



Ontario College Quality Assurance Service

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

QUALITY BREAK

Welcome to the OCQAS Newsletter, your peek behind the quality scenes with quality news, updates, resources and more!

Newsletter #24 – September 2025

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CIP Code Entry now enabled in CVS AA

We're excited to announce that colleges can now access CIP (Classification of Instructional Programs) codes directly in the CCV AA tool. Simply navigate to the “**Basic Information**” menu page, where you'll find two new fields: one for the “**Code**” number and one for the “**Title.**” Additionally, CIP codes will now be included in the Validation letters for your convenience. Please remember to double-check the accuracy of both the code and title entered. If you have any questions or need assistance, don't hesitate to reach out—we're here to help!

Introducing the VLO Geek Bot Your New VLO Drafting Assistant!



We're excited to share that colleges can now review and update their Vocational Learning Outcomes (VLOs) using the VLO Geek Bot, available in the CVS AA tool. On the “Program VLOs” menu page, look to the right-hand side for a box labeled “Need VLO Help?” Click the “VLO Geek Bot” button and discover how easy VLO drafting can be!

To get started, enter your Program Purpose, Occupational Area (we recommend reusing what you've already added in the tool), and the VLO you'd like reviewed. Then click “Get VLO Feedback.” The VLO Geek will analyze your input and provide feedback plus three tailored suggestions.

Tips for Best Results:

- The more detailed your Program Purpose and Occupational Area, the better the alignment with real-world job expectations.
- The tool scans job postings, NOCs, and CIP codes to generate relevant suggestions.
- Avoid including course-level tasks or tools—VLOs should reflect what graduates will be expected to do on the job.

Go ahead and try it: [VLO Geek Bot](#)

Always Use the Most Updated Informal Review Template

We're all working to save time and improve efficiency—but if you've saved an old version of the **Informal Review Template** on your computer, you might be slowing things down for yourself and for us. The latest version includes important updates, such as a new section for “Review of CIP Code Assignment” and fields for MTCU Code and Title.

We take your feedback seriously and regularly revise the template to better meet your needs. Please make sure you're always using the most current version—available directly from our website www.ocqas.org/resources—to ensure a smooth review process.

Who Does What? Understanding System Responsibilities in Ontario's College Process

Navigating the college program approval process in Ontario involves multiple partners, each with a clear role to ensure quality, consistency, and alignment with provincial standards.

- **College Boards of Governors** are responsible for approving all new and modified programs. They ensure alignment with the **Credentials Framework**, naming protocols, and provincial standards, and verify that program advertising is accurate.
- The **Credential Validation Service (CVS)** validates programs system-wide, ensuring they meet the **Credentials Validation Framework**, follow naming standards, and align with the correct **CIP Code**.
- The **Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security (MCURES)** develops and approves program standards, manages funding requests, and updates public records.
- **Ontario Colleges Application Service (OCAS)** supports the system by aligning its platform with credentialing standards and publishing validated programs for student applications.
- For degree programs, the **Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB)** reviews applications and recommends Ministerial Consent, ensuring programs meet rigorous quality standards.

From creating new programs to updating titles or CIP codes, each step involves collaboration between colleges, CVS, the Ministry, and OCAS. Understanding these roles helps streamline processes and maintain the integrity of Ontario's postsecondary education system. For more details check our [In-Focus: System Responsibilities](#).

Strengthening Essential Employability Skills Through General Education

For years, employers have consistently voiced a need for graduates to enter the workforce with stronger Essential Employability Skills (EES). These skills—such as communication, problem-solving, critical thinking, information management, interpersonal (collaboration) and personal—are foundational to success in any career. However, teaching and modeling these skills effectively requires time, intention, and integration across the curriculum.

During the recent 24-college tour, a call was made to seek efficiencies that benefit the entire sector. One promising solution has emerged, thanks to Conestoga College for bringing it to light: colleges can now purposefully teach EES through one of their General Education courses. This approach allows

institutions to embed skill development within existing structures, rather than adding new layers to already full programs.

General Education courses, which span five themes—Arts in Society, Civic Life, Social and Cultural Understanding, Personal Understanding, and Science and Technology—offer a rich platform for modeling and teaching EES. By aligning course content with real-world applications and emphasizing purposeful instruction, colleges can ensure students are not only exposed to these skills but actively develop them.

It is important to clarify that this initiative is not about assigning group work or reflective journaling. While those methods have value, the focus here is on intentional teaching strategies that directly build employability skills. Faculty should be supported with resources and training to design learning experiences that foster critical thinking, effective communication, and professional behavior.

This sector-wide efficiency has the potential to elevate the quality and consistency of graduate outcomes. By embedding EES into General Education in a meaningful way, Ontario's colleges can better meet employer expectations and prepare students for the