



Ontario College Quality Assurance Service

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

STANDARDS OF PRACTICE FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION Quality Assurance Audit (SPIEQAA)

GUIDELINES AND FRAMEWORK (Pilot Project- Fall 2023)

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1. INTRODUCTION TO THE STANDARDS OF PRACTICE FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION FOR ONTARIO'S COLLEGES

In the development of an approach to self-regulation, a decision was made to focus on *quality assurance*: the mechanism or procedures used to measure the level or existence of quality. To that end, the Ontario College Quality Assurance Service (OCQAS), a policy-driven, arms-length independent oversight and governance body, established in 2005, and operating independently of any individual academic institution and of the provincial government, focuses on:

- ensuring that programs leading to an Ontario College credential conform to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities' (MTCU) Credential Framework which functions through the Credentials Validation Service (CVS).
- leading the audit process and evaluating the effectiveness of quality assurance systems within colleges which operates through the College Quality Assurance Audit Process (CQAAP).
- setting the parameters, piloting, and auditing the sector-wide standards created by the Ontario Colleges to strengthen the programs and supports for international students.

In this capacity, OCQAS contributes to and enhances the continuous quality improvement efforts of public college education in Ontario.

The Ontario public colleges, through the work of OCQAS, have developed a strong, well-received, and effective quality assurance system since 2005. This was affirmed in 2021 by an external review and evaluation by the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE).

2. QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK

i. Guiding Principles

A set of *Guiding Principles* were developed and approved by the Committee of Presidents (COP) and the OCQAS Management Board in 2023. These guiding principles ensure that any quality assurance and improvement model developed for Ontario's colleges must:

- be consistent with international best practices.
- be effective, efficient, and cyclical.
- give appropriate notice to colleges prior to review.
- be described and operate as an audit which provides a review of each college's educational *quality assurance mechanisms* to ensure that minimum standards are met.



- use an external, competent, mutually agreeable, objective peer review audit panel.
- follow a mandatory and clear process that identifies strengths and weaknesses, recommends improvements, and facilitates positive change.
- distribute a preliminary report to the college for its response and include the college response in the final report.
- provide for categories of approval.
- provide a method and system for appeals regarding its decisions and reports.
- provide for consistency of audit panel decisions.
- be sustainable and affordable for the system as a whole and for the individual colleges in the system.

ii. Principles

All signatory colleges commit to be guided by the following principles in their delivery of education to international students. Public colleges that have partnered with private colleges agree that those colleges are also guided by these principles:

- **Student-focused** – Putting students at the centre of all that we do and ensuring their perspectives are considered in decision-making.
- **Professional** – Providing accurate information and demonstrating integrity in relationships with students, potential students and their families, international education agents and all post-secondary education partners.
- **Transparent** – Developing transparent relationships with potential and enrolled students through the open sharing of information that allows students to make informed choices.
- **Collaborative** – Working collaboratively with communities, governments, and other parties to support the success of international students.
- **Culturally sensitive and responsive** – Recognizing student diversity in providing supports and services.
- **Accountable** – Acknowledging the college's role in student well-being and success and working with students and partners to address issues as they arise.
- **Continuous improvement** – Seeking feedback on an ongoing basis, assessing the impact of programs and services, and adjusting approaches to continuously improve the quality and impact of programs and services.

iii. Defining Quality

The OCQAS defines quality as the alignment and consistency of the learning environment with the institution's vision, mission, and goals (*fit for purpose*) demonstrated by the development of a culture of quality, in other words, the ability of an institution to reach its stated objectives and fulfill them.



- Quality as a *process* which can be defined in terms of:
 - *Internal quality assurance*, which refers to ongoing activities implemented by an institution to ensure it is indeed reaching its stated objectives.
 - An internal quality assurance system begins with the institution's identity and enters a quality cycle of *planning, implementation, review, and enhancement*. The *plan-do-check-act* cycle is applied to the institution's capacity to:
 - translate vision, mission, and goals into desired learning outcomes.
 - establish quality assurance mechanisms and structures.
 - review against predetermined defined standards and their accompanying requirements.
 - enhance mechanisms and systems.

The process develops into a continuous cycle of improvement.

