



Ontario College Quality Assurance Service

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

# OCQAS STRATEGIC PLAN

## 2021-2024





To be acknowledged globally as a leading post-secondary education quality assurance agency in Canada.



## MISSION

To guide and support the public college system in Ontario through institutional quality assurance to achieve a standard of excellence recognized by students, graduates, employers, government, and the communities they serve.



## VALUES

### **Accountability**

We are a dependable agency that is responsive to the needs of those we serve.

### **Collaboration**

We respect, value and recognize the contribution of our many stakeholders and are committed to reflecting those contributions in our continuous improvement as a quality assurance agency.

### **Transparency**

We are consistent in our application and delivery of quality assurance services across the Ontario College system.

# GOALS, OBJECTIVES, TACTICS AND METRICS



## Strategic Priority: Training and Capacity Building

**Build capacity and mitigate the impact of personnel turnover in the System by revising and creating training and professional development opportunities to meet the emerging needs in the system.**

### RATIONALE

- Significant personnel turnover in the System (Board, Presidents, Vice-Presidents Academic, Deans) and within the Ministry
- Decreased offering of synchronous training
- Differences in size, structure, knowledge, and capacity of QA units in the System
- More consultants doing program development from outside the College System require training

### GOAL #1

**Increase the reach and impact of training and consultation.**

#### OBJECTIVE/TACTICS

**OCQAS will repurpose and develop training materials to enhance support for the System's quality assurance activities. This will include developing relevant accessible modular resources.**

Documentation and resources will:

- support both the CVS and CQAAP services for audiences we haven't directly served before, and Ministry where there can be significant turnover at all levels;
- be informative and clarify expectations to users regarding submissions;
- include choice from various modalities according to level of knowledge, availability and preference;
- meet the needs of a variety of QA personnel with varying levels of experience;
- be developed based on collaboration and evidence-based research.

**OCQAS will continue to offer consultation and development opportunities to stakeholders to promote consistency and build capacity in the System.**

Opportunities will include:

- different options to serve the needs of our diverse audience, including the varied QA units of the colleges;
- secondments and shadowing models, with increased flexibility to facilitate the participation of any interested person in the System.

#### METRICS

- Positive responses from users on the quality and completeness of the documentation and training resources (survey)
- College-specific metrics e.g., increase/decrease in number of interactions (properties in the tool)
- Satisfaction with consultation received
- Development of new secondment models



## Strategic Priority: Service Excellence

Champion quality assurance as continuous improvement and maintain the level of services, advocacy, and support for which OCQAS is known. Delineate OCQAS' role as steward to the colleges for the purposes of ensuring institutional quality assurance and facilitating continued development of high-quality programs in Ontario.

### RATIONALE

- Need to maintain the level of services, advocacy and support we are known for
- Perception of feedback on program submissions are inconsistent
- Need to ensure OCQAS practices quality assurance internally
- Perception by some of QA as additional work with no added value

## GOAL #2

**Enable colleges to answer rapidly changing market demands.**

### OBJECTIVE/TACTICS

**OCQAS will provide reliable and responsive service to support colleges in meeting the needs of the communities they serve.**

OCQAS will:

- maintain the current level of service, advocacy and support;
- simplify and streamline efforts needed by colleges for doing program submissions.

### METRICS

- Tracked response and resolution times; services staying within stated timelines
- Completion of a streamlined approach to program submissions

# GOAL #3

**Lead a healthy Quality Assurance culture.**

## OBJECTIVE/TACTICS

**OCQAS will facilitate internal reviews of services and engage in making sure the agency provides a streamlined, tightly focused service.**

OCQAS will:

- improve QA processes in ways that take fewer budgetary resources;
- identify generic elements of QA that could serve as templates that colleges can adopt (e.g., outcome mapping tools; generic academic policies; generic approval processes; common software tools that can easily be adopted by colleges; templates for expected review of student services);
- simplify and streamline efforts needed by colleges for doing CQAAP audits;
- differentiate Ontario College QA process from those of private colleges (i.e., Micro-credentials);
- advocate for new MTCU codes, review of program standards and competency-based education.

## METRICS

- Action items from INQAAHE 2021 review implemented
- Completion and implementation of changes in processes that help streamline QA activities for the colleges
- The advantages of the Ontario College QA processes profiled on the OCQAS website
- Updates provided to the College System of OCQAS advocacy efforts





## Strategic Priority: Enhanced Staffing and Future Planning

Increase the capacity of OCQAS in the interest of succession planning, and operational and strategic effectiveness. Continue to promote the secondment model as an equal opportunity that benefits all Ontario Colleges and contributes significantly to the work of OCQAS.

