processes and pathways that will facilitate appropriate funding for the proposed programs. In order to address any potential issues once the validation is handed-off to the CU, we share information with college staff about elements of a program proposal that could slow the funding decision prior to validating. We provide a detailed rationale explaining the decision behind the creation of a new program that will require a new MTCU code in order to facilitate the new code location and funding.

In the case that a college has requested a program standard appeal, or if there are multiple MTCU codes involved in a new program funding decision, we also complete a detailed analysis of program mapping. This aids the college in accurately communicating the content and intention of the program being reviewed for funding.

Program Description Database

In January 2015, the Provincial Program Description Database that the Ministry hosted for the colleges was hacked. Since then CVS has managed and updated the Provincial Program Descriptions.

We have developed a filing system to capture new program descriptions and created a database with all current descriptions. When a college requests information from this database, we provide this information within two business days.

For the last three years CVS has been working with a developer to design a web-based application that will allow colleges to access all the program descriptions and submit CVS applications online. The development of this application is almost complete and we expect to have a beta version for testing during the 2017/2018 academic year.

College Quality Assurance Audit Process (CQAAP)

ACTIVITY

The College Quality Assurance Audit Process (CQAAP) model has remained untouched since the changes that were made in 2014/2015 to reduce inconsistencies and professionalize the audit process. To that effect, we have noticed that the changes such as auditor training, selection of programs, site visit criteria and sample mechanisms have accomplished the intended results. To ensure stability, and in response to the recommendations of the COP Accreditation Task Force, no changes will be made to the process until all 24 colleges have completed the CQAAP. These audits will be completed by September 2019.

Audits

In the 2016/2017 year, the following six colleges were audited: Loyalist, St. Clair, St. Lawrence, Seneca, Niagara and Humber. These six audits were completed by 14 auditors from within the Ontario college system (largely retired administrators) and seven external auditors from outside the province.

OCQAS generally completes four to five audits per year, as the 24 colleges are in a 5-year audit rotation. However, this past year's audit activity was higher than the expected due to the decision of COP to delay the move to accreditation.

This table graphic represents the actual schedule for the third-cycle of audits (2015-2020).

Year	College					
2015/2016	GRBR	CONF	ALGO			
2016/2017	LOYT	SLAW	NIAG	HUMB	STCL	SENE
2017/2018	FLEM	FANS	CENT	SHER	DURH	
2018/2019	CAMB	CANA	MOHA	NORT	SAUL	
2019/2020	GEOR	BORE	LACI	LAMB	CONS	

Audit Process Improvements

These improvements were introduced in 2016 to address inconsistencies colleges had experienced in previous audits. In the spirit of continuous improvement OCQAS is gathering feedback on the current process, although no changes will be implemented until 2019.

Training for Auditors

During 2016/2017 OCQAS introduced more rigor into the preparation of audit panels. We did this by providing more detailed guidelines on the review process and implementing more comprehensive education sessions, for example:

- Before panelists conduct an audit, they are required to participate in sessions to gain an in-depth understanding of the quality framework, review their role in conducting reviews and the procedures to be followed, and familiarize themselves with the information to be included in an audit report.
- Panelists are also required to participate in practical education sessions on how to use the standards and requirements to assess a college's quality assurance mechanisms.

With more thorough preparation of panelists, the OCQAS has strengthened the reliability and validity of the quality audits.

This approach to training ensures consistency in the assessment of the standards and their accompanying requirements and provides increased levels of preparation and team building for the audit panel members prior to the site visit.

Once potential auditors complete the training, they are placed on the auditor roster. Currently OCQAS has a roster of 52 auditors. Each of these auditors have been evaluated to have the skills and knowledge necessary to carry out an institutional audit.

Program Selection

In 2016 we also introduced a more consistent approach to the selection of the programs to be reviewed during an institutional audit. Colleges are now asked to submit four programs of their choice according to OCQAS guidelines, and OCQAS selects an additional two from a list of all programs offered by the college. The six programs for the review are confirmed to the college one year in advance. This methodology addresses concerns raised about the panel having too much discretion to request a last minute change in the programs to be reviewed.