 - *External quality assurance*, which refers to activities implemented by an external body to evaluate, based on agreed-upon and predetermined quality standards, the ability of an institution's quality assurance processes to ensure it is meeting its stated objectives.
- Quality as a *system* which consists of a structured yet dynamic organization of different quality assurance *mechanisms*.
- Quality as *improvement* which refers to the ability of the established quality assurance system to be effective by demonstrating and ensuring continuous growth.

iv. Evidence-based Evaluation Approach

The OCQAS adopts an evidence-based evaluation of the institution's objectives through an audit process. The audit is based on agreed-upon and predetermined standards and their accompanying requirements to determine whether the institution's mechanisms are sufficiently robust and effectively designed to achieve the expected outcomes.

Such an audit does not make specific judgments on activities; however, it does examine service-specific *evidence* to the extent necessary to be able to establish that institutional systems are functioning properly.

This approach respects an institution's culture, values, principles and evaluation methods that allow each institution to demonstrate its ability to meet the established standards, and thus takes into consideration the vision, mission, and goals of the institution.



3. OVERVIEW OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS

i. The Quality Assurance Mechanisms

In a college, the quality assurance mechanisms can take many shapes and cover different requirements of the standards. For OCQAS, a quality assurance mechanism is both mandatory and guiding from an institutional perspective and has been documented and implemented to ensure quality and continuous improvement. Mechanisms most often take the form of (but are not limited to) *structures, policies, practices, processes, programs, guides, templates, plans, committees, forums, regulations, legislation, by-laws, and various tools*.

ii. The Quality Assurance System Submitted to an Audit

Ontario's public colleges have over the years implemented a diverse range of mechanisms that assure and measure the existence and level of quality within their institutions. The institutional quality assurance system includes an institutional management system designed to collect the evidence required to demonstrate the implementation of these mechanisms and their effectiveness.

The primary purpose of the audit is to examine the effectiveness of those mechanisms in ensuring quality, ensuring that the college's programs and services are being delivered consistent with the standards of practice for international education, including (where relevant) the colleges' programs and services delivered through a private partner.

iii. Evaluation Criteria

The standards and their accompanying requirements provide the framework for Ontario's colleges to assess the extent to which their quality assurance mechanisms are meeting the established standards.

Quality Assurance Standards

The following *five standards* to be met are:

1. Marketing, promotion and admission.
2. International education agents.
3. International student orientation and transition.
4. Standards for supports and services to promote student well-being and safety.
5. Standards for post-graduation support services.



It is expected that determination of the effectiveness of a college’s quality assurance system, in other words, its ability to ensure continuous improvement of quality in its stated objectives, will be based on the following:

- *implementation* of quality assurance mechanisms.
- *effectiveness* of these mechanisms, that is, their ability to ensure a continuous improvement in quality by:
 - conducting a critical assessment of achievement of the mechanisms’ stated objectives.
 - identifying areas of strength and areas for improvement to ensure these objectives are met.
 - implementing corrective measures for improvement, namely through an action plan, in a context of continuous quality improvement.
- *review and updating (enhancement)* of quality assurance mechanisms to ensure their effectiveness.

The following provides details of the standards and their accompanying requirements for each component of the quality assurance system.

STANDARD 1

MARKETING, PROMOTION AND ADMISSION

Effective quality assurance mechanisms ensure accessibility of marketing, promotion, and admission information for international students.

REQUIREMENTS

The colleges must:

<p>1.1 Undertake marketing of and communication about their academic programs and services that is accurate, consistent with Canadian and Ontario law and not misleading. This includes not guaranteeing any academic, immigration or employment outcome.</p>
<p>1.2 Make accessible to prospective students information to support them to make informed choices about programs suited to their background, goals and aspirations, including information about:</p> <p>1.2.1 The nature of college education and student responsibilities at Ontario colleges.</p> <p>1.2.2 Entry requirements, including language proficiency.</p> <p>1.2.3 Student life in Ontario including the types and cost of accommodation and the types of part-time work available while studying.</p> <p>1.2.4 The student profile at the campus at which the program is delivered.</p> <p>1.2.5 The services the college provides such as academic supports, health-care services, and housing services as well as related services that may be available in the community.</p>
<p>1.3 Recognize the complexities of international admissions and visa approval processes, endeavor to provide alternative enrolment options when managing program capacity constraints.</p>



STANDARD 2

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION AGENTS

Effective quality assurance mechanisms ensure monitoring of professional and ethical relationships with international education agents and other partners in the marketing and admission process.