### RATIONALE

- Only one FTE in place to complete operational and strategic objectives
- No full-time French resource
- Secondments are rotational and there is a loss of knowledge for OCQAS

## GOAL #4

**Ensure the staffing and future planning model are meeting the current and future needs of the system.**

### OBJECTIVE/TACTICS

**OCQAS will develop and implement a staffing and succession model to support the OCQAS' operations and sustainability.**

Staffing and succession model will:

- continue a revised model of secondments for building system capacity that will reduce the cost to OCQAS but continues to build QA capacity of colleges;
- add an additional full-time employee that can add management capacity and undertake French language liaison and support with French colleges.

### METRICS

- A secondment selection and responsibility policy established
- New secondment models created
- Documents available and cross-role staff experience provided to ensure knowledge transfer and service continuity in the event of staff turnover
- Develop and implement a staffing plan that includes job description, budget allocation, advertising, and recruitment





## Strategic Priority: Branding and Communications

Raise the profile of the OCQAS to increase awareness of the quality of the Ontario College system for prospective students, the general public, and the Ontario government. Build recognition of OCQAS as a leading quality agency in Canada and staunch advocate for postsecondary programming in Ontario. Harness a variety of communication channels to facilitate collaboration among the colleges, and to disseminate information related to program and institutional quality assurance.

### RATIONALE

- Different structures of QA units in the System can lead to fragmented and inconsistent communication
- Lack of recognition for the work done by OCQAS within and outside the College System
- Increased global recognition of OCQAS processes would increase the recognition of the Ontario College System and its QA processes
- Lack of brand recognition; agency acronym is not recognizable in English and is mistaken for OCAS

## GOAL #5

**Promote a healthy Quality Assurance culture across the CAAT system.**

### OBJECTIVE/TACTICS

**OCQAS will enhance its communication strategy to better inform and engage stakeholders in the work of the organization.**

The communication strategy will:

- address the needs of the system related to OCQAS services;
- include information regarding Quality Assurance;
- enhance the profile of the colleges;
- use a variety of media to ensure a broad reach;
- build a QA profile that responds to government and ministry priorities.

### METRICS

- Development and implementation of a communication strategy
- Development and implementation of a social media communication strategy
- Creation of appropriate social media channels

# GOAL #6

## **Promote and highlight the Quality Assurance practices of the CAAT System.**

## OBJECTIVE/TACTICS

**OCQAS will develop a brand strategy to increase the agency's visibility, highlighting the strengths and accomplishments of the organization and its service to colleges.**

The brand strategy will:

- highlight the work of OCQAS;
  - enhance the profile of the colleges;
  - build OCQAS' public and government profile in order to help the System articulate its quality message;
  - build an international profile that encourages prospective students to apply to Ontario colleges;
  - develop its profile with employers to build their support and have them recognize the value of graduates from OCQAS validated programs and audited institutions;
  - develop its profile with college faculty so that they more highly value the QA processes.

## METRICS

- Development and implementation of a plan to strengthen the brand, and the means to enhance its reach





## Strategic Priority: Partnerships & Outreach

Continue involvement in provincial initiatives, and the important work of building relationships across the system, including with the colleges, the Ministry and the Indigenous Peoples Education Circle (IPEC). Commit to further involvement in research related to QA and increased engagement with national and international quality assurance agencies.

### RATIONALE

- OCQAS needs to enhance its services and extend its impact by connecting with external stakeholders
- Collaboration with the Indigenous Thought Leaders Circle needs to continue
- Need to continue to work with the cross-country checkup group and provincial groups (HQM, CCVPA)
- Not currently collaborating with other QA agencies internationally, as noted by INQAAHE

## GOAL #7

**Ensure sustained investment in relationship building.**

### OBJECTIVE/TACTICS

**OCQAS will continue to work with HQM/CCVPA/MCU/IPEC to inform quality assurance processes.**

OCQAS will:

- use the goals of the Strategic Plan to help set objectives for its relationships with its various partners;
- continue to invest in relationship building, a key element to the accomplishments and work it does with the Indigenous Thought Leaders Circle, and to the creation of forums such as the TriQA;
- strengthen linkages with the Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities.

### METRICS

- Working groups composed of members of HQM and CDAG have been established to provide OCQAS input on the CVS Credential Framework Guidelines, the CQAAP Guidelines and Framework, the CVS A/A tool

# GOAL #8

**Ensure sustained investment in QA research.**

## OBJECTIVE/TACTICS

**OCQAS will engage in research projects with quality assurance agencies across Canada and the world to increase OCQAS' visibility and improve established quality assurance practices.**

OCQAS will:

- continue to collaborate with its Canadian counterparts to inform QA best practices (i.e., Student Voice);
- increase international collaboration.

## METRICS

- Engage in at least two international and/or national research projects that inform the strategic initiatives of the organization



Ontario College Quality Assurance Service

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