Site Visit Criteria

More detailed criteria are now in place for the site visit. These changes include the following requirements:

- Panelists meet with specific college groups, including senior management, administration, program advisory committees, faculty, students, and graduates;
- Each member of the panel must attend the meetings with each group, discontinuing the former practice of dividing up the site visit meetings among different panelists.

These changes were implemented to address concerns about inconsistent site visit experiences across colleges.

Standards with Guiding Information and Examples of Quality Assurance Mechanisms

The current standards and requirements are more coherent and comprehensive than previous versions. These new guidelines assist colleges in preparing the institutional self-study for the audit. They also provide a common ground of expectations for the colleges and auditors.

Support for Audit Preparation

The year before a college is to be audited, OCQAS visits the college. The purpose of this visit is to assure clear communication of timelines and expectations. To maintain transparency we share with the college the information provided to the auditors, for example, roles and responsibilities and expected code of conduct. We also share with the auditors any information provided to the college.

Furthermore, OCQAS offers monthly webinars in collaboration with HOQM to showcase best practices in the system according to the different stages of the audit process or the requirements. During these presentations, we co-present with a representative of the college whose best practice is being highlighted.

On behalf of Niagara College, we would like to extend our sincere thanks for your leadership of a very engaging CQAAP site visit. We greatly appreciated the professionalism, preparation, and attention to detail of the panel, but more importantly, we appreciated the thoughtful, collegial and respectful conversations with the members of our college community. The process was an opportunity for our colleagues to pause and reflect on their work and all that we accomplish together to support excellence in teaching and learning at Niagara. The benefit of external review of our practices served to remind our community of our distinctive culture of caring and commitment to students and has, we are sure, validated that commitment and will serve to deepen and sustain our efforts. Your attention to detail and prompt reply to our many questions throughout the process was appreciated. It was comforting to know that if we had a question you were willing to offer your guidance and support."

*– Jeff Post,
Manager, Academic Quality*

COLLABORATIONS/ MEMBERSHIPS

Collaboration with quality assurance institutions locally and around the world allows us to stay current and relevant with best practices nationally and internationally. Participating in workshops, conferences, and monthly cross-Canada meetings with other quality assurance bodies allows us to accomplish that goal.

Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB)

PEQAB is an arms-length advisory agency that makes recommendations to the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development of Ontario on ministerial consent of applications of all public or private degree-granting organizations to offer all or part of degree programs.

This year, one of their senior policy officers shadowed one of our CQAAP audits with the intent of finding synergies that would reduce the renewal consent timelines for the colleges that offer degrees. OCQAS is also in regular communication with PEQAB to share best practices in QA and ensure we are aware of common challenges or issues affecting Ontario's public colleges.

PEQAB is moving ahead with a process that will allow some colleges to reduce the work and timelines for consent renewal, and the details of that process are still under review.

Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA)

CHEA is the national advocate and voice for academic quality through accreditation in the United States of America (USA). Their purpose is the coordination and improvement of quality review based on seven principles. OCQAS has been a member of CHEA since 2013. We take part in the CHEA International Quality Group activities including the annual meeting, workshops and webinars that focus on major issues affecting quality assurance around the world.

International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE)

INQAAHE is a worldwide association of organizations that are active in the theory and practice of quality assurance in higher education. Their central purpose and role is to promote and advance excellence in higher education through the development of the theory and practice of quality assurance. OCQAS has been a member of INQAAHE since November 2011 and has been recognized as meeting their "Good Practice" standards. Through INQAAHE, we liaise with members of many countries to validate QA processes and opportunities. We also attend the INQAAHE Annual Conference.

COMMUNICATION

Website

During 2016/2017 we undertook a complete update of the OCQAS website to enhance security, navigation and functionality. This new design allows for a bilingual format with an automatic switch in each page.

Newsletter

The purpose of the newsletters is to keep the college system informed of the events and items that are important to the stakeholders regarding quality assurance. During 2016/2017, we published two newsletters with articles that address QA related topics including the activities of the MASED Program Standards Evaluation Unit, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action, personnel changes, and things to come.