REQUIREMENTS

The colleges must:

- | |
|---|
| 2.1 Manage its relationships with international education agents and other partners in the marketing and admissions process to support honest business practices that are in the best interests of international students and uphold the reputation of Ontario’s postsecondary sector. |
| 2.2 Require its education agents and other recruitment partners to comply with the standards under marketing, promotion and admission outlined in section one and to be transparent with prospective students about the rationale for recommending alternate programs. |
| 2.3 Require its international education agents to have completed an Ontario college sector endorsed agent training program. |
| 2.4 Monitor the performance of its education agents and other recruitment partners, including terminating contracts with any education agent who has been involved in any serious, deliberate or ongoing conduct that is false, misleading, deceptive, or in breach of the law. |

STANDARD 3

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ORIENTATION AND TRANSITION

Effective quality assurance mechanisms ensure the availability and provision of international student orientation and transition programs.

REQUIREMENTS

The colleges must:

- | |
|--|
| 3.1 Provide orientation and welcoming initiatives, both prior to and following arrival in Ontario. |
| 3.2 Make available information, both before and after arrival, on the services, supports, and facilities that the college offers to all students, including those specifically designed for international students. This would include information related to:
3.2.1 Housing and residence options.
3.2.2 Health, safety and mental well-being
3.2.3 Education/academic progression.
3.2.4 Learning support services, including accessible education services.
3.2.5 Local community integration.
3.2.6 Part time employment opportunities and federal and provincial government information on employment applicable to international students.
3.2.7 Federal and provincial government information on immigration status of international students and citizenship pathways, including information related to the post-graduation work permit where applicable.
3.2.8 Daily life (e.g., weather, transportation services, housing, childcare, communications, personal finance, and banking). |



3.3 Make available information on relevant college policies (e.g., academic policies, information technology use, students' code of conduct, harassment and bullying, anti-racism, sexual harassment and misconduct)

STANDARD 4

STANDARDS FOR SUPPORTS AND SERVICES TO PROMOTE STUDENT WELL-BEING AND SAFETY

Effective quality assurance mechanisms ensure the monitoring of additional and targeted supports and services to promote student well-being and safety.

REQUIREMENTS

The colleges must:

Medical Insurance
4.1 Ensure that each international student who is enrolled for educational instruction has appropriate insurance covering medical care in Ontario.
Student Safety
4.2 Take all reasonable steps to provide a safe environment on campus and advise international students on actions they can take to enhance their personal security and safety on and off campus, including how to seek assistance and report on an incident that significantly impacts their well-being.
Student Safety
4.3 Document critical on-campus safety incidents and remedial action taken by the college.
Health and Mental Well-Being
4.4 Provide international students with the opportunity to engage in experiences on-campus, off-campus and/or in the virtual campus to improve their physical and mental health, well-being and safety.
Health and Mental Well-Being
4.5 Provide information to international students about how to access medical and mental health services through the college or through community and public services, including culturally responsive services where they may be available.
Education/Academic Progression
4.6 Offer academic supports.
Education/Academic Progression
4.7 Provide professional development opportunities to college staff to help them continuously improve, engage with and support international students.
Anti-racism, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
4.8 Champion an on-campus environment that is safe and welcoming, and fosters greater equity, diversity and inclusion for students from minority groups including racialized and 2SLGBTQIA+ community members and students with disabilities.



STANDARD 5

STANDARDS FOR POST-GRADUATION SUPPORT SERVICES

Effective quality assurance mechanisms ensure the availability and accessibility of college-wide post-graduation support services for international students.

REQUIREMENTS

The colleges must:

5.1 Provide graduating international students who choose to stay in Ontario with federal and provincial government information on the immigration status of international students and citizenship pathways, including information related to the post-graduation work permit where applicable.

5.2 Provide recent graduates with employment services.

5.3 Link graduating students to alumni networks, programs, and supports.

iv. The Audit Process

The audit process is comprised of several stages:

- an audit package built by the college,
- an audit visit,
- an audit report written by the audit panel,
- a review of the report by the college,
- the approval of the report by the OCQAS Management Board, and
- a 24-month follow-up report submitted by the college.

v. Auditor Training

The training of the potential audit panel members consists of two (2) compulsory training sessions:

i. Auditor Orientation

The group of potential audit panel members are trained on the following:

- Understanding of the Standards and the Requirements.
- Expected code of conduct (confidentiality, impartiality, respect).
- Roles and responsibilities.
- Conflict of interest guidelines.
- Accessing and using the required resources and documentation.

ii. Assessment of an Audit Package



Following the auditor orientation, potential audit panel members will be required to complete an assessment of a college's audit package.

