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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Ensuring quality and consistency across the Ontario post-secondary education system
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Introductions

Lisa Sinclair is back at OCQAS on secondment until June 30th. She can be reached at sinclair@ocqas.org. Lisa's workdays are Mondays and Tuesdays. Lisa is the Coordinator, Quality Assurance & Administrative Projects at Loyalist College.

Sara Barnes will join Lisa on secondment, also until the end of June. Sara is an Academic Quality Lead at Georgian College. Sara's workdays are Tuesdays and Wednesdays and can be reached at barnes@ocqas.org.

When contacting CVS via email please send the email to the common CVS email address to ensure that emails are received by all CVS staff regardless of who is working that day. The new common email address is cvs@ocqas.org.

Secondments are available to anyone working in the Ontario College system who is interested in learning more about OCQAS' operations. They are awarded on a first-come, first-serve basis for a 6-month term, two days a week.

CQAAP Updates

- **Current State of Quality Assurance Activities Report:** to help auditors make clearer connections between work done to address recommendations from a college's previous audit, this report is now integrated into the Self-Study Report template and auditors must comment on the progress made in their final report.

- **Inclusion of Indigenous ways of knowing:** working with the Indigenous Thought Leaders (ITL) Circle, and with the support of the Indigenous People's Education Circle (IPEC), three CQAAP requirements have been updated to include guiding information, mechanisms and criteria specific to the inclusion of Indigenous ways of knowing. They are:

    1.3 Under Quality Assurance Mechanisms/ Stakeholder data: Indigenous was added to the list of groups where data should be gathered.

    4.2 Under Evidence: Indigenous ways of knowing and learning has been added to the list of methods for teaching and learning that should be available for faculty to explore.

    6.3 Under Guiding Information: Indigenous has been added to the list of academic support and advising services the colleges need to report on.

- **Program selection:** in response to the increase in non-funded program development across the Ontario College system, full-cost recovery programs will now be eligible for selection to represent the college's QA activities in CQAAP audits. Similar to credential type, these programs will be selected proportionately based on the type of programs a college offers.

- **Reminder:** Colleges who did not receive a "Mature Effort" Audit Decision are encouraged to contact OCQAS for an opportunity to observe another college's audit.

OCQAS Virtual College Tour

Thank you for having us!

While we cannot wait until we can visit you at your physical campus, we appreciate the opportunity to virtually meet with you to catch up and touch base on all things QA. Can you believe it's been six years since Karen's first tour?!

The OCQAS virtual college tour not only allowed us to share what we had learned during the CVS review, but also to gather even more information from different stakeholders including college presidents and vice-presidents academic, as we continue to improve our services. Here's a highlight of where the Ontario College system would like to see OCQAS focus on moving forward:

1. Advocacy with the Ministry:
   a. Streamline approval processes, where possible.
   b. Improve communication around expectations and policy.
   c. Review Provincial Program Standards
   d. Review the Ontario Qualifications Framework (OQF).

2. External advocacy:
   a. Raise the profile of Ontario Colleges' QA practices to help differentiate from private institutions.
3. Indigenous Presence in CQAAP:
   a. Continue the work done with IPEC.
   b. Include equity and diversity more broadly.
4. Micro-credentials:
   a. Define and develop standards and criteria for QA.
   b. Integrate into the OQF.

Moving forward, colleges are looking to OCQAS for support with:
- The need for rapid response to community/industry needs.
- Development and sharing of best practices resources.
- Workload challenges for smaller colleges.
- Addressing online delivery and adoption of technology.
- Facilitation of collaboration amongst the colleges.
- Finding efficiencies in QA/find a balance between responsiveness and quality.
- Inclusion of student perspectives.
- Clear and transparent communication of information.

The CVS AA Tool

The CVS Anytime, Anywhere Tool is now supported by OCAS. This change will help facilitate required changes to the tool in a timely manner. Thank you for your patience as we worked out the initial glitches.

Note: When submitting an application for validation, be sure to click 'Back to College Applications'. Otherwise, the application stays in 'edit mode' at the college.

We continue to work with OCAS to improve the user experience and functionality of the tool. Please let us know if you have any suggestions!

