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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We don’t want to miss your message or keep you waiting!

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Ensuring quality and consistency across the post-secondary education system
Visit our website! WWW.OCQAS.ORG
CVS Email Reminder
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.

Summer Newsletter Link
Also, in case you missed it, our Summer Newsletter was loaded with valuable information and updates related to two-year graduate certificates, the information review template, MTCU codes, updating VLOs and admission requirements. Click here to view the Summer Newsletter.

CVS Training Update
In August and September, CVS hosted a series of training sessions to provide Colleges with professional development opportunities related to writing VLOs, titling protocol and the CQAAP audit process. These sessions were offered virtually-synchronously and are available to listen asynchronously via the recordings which are posted on the CVS Resources page of the OCQAS website.

Currency of Base VLO Selection
Just a reminder for Colleges that are mapping to VLOs in the CVS Online Tool, make sure you are using the most current set of outcomes for the particular MTCU code! Any questions? Reach out to CVS for help!

OCQAS Strategic Plan & Annual Report Release
In case you missed it, in early October, OCQAS released the OCQAS Strategic Plan 2021-2024 and the Credential Validation Service Annual Report 2020-2021. These reports are available in French and English and are published on the OCQAS website. The Strategic Plan highlights the vision, mission and values of the OCQAS and outlines the goals, objectives, tactics and metrics for the next 3-year cycle. The Annual Report highlights the CVS core functions and activity over the last academic year.

We value your feedback. If you have any questions or comments about these two documents, please connect with OCQAS at cvs@ocqas.org.
Survey results indicate overwhelmingly that the 2020-2021 CQAAP was a positive experience for both the colleges and the audit panel. Respondents are appreciative of the support OCQAS provides throughout the process, and are very positive about the virtual site visit. In response to the feedback, OCQAS will be working on the following in the new year:

- Providing clearer parameters regarding volume, organization and accessibility of evidence for auditors.
- Development of guidance/exemplars for organizing the Self-study;
- The potential for mentorship and leveraging colleges who have been through the process for valuable advice.

OCQAS Working Groups

Working Group Updates
In 2021, OCQAS started a series of working groups to support its own quality assurance processes. These working groups consist of a variety of volunteer staff, faculty and administrators from across the Ontario college system. Here are some updates on the working group’s achievements so far.

CVS Guidelines Working Group
The Guidelines Working Group was established to review all components of the CVS Guidelines, with the goal of implementing changes for the 2022-2023 academic year. Several areas of focus have been identified, including program hours, two-year graduate certificate programs, admission requirements, apprenticeships, and micro-credentials, among others. The group, which includes representatives from ten colleges, has been very productive, already meeting three times since the beginning of October. The discussion has been rich and will provide valuable input into the next revision of the CVS Guidelines.

CVS Online Tool Working Group
The Online Tool Working Group has met several times and identified efficiencies and improvements that could be built into the tool for a more seamless and effective validation experience. These improvements include creating clarity in the tool’s functionality, building more flexibility and usability into the tool. The list of suggestions for improvements has been triaged and the developers are currently working on making these improvements. Stay tuned!

CQAAP Working Group
The CQAAP Guidelines Working Group has met twice this fall so far (Oct and Nov) and will continue to meet monthly. They will review the CQAAP Standards documentation, including the additional documents that help colleges to complete the self-study and the audit site visit. Working group discussions on key topics will inform improvements to the guidelines and clarification on requirements for Program Selection, Public Private Partnerships, Micro-credentials, Agenda planning, Site Visit Participants, Evidence Mapping Template, Auditor Selection Process, and the Self-Study Narrative. The working group is committed to addressing these priority topics and updating the guidelines for the 2022-23 academic year.
Apprenticeship OCC Project

In recent years, some Ontario colleges have started granting apprenticeship graduates with Ontario College Certificates (OCC) to recognize the achievement of learning outcomes that align with Certificate programs.

Additionally, the Council of Presidents (COP) has recently agreed that apprentices who complete their final in-school portion at a college, should receive an OCC. This would provide the colleges with a competitive advantage over other Training Delivery Agents, as well as enable those apprentices who don’t complete their Certificate of Qualification (CofQ) but who have completed their in-school, the benefit of a pathway into other college educational programs.

CVS supports this activity, as all new Ontario Credentials require a program validation regardless of the program’s funding source.

The typical duration for an Ontario College Certificate program is 600 to 700 hours delivered over two semesters. CVS recognizes the time requirements associated with apprenticeships, which is typically 720 hours over three semesters, and considers this as appropriate alignment.

There are a few apprenticeship programs that provide less than 600 hours of in-school training. In these cases, a decision has been made that programs with less than 480 total hours will not be validated at OCC. Those programs should remain as locally approved certificates as per the College’s framework for non-funded credentials.

Titles for such programs need to align with CVS titling protocols and other programs within the chosen MTCU Code and typically have ‘apprenticeship’ as a modifier. In some cases, sectors have agreed upon titles. Please consult with CVS early in your process to ensure you’ve chosen an appropriate title.

All other elements of a new program application apply; however, in addition to system-level admission requirements, program-level admission requirements must include a requirement for students to be in good standing and registered as an apprentice with the Ministry of Labour, Training, and Skills Development (MLTSD).

Vocational Learning Outcomes (VLOs) can be modified to reflect the nature of the apprenticeship when the program is mapped to a program description but if the program is mapped to a program standard, additional VLOs should be added to include the apprenticeship element. Essential Employability Skills must also be mapped into these programs.

Samples of validated apprenticeship OCCs can be accessed to help Colleges complete these validation applications. These samples can be found on the Dropbox.

To date, CVS has validated a total of 122 apprenticeship OCCs which represents approximately 44% of the total apprenticeship programs in the Ontario College system.

For more information on this process, please check out the Developing an Ontario College Credential for Apprenticeship Programs resource on the website, or contact CVS at cvs@ocqas.org.