Prior to participating in this training session, the potential audit panel members will be asked to sign a mandatory confidentiality agreement to prevent the unauthorized disclosure of proprietary and confidential information, as will be defined by the agreement.

The assessment process of an audit package is as follows:

- The group of potential audit panel members will review the college's audit package.
- Once the initial review is completed, the group of potential audit panel members will be asked to submit their initial review results to OCQAS.
- OCQAS will evaluate the results of the initial review to assess inter-reliability using the following statistical measure:
 - Fleiss's kappa: a statistical measure for assessing the reliability of agreement between a fixed number of raters when assigning categorical ratings to several items or classifying items. The measure calculates the degree of agreement in classification over that which would be expected by chance.
- The groups of potential audit panel members will receive specific training from OCQAS in order to address the inconsistencies highlighted by the inter-reliability measure.
- The groups of potential audit panel members will be asked to submit a second review of the same audit package for re-evaluation by OCQAS according to the same statistical measure.

Based on results of the re-evaluation, a final selection of three (3) audit panel members will be made by OCQAS and submitted to each of the colleges as their final audit panel.

This approach to auditor 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 audit visit.

Audit Panel Composition

The OCQAS recruits experts with diverse backgrounds within the post-secondary education network and elsewhere. These experts may include directors or senior employees associated to international education, student support, quality assurance, registrar, or enrolment services. Experts may also be recruited from diverse socioeconomic groups or from colleges/universities offering degrees in education-related fields.

The audit panel members are selected both for their knowledge of the post-secondary education network and their experience in evaluation and quality assurance.



Audit panel members must have the following qualifications:

- Demonstrated recent experience (5-10 years) in the post-secondary education sector as a senior administrator or a position that collaborated with units and areas across the institution.
- Knowledge and understanding of policies, procedures and practices in the post-secondary education sector.
- Ability to collect and verify audit evidence.
- Ability to compose findings and conclusions (information analysis and synthesis).
- Strong report writing skills.
- Ability to form and develop interpersonal and professional relationships.
- Ability to work independently and as a member of a team (collaborative work).
- Strong problem-solving and critical thinking skills.
- Strong organizational and project management skills.
- Ability to be objective and impartial.

Further, audit panel members must not have an employment, advising, or contract relationship with the college under review, or any other connection that could create a conflict of interest, whether perceived or real.

The audit panel composition generally follows the structure outlined below; however, extenuating circumstances and the need for external confidence may require changes to be approved by the OCQAS Management Board after consultation with the college being audited.

- One (1) qualified and trained audit panel chair who is external¹ to the CAAT system and has demonstrated audit experience, preferably direct experience with at least one (1) audit in an Ontario College, either as a panelist or an observer to the process.
- Two (2) qualified and trained audit panelists from within, or external to, the CAAT system, and external to the college being reviewed.

The members of the audit panel are accompanied by one (1) OCQAS employee who participates strictly as an observer which means without interference in any aspect of the audit (this individual may not inject, provide opinions, argue a finding, speak for or against a finding). The OCQAS employee may however offer redirection or clarification at times, as required, to ensure standards and their accompanying requirements are being accurately interpreted.

¹ *External* is defined as follows: residing outside of the province and having worked outside of the CAAT system for a minimum of five (5) years.



For each audit, panel members are selected to analyze the audit package submitted by the college, visit the college (virtually), and make evaluation decisions and recommendations for improvement. The audit panel members are tasked with:

- Analyzing, prior to the audit visit, the audit package submitted by the college.
- Identifying items requiring further verification and clarification prior to the audit visit.
- Participating in all aspects of the audit visit.
- Verifying the effectiveness of the college's quality assurance mechanisms based on the information acquired prior to, and during the audit visit.
- Collaborating with other audit panel members.
- Preparing the audit report which specifies, where applicable, recommendations to the college for continuous improvement based on the audit findings.

Audit panel members are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner throughout the entire audit process. The following are the guidelines that audit panel members are expected to follow:

- Perform work with integrity (honesty, diligence, responsibility).
- Perform work in an impartial manner.
- Ensure fair presentation (report truthfully, openly and accurately using evidence-based audit findings).
- Exercise due diligence and professional care.
- Exercise discretion, confidentiality and proper handling of information acquired during the audit process.
- Ask carefully planned audit questions related to the standards.
- Act in a manner that is free from bias and conflict of interest.
- Communicate in a diplomatic and objective and timely manner.
- Maintain open communication channels.

