Ontario College Quality Assurance Service

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

OCQAS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN
MEDIA, BRANDING AND STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES
2022-2023

INTRODUCTION

The OCQAS Strategic Plan 2021-2024 has highlighted the need for a communications plan to meet various of its objectives. It recognizes that to meet its vision to be acknowledged as a leading post-secondary education quality assurance agency (QA) in Canada, it needs to be more visible and familiar to its users, post-secondary institutions and quality assurance authorities across the province, the country and in the global QA arena.

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

OCQAS relies heavily on three main sources to disseminate information: the website, the Heads of QA Group from Ontario public colleges and the Curriculum Developers Affinity Group. It does not currently participate in the social media realm, nor does it actively advertise its services or boast its importance and value.

A current survey to the usual group members revealed that OCQAS users mainly look for information on the OCQAS website. Most users are not entirely satisfied as they find the website difficult to navigate, barely searchable and they feel that they spend too much time looking for the information and once they find it, they are not certain that it is the most up to date information. Most participants identified the website as the preferred method of accessing information.

OCQAS is a member of International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) and has developed a small network through this membership. OCQAS aims to maximize on the resources and people involved with INQAAHE to grow the network and to highlight best practices across the world.

OCQAS employs auditors from many Canadian provinces which also supports Canadian networking opportunities. In the current state, outreach of this type is at a minimum, OCQAS could further explore of these connections through the auditors.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
QA resource for a variety of educational institutions and QA authorities Part of few provinces that requires QA audits on colleges Specific and unique purpose for public colleges Ontario public colleges need the service Bilingual service Involved with international QA Small staff adapt quickly to the demands and changes	Limited employee resources Not all materials are available in both official languages Website needs improvements Is only needed by Ontario Colleges Not present on social media Updating all materials in a timely fashion No current email list – relies on groups Brand and value are unknown Limited financial resources Current processes do not include software support Changes to the CVS AA Tool are slow
Opportunities	**Threats**
Fresh start to get a message to the public Current appetite for accreditations and QA Evidence-based practice is booming Highlighting QA culture is positive and rewarding Fresh branding to showcase what is important to OCQAS and its users	The target users are constantly changing QA processes can be intimidating QA processes can feel onerous Information shared can be bland Preferential treatment could be perceived

Objectives

The OCQAS is dedicated to meeting its mission to guide and support the public college system in Ontario through institutional quality assurance with the goal of achieving a standard of excellent recognized by students, graduates, employers, the government, and the communities it serves. It will require a focused engagement in outreaching communications that will include current communications practices and new robust practices that not only include operational information but that will highlight innovative practices as well as local and global champions in quality assurance.

COMMUNICATIONS

Objectives	Purpose	Methods	Outcome/Metrics
Select and use different media/process to communicate with our diverse group of Stakeholders directly	• To inform and update stakeholders in a timely manner • To collect information from stakeholders to support OCQAS processes	• Identify all stakeholders (CVS AA Tool account requesters, HQM and CDOG members) • Survey stakeholders to learn the best medium for communicating with them • Host QA forums	• Identify the best communication media/process • Create accounts for new channels of communication • Create email lists • # emails • # members on email lists • # participants in forums
Lead a healthy Quality Assurance culture	• Address the needs of the system related to OCQAS services including validations • Ensure that the materials available are current and relevant • Support QA networking	• Develop training materials • Offer training and information sessions • Host QA forums • Update Website • Host Working Groups • Present to various stakeholders	• Streamline processes for CVS and CQAAP • # workshops, presentations • # Newsletters • # training materials created • # participants in forums and working groups
Highlight the Quality Assurance practices of the CAAT System.	• To recognize best-practices and encourage continuous improvement in the college system	• Gather and document best practices • Share findings	• Collected social media data • # emails • # website posts

Branding

Objectives	Purpose	Method/Audience	Metrics
Develop a Brand strategy to increase the agency's visibility	• To highlight the strengths and accomplishments of the organization and its service	• Share best practices with users of the OCQAS services including HQM/CCVPA/MCU/IPEC, Government, Provincial, National and International QA authorities and contacts	• Collected social media data • # emails • # website posts
Promote the Quality Assurance practices of the CAAT System.	• To highlight the College's QA processes • To promote OCQAS' involvement in supporting QA successes of the Colleges	• Share QA information with college faculty and staff in mind • Share stories targeted to prospective students and employers	• Collected social media data • # emails • # website posts

MEASURING RESULTS

The first metric of importance in this communications plan is establishing a baseline. Because OCQAS is not on social media nor does it have an email list or deliver regular messages (including newsletters) outside the groups mentioned, establishing a starting point to grow from is easy. The plan aims at monitoring data and metrics from the new processes to inform decisions on communications methods and media. This first year of the plan will inform next steps with learned experiences from communications trials. Some expected outcomes and metrics include the following:

a) Creation of email lists for various purposes
   a. Number of emails sent
   b. Number of email participants
      i. CVS updates
      ii. QA best practices
      iii. Newsletters
      iv. Shout outs
b) Creation of social media accounts
   a. Number of accounts created
   b. Number of posts on each account
   c. Data relevant to each account such as followers and likes
c) Supporting QA networking
   a. Number of participants in working groups and forums
d) Development of educational Tools
   a. Number of newly developed short accessible videos including French videos
   b. YouTube views
   c. Number of presentations/conferences
   d. Number of informational documents and training materials
e) Best practices interviews with global QA authorities
   a. Number of interviews
   b. Number of upcoming participants
f) User satisfaction of the improved website
   a. Survey to users

TIMELINES

Though some activities have been started, the OCQAS team plans to enthusiastically engage in communications activities throughout the upcoming year. Some planned activities and timelines are as follows:

PROJECT					PROJECT START DATE					PROJECT END DATE				
OCQAS Communications Plan Activities 2022-2023					August 2022					July 2023				

ACTIVITY	ASSIGNED TO	STATUS	START	END	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL
Create Email List for CVS users	Sylvie	Not Started	08/22	04/23												
Email Newsletter	Sylvie	Ongoing	08/22	07/23												
Email Shout Outs	Sylvie	Not Started	09/22	07/23												
Create Email List for OCQAS news	Sylvie Karen	Not Started	08/22	04/23												
Create a Twitter Account	Sylvie	Not Started	09/22	09/22												
Send Tweets Bi-Weekly	Sylvie Karen	Not Started	09/22	07/23												
Create a LinkedIn Account	Sylvie	Not Started	10/22	10/22												
Post a monthly LinkedIn Success Story or best practice	Karen Sylvie	Not Started	10/22	07/23												
QA Best Practice Interviews	Karen Sylvie	Not Started	08/22	07/23												
Improve Website	Sylvie	Not Started	09/22	02/23												
Launch "new" Website	Sylvie	Not Started	03/23	04/23												
Develop Educational Tools	Sylvie	Ongoing	08/22	07/23												

In Conclusion

The OCQAS team commits to the communications plan and intends to build on this foundational proposal in 2023-2024 to meet the strategic goals and objectives. The plan is intended to be used as a guide and is a working document that may be adjusted or added to. A summary report will be created from which the next communication plan will stem.