Presentations/Workshops/Conferences

The OCQAS Executive Director takes every opportunity to present at various conferences and events that are organized and hosted by the colleges and attended by the heads of quality management and curriculum developers. This provides the opportunity to share information to a variety of stakeholders. These presentations give OCQAS an opportunity to share best practices, points of interest and ensure common ground in topics related to both the credentials validation service and the college quality assurance audit process. This year, the Executive Director presented at two provincial conferences:

1. Collaborative Conference – CDAG/CDOG/HOQM
2. Learning Outcomes Conference

Additionally, she participated in other special events hosted by the Colleges (e.g. Professional Development Days at Canadore College ; “The New Normal: Northern College in the 21st Century”; Aligning and Building Curriculum (ABC).

“Thank you for your continued support of my professional development and for our peers who embrace curriculum and quality. Your knowledge and skills have helped to shape my practice as an educator of leading-edge students and graduates entering the workplace.”

– Lisa Cuncic-Pegg,
Chair, Curriculum
Development Affinity Group

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Organizational Structure

To meet its mission, OCQAS has had two full-time employees delivering the credential validation services and quality assurance processes for the public college system in Ontario. A shift in organizational priorities in the past year allowed for a restructuring of the unit to an office of only one full-time staff member. The position of Quality Assurance Associate was deemed redundant and therefore eliminated. We send a warm and special 'thank you' to Genevieve Paquette for the important work that she contributed to OCQAS over the last three years.

Secondments

The shift in organizational priorities includes a shift toward QA capacity building across the colleges. Therefore OCQAS will be seeking opportunities to invite college staff for short-term secondments. A secondment allows a person to learn from and experience first-hand the activities of OCQAS. It is especially valuable for colleges that are getting ready for their institutional audits (e.g. Durham College 2017/2018 audit). At the same time, it provides OCQAS with a direct source of input and information about the activities in the colleges.

During 2016/2017, Michelle Cole, Manager, Program Development and Quality Initiatives at Durham College was seconded to OCQAS for one day a week. It was a valuable experience for both Michelle and for OCQAS.

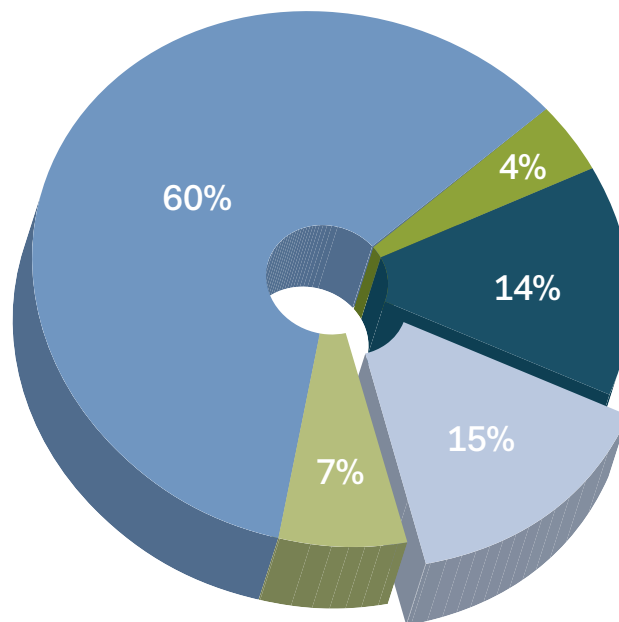
BUDGET

OCQAS is unique in our industry as we are owned, operated, and funded by the 24 public colleges in Ontario. Ontario Public Colleges pay a membership fee and this is our only income source. All activities required to support the colleges in their Quality Assurance processes are funded through these fees, such as college visits, credential validation reviews, audit panel members, travel and honorarium.

For the last five years, the annual budget for OCQAS has been \$500,000.

2016/2017 BUDGET ALLOCATION

- Salaries and Consulting Fees
- Business Development (Travel, PD,PR)
- Office and General
- CQAAP
- Special Projects





Ontario College Quality Assurance Service

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