All audit panel members are made aware of the expected professional conduct practices through their training with OCQAS.

4. STAGES OF THE AUDIT PROCESS

All documents can be found on the OCQAS website: www.ocqas.org.

i. Notification of the Audit

The OCQAS will communicate with the designated college representative(s) from the colleges to be audited for the Pilot after the approval of the Committee of Presidents



(COP). At that time, the OCQAS will outline, in general terms, the information and documentation that the college is required to submit in advance of the audit.

Timeframe: One week after COPs approval of the Pilots.

ii. Dates for the SPIEQAA Pilots

	Submission of Sites	Submission of the Audit Package	Auditor Training Audit Package assessment	Review of the Audit Package and Follow-up	Audit Visit	Preparation and Submission of the Preliminary Audit Report	Review of the Preliminary Audit Report	Submission of the Final Audit Report
1	Sep 18, 2023 Northern College	Oct 16, 2023	Oct 30, 2023	Nov 15, 2023	Nov 20-24, 2023	Dec 18, 2023	Jan 15, 2024	Jan 22, 2024
2	Sep 25, 2023 Mohawk College	Oct 23, 2023	Nov 6, 2023	Nov 20, 2023	Dec 4-8, 2023	Jan 8, 2024	Jan 22, 2024	Jan 29, 2024
3	Oct 2, 2023 Humber College	Oct 30, 2023	Nov 13, 2023	Nov 27, 2023	Dec 11-15, 2023	Jan 15, 2024	Jan 29, 2024	Feb 5, 2024

iii. Submission of Sites

The purpose of site identification is to ensure representation.

- Colleges will submit to OCQAS the list of all campuses, access sites and Private Partners.

Timeframe: 4 weeks prior to the college’s scheduled Audit Package Submission.

iv. Completing the Standards of Practice for International Education Quality Assurance Audit (SPIEQAA)

As part of its internal evaluation process, the college is required to carry out and record the critical assessment of the effectiveness of its quality assurance mechanisms in an audit package.

The audit package will describe the mechanisms used by the college to ensure their home campus and those of its Public College-Private Partnerships (PCPPs) (when and where they



exist) operate with the same student protections and standards of services, accountability, quality assurance and provide evidence of their effectiveness.

The audit package which is either a self-study or QA Book, must be concise, supported by relevant evidence, and accompanied by a continuous improvement action plan.

v. The College Self-Evaluation Process

The college is required to collect evidence and conduct a comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness of its quality assurance mechanisms, according to the standards and their accompanying requirements.

This analysis must be based on valid and sufficient data to provide an effective critical assessment and demonstration of strengths and areas for improvement in the effectiveness of its quality assurance mechanisms. Based on the results of this self-assessment process, the college can then draw conclusions for each component of its quality assurance system.

The OCQAS staff will assist the college in preparing for its audit by doing an 'informal review' of their self-study or QA Book and/or the Cover Letter prior to the final submission and by providing the required support and feedback. This opportunity for an informal review is not mandatory; however, it is highly recommended.

vi. Submission of the Audit Package

Self-Study Option:

In addition to the completed self-study and supporting evidence, the college must submit the following accompanying document to OCQAS:

- A current organizational chart for the college, including names and responsibilities of all senior college employees.

QA Book option

In addition to the completed QA Book and supporting evidence, the college must submit the following accompanying documents to OCQAS:

- A current organizational chart for the college, including names and responsibilities of all senior college employees.
- A Cover Letter, which will include the college's QA structure, activities and goals and the opportunity to brag a little about commendable practices.
 - A Critical Review – Appendix A (a self-reflection and affirmations as needed on each standard and accompanying requirements).



The documents must be submitted electronically using a system/tool of the college's choosing, (i.e., database system, file storage and synchronization system, etc.). Regardless of the system, colleges must select technology that is user-friendly and secure, provide appropriate technical support, and ensure that documents are easily accessible, searchable, and clearly identified.

Documents to be completed/provided by the college and submitted to OCQAS:

- **Self-Study (sample template provided)**
- **SPIEQAA Book (sample template provided)**
 - **Cover Letter**
- *a current and complete college organizational chart.*

Timeframe: 6 weeks prior to the college's scheduled audit visit date.

vii. Confirmation of the Audit Visit Dates and Audit Panel Members

Following the auditor training, an official electronic confirmation of the previously agreed-upon audit visit dates and final audit panel members is sent by OCQAS to the designated college representative responsible for liaison with the audit panel chair.

Timeframe: 4 weeks prior to the college's scheduled audit visit date.

viii. Review of the Audit Package and Follow-up Questions

The college's audit package received is analyzed and reviewed for completeness by the audit panel. Following the reception and final review of the audit package, the audit panel chair promptly submits to the designated college representative, any request for additional documentation/evidence and questions related to the college's audit package that require further clarification and investigation. The college must respond in a timely fashion, providing the audit panel chair with the requested information and documentation.

Document to be completed by the audit panel and submitted to the college:

Audit Panel Review Questions and Areas Requiring Further Investigation

Timeframe:

- ***Submission of request to the college representative for additional information: at least 2 weeks prior to the college's scheduled audit visit date.***
- ***Submission of college response to the audit panel chair: at least 1 week prior to the college's scheduled audit visit date.***

ix. Preparation for the Audit Visit



The designated college representative develops a draft schedule for the audit visit and submits a copy to the audit panel chair for review and consideration. The audit panel chair forwards any comments or proposed modifications to the designated college representative to help finalize the audit visit schedule.

The schedule will be drafted according to the following audit visit requirements:

Representative Group/Function*	Representation Requirements	Duration (1.5 days)
Senior Leadership	Locally determined (i.e., President, VP Academic, VP Student Services, VP International, VP Finance, VP Human Resources)	Beginning of day 1 (30 min.) for opening remarks. End of audit visit (30 min.) for closing remarks.
Students enrolled in main or other college campus	<p>General Requirements: In order to provide the audit panel with a complete overview of the college's international student population, we ask that the college ensure diversity of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Country of origin - Program - Start date (fall, winter, spring) - Campus and/or site <p>Group Meeting(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The audit panel will meet with two (2) groups of students separately. • Each group will have between six (6) to a maximum of twelve (12) students. 	40 min./group
Students enrolled with Private Partners	<p>General Requirements: In order to provide the audit panel with a complete overview of the international student population attending a Private Partner campus, we ask that the college ensure diversity of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Country of origin - Program - Start date (fall, winter, spring) - Campus and/or site <p>Group Meeting(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The audit panel will meet with two (2) groups of students separately. • Each group will have between nine (9) to a maximum of twelve (12) students. 	40 min./group
Graduates	<p>This representative group includes individuals who have met all the requirements and have been granted a college credential within the last 24 months.</p> <p>General Requirements:</p>	40 min./group



	<p>In order to provide the audit panel with a complete overview of the college's international graduate population, we ask that the college ensure diversity of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Country of origin - Program - Start date (Fall, Winter, Spring) - Campus and/or site <p>Group Meeting(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The audit panel will meet with two (2) groups of graduates separately. • Each group will have between six (6) to a maximum of twelve (12) graduates. <p>Or Survey</p>	
Recruitment Services, Marketing/Communications	<p>Locally determined The group should be at maximum twelve (12) individuals.</p>	40 min.
Leadership Responsible for the International Education File	<p>Locally determined The group should be at maximum twelve (12) individuals. Including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International welcoming and orientation • Immigration support (RSIA and RCIC) 	40 min.
Enrolment Services (Employees)	<p>In order to provide the audit panel with a complete overview of the college's quality activities, we ask that the college include representatives from these areas (including, but not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions • Advising; Academic and Including Regulated International Student Immigration Advisor (RSIA) and Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultant (RCIC) • Orientation • Graduation/Convocation <p>The group should be at maximum twelve (12) individuals.</p>	40 min.
Student Support Services (Employees)	<p>In order to provide the audit panel with a complete overview of the college's quality activities, we ask that the college include representatives from the student support services (including, but not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health, safety and mental well-being • Healthcare • Counselling • Housing and Residence • Tutoring • Student Association or Council • Learning Support Services • Bursaries and Scholarships <p>The group should be at maximum twelve (12) individuals.</p>	40 min./group
Directors/ all services	<p>In order to provide the audit panel with a complete overview of the college's quality activities, we ask that the college include representatives from all services (including, but not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registrar • Strategic enrolment 	60 min.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student services • Enrolment services • Information Technology • Facilities • Ancillary (food, security, transportation) • Human Resources (Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)) <p>The group should be at maximum twelve (12) individuals.</p>	
Employment/ Career Services Alumni Foundation (and post-graduate services)	Locally determined The group should be at maximum twelve (12) individuals.	30 min.
Agents	Survey	
Audit Panel	Audit Panel members	End of audit visit before closing remarks (60 min.) for deliberations.