The CVS Review and Handbook

Background

In June 2021, as part of our own commitment to continuous improvement, the team embarked on a CVS Service Review. It started with a survey that was sent to the Heads of Quality Management and CDAG that asked 13 questions about stakeholders' satisfaction with the current services provided and a request for concrete suggestions for improvement. Thank you to our 80 respondents for taking time to answer the survey!

A qualitative analysis highlighted the following areas of focus:

1. Definition of CVS' role and scope, including its relationship to the Ministry.
2. Availability of resources, specifically in French, and the CVS tool.
3. Adequate capacity/staffing.
4. Expectations and requirements for CVS applications.
5. The quality of CVS' feedback.

The CVS team hosted two focus groups in September and October, 2020 with 12 volunteer participants who contributed to the survey results. These sessions helped the CVS team verify their interpretation of the survey results and garner even more concrete recommendations for improvement.

The CVS team shared the results of this review with stakeholders at each of the 24 colleges during the OCQAS virtual college tour that concluded early in January 2021.

CVS strives to provide efficient and transparent services that meet the needs of the 24 colleges in the system. As colleges work through processes of new program development and/or modification of existing programs, CVS staff provides guidance and support necessary for colleges to meet their goals, but also to ensure that programs align with the OQF and other Ministerial requirements.

In response to the system request for a more formal way of disseminating information, we created a CVS Handbook for New Program Submissions and Program Modifications. This document combined information from the program development/application rubric that was created in collaboration with George Brown College, information from newsletters, training materials, and in person communication. It was sent to the HQM executive for review and feedback.

This review garnered lots of feedback that has since been incorporated into the final version of ***The CVS Handbook for New Program Submissions and Program Modifications***. We would like give special thanks Fanshawe college specifically for their detailed feedback and recommendations!

The Handbook is the definitive guide for anyone who is submitting new program proposals or program modifications to CVS and will be required reading as part of the CVS training.

We recognize that there are various levels of experience, knowledge and understanding of CVS' processes throughout the Ontario College system. We will endeavour to continue to create additional resources that will complement the Handbook but will be more focused for various stakeholder groups (e.g., subject matter experts).

ACRONYMS

CQAAP – College Quality Assurance Audit Process
QA – Quality Assurance
CO – Colleges Ontario
OCAS – Ontario Quality Application Service

CVS – Credentials Validation Service
OCQAS – Ontario College Quality Assurance Service
OQF – Ontario Qualifications Framework
CDAG- Curriculum Developers Affinity Group

CVS Updates

1. **Admission Criteria**
In order to maintain two values of the Ontario College system – access and pathways – it is important that program-level admission requirements for similar programs are consistent. Program level admission requirements should consider the type of background a student would need in order to be successful in a program of a specific field of study. For example, a student entering a computer/technology program may require certain math or science credits that a public relations student may not.

2. **Program Titles**
Please remember, the approved program APS title articulated in the funding letter must appear exactly as stated on the Ontario College Credential awarded and in any and all program advertising materials.

3. **Program Modifications**
The CVS database contains all Program Descriptions that were validated since 2018. Programs that were validated prior to 2018 may not be in the database. If they are, they will be based on the last program that was validated by the Ministry.

   If you need to modify a program that is not in the database or requires updating, please use the ***CVS Application Form for Program Proposal***, or for title modifications, the ***CVS Request for Program Title Modification*** form. If the existing program is in the database, be sure to select the 'modify program' option in the top right-hand corner.

4. **Updating VLOs**
Because there is no requirement for re-validation of a program if the VLOs change less than 25%, Program Descriptions become outdated in the database quickly. When you are updating a program's VLOs that is mapped to a Program Description, please share your updated VLOs with CVS so that the database can be updated too.

5. **Support for Northern Colleges**
We are in the process of developing a support plan for Northern Colleges, including the creation of condensed resources with the basics for applications and modifications. These resources will be widely shared. Please stay tuned!

6. **Mapping to MTCU Codes not Programs**
We remind colleges, when creating a 'New' program using a Program Description, the exercise of selecting an MTCU code should focus on the alignment with the dimensions contained in that MTCU code, not the VLOs of another college's program within that code.

7. **French Resources**
We are working hard (special Thank you! Diane Bergeron) to ensure that all resources are also available in French. The CVS voice-over training and vocational learning outcomes workshop materials have recently been translated and posted to the French website.