*If a group or individual in your college works within the Standards of Practice of International Education and has not been represented here, please contact OCQAS to include them in the audit visit.

It is expected that the college will provide a broad range of individuals, as identified by the representation requirements. When the participation in some groups is minimal, the conversations may not allow for the audit panel members to corroborate information and cause a lack of clarity on some processes. It is the responsibility of the college to secure attendance to the audit visit meetings and to adequately prepare the participants for the discussion.

The audit visit schedule must include the name, role/position and sector for each of the members of the representative groups. Also, colleges are expected to provide identification for all members of the representative groups during the meetings (interviews) indicating their name, role/position and sector (college must “rename” participants in the virtual setting if needed prior to the interview meeting start).

Colleges also may suggest activities outside of the audit visit requirements, such as campus tours or meet and greet receptions; however, it is understood that these activities must not impede on the established audit visit requirements and must be consistent with the purpose of the audit visit. If for any reason the audit panel deems the proposed activities as not being consistent with the audit visit purpose, it can request to have them removed from the proposed schedule. No meetings are to be held during the lunch period.

Prior to the audit panel commencing the audit visit interviews, it is expected that interview questions are prepared for each of the respective representative groups. The questions should be clearly linked to key elements of the standards and their accompanying requirements and serve to clarify areas of the college’s audit package that require further verification or clarification based on the audit panel’s assessment of the college’s audit



package and all other supplemental information and documentation received prior to the audit visit.

Colleges are strongly encouraged to inform the members of representative groups of their role and responsibility in the college's audit process, including the purpose and scope of the SPIEQAA, prior to the audit panel interviews.

*Document to be submitted by the college to the audit panel chair: **Draft Audit Visit Schedule.***

*Timeframe: at least **1 week** prior to the college's scheduled audit visit date.*

x. Audit Visit

The main purpose of the audit visit is to verify and supplement the information contained in the college's audit package and provide a better understanding of the college's conclusions. In addition to supplementing the audit package, the audit visit enables consideration (where applicable) of any subsequent corrective measures implemented by the college between the time of adoption of the audit package and that of the audit visit.

The duration of the audit visit is 1.5-2 days, which includes meetings (interviews) with various representative groups involved in the implementation and follow-up of quality assurance mechanisms and the assessment of the effectiveness of those. It is expected that the audit visit will take place through videoconference to facilitate the participation of individuals. If web or teleconference is used, colleges must provide adequate technical support.

Audio or video recordings of the meetings (interviews) with the representative groups are not permitted, however, OCQAS reserves the right to record an interview or part of an interview should an auditor lose connection.

Throughout the audit visit, the audit panel meets to summarize and record its observations. The audit panel members also assess the results of the evaluation for each requirement against its objectives, identify key areas of strength and key areas of requiring improvement in order to render key messages to present to the college.

The audit panel's observations are strictly evidence-based and supported by the information provided in the college's audit package, the views expressed by the college participants during the audit visit, and any other documents that followed the audit package or those examined during the audit visit.



The audit visit concludes with a meeting with the college senior leadership, including other administrative employees the college deems should be present. The sole purpose of the meeting is for the audit panel chair to present its conclusions; this is not an opportunity to discuss audit findings. This serves as a way of preparing the college for the possible contents of the preliminary audit report, and recommendations to be included within it.

It is expected that all evidence will have been submitted prior to the completion of the audit visit.

Duration: 1.5 - 2 days.

xi. Preparation and Submission of the Preliminary Audit Report

Following the audit, which includes a thorough review of all documentation received from the college and the completion of the audit visit, the audit panel drafts a preliminary version of the audit report.

Pilot Results

The pilot's purview is to test the process and standards and therefore, the colleges partaking in the pilot will not receive a decision derived from the evaluation framework. Since the pilot will be completing the entire process, should a college wish to receive a decision to formalize their audit results, a request must be submitted to the Chair of the OCQAS Management Board.

Evaluation Framework

An audit decision can only be arrived at after the fair, unbiased implementation of the evaluation process and the assessment of the college's audit package and evidence presented during the audit visit in relation to the standards and their accompanying requirements as defined by OCQAS.

The intention of the process is formative, and colleges partaking in the pilot will have their attestations validated as well as receive commendations and recommendations.

Should a college request one, the evaluation decisions are as follows:

Requirement Results:

- MET: A Requirement is **met** if the college meets or exceeds the expectations embodied in the Requirement.
- PARTIALLY MET: A Requirement is **partially met** if the college meets in part the expectations embodied in the Requirement, or performance in relation to some aspects of the Requirement must be improved.



- NOT MET: A Requirement is **not met** if the college fails to meet the expectations embodied in the Requirement, or performance in relation to one or more aspects of the Requirement is deficient.

Standard Results:

- MET: A Standard is **met** if the college meets or exceeds the expectations embodied in the Standard.
- PARTIALLY MET: A Standard is **partially met** if the college meets in part the expectations embodied in the Standard, or performance in relation to some aspects of the Requirements must be improved.
- NOT MET: A Standard is **not met** if the college fails to meet the expectations embodied in the Standard, or performance in relation to one or more aspects of the Requirements is deficient.

Maturity Results:

- MATURE EFFORT: A College receives a Mature Effort when it meets or exceeds the expectations embodied in the Quality Standards.
- ORGANIZED EFFORT: A College receives an Organized Effort when it meets in part the expectations embodied in the Quality Standards.
- FORMAL EFFORT: A College receives a Formal Effort when it fails to meet the expectations embodied in the Quality Standards.

Report Findings

The audit report is designed to describe the college's quality assurance system and its effectiveness. The report outlines the findings of the audit panel which are reached through its interpretation of the specific information it has reviewed. The report notes strengths as well as those areas that require development and provides recommendations for improvement. It also attempts to address all relevant areas without excessive detail or presuming to be exhaustive. The report does not comment on individuals (positively or negatively) or on standards that bear no relevance to the quality assurance process.

The audit report does not contain statements that cannot be substantiated; evidence must be appended on which to base the statements made. Conversely, strongly held views are stated firmly and in a forthright manner, avoiding excessive subtlety.

Where a college introduces a new quality assurance mechanism to supersede a former mechanism, and due to its newness, there is insufficient evidence of the effectiveness of this new mechanism, the college should provide evidence that the former mechanism was implemented and effective. This principle should be interpreted in the spirit of 'not unduly punishing colleges for implementing new and more effective quality assurance systems' in lieu of a prior quality assurance system that was demonstrably effective.



In respect of all conclusions reached and judgments made, the audit report must contain sufficient evaluative narrative to demonstrate the reasoning which led the audit panel to its conclusions. Particularly where remediation is required, the college must be able to understand, from the report's content, the nature of the deficiency to be addressed. Similarly, the college must be able to understand, from the report's content, reasons given for the meeting of the requirements as this is helpful insight for future audits.

Once completed, the preliminary report is then submitted to OCQAS for review to ensure clarity and consistency of the text, and for analysis and approval before it is sent to the designated college representative for review.

*Document to be submitted by the audit panel chair to OCQAS: **SPIEQAA Audit Report Template.***

*Timeframe: within **3 weeks** following the audit visit.*

xii. Review of the Preliminary SPIEQAA Report

The OCQAS forwards the preliminary version of the audit report to the designated college representative for comments and feedback on whether the report accurately reflects the situation of the college. The college must submit its response, in writing, to OCQAS within the designated timeframe.

Once OCQAS has received the college's feedback, the document is forwarded to the audit panel chair, who in turn, reviews the feedback with the audit panelists and may make changes to the preliminary report, at the audit panel's discretion.

In cases where the audit panel does not agree to incorporate the college's comments to the audit report or the corrections recommended by the college that have been deemed important, the latter can request to have them submitted to the OCQAS Management Board for review upon submission of the final audit report.

Timeframe:

- ***Submission of the college feedback to OCQAS: within 2 weeks of the receipt of the preliminary audit report.***
- ***Submission of the final report: within 1 weeks of the OCQAS receiving the response from the college.***

xiii. Submission of the Final SPIEQAA Report



Once the feedback from the college and the audit panel has been incorporated and the report is final, OCQAS will submit the final report to the OCQAS Management Board for review and approval.

It falls within the Board's purview to affirm the conclusions, support the recommendations in the report, and approve the final audit report. Following its revision, the Board may ask the audit panel to make certain amendments to the audit report in order to ensure consistency prior to its approval.

Timeframe: scheduled bimonthly OCQAS Management Board meetings.

xiv. Formal Board Approval

Following its review of the final audit report, the OCQAS Management Board will approve the final audit report.

Once the final report has been approved by the OCQAS Management Board, it is released by the Executive Director of OCQAS to the President of the audited college and the audit panel members for signatures. At this point, the college may share the report with its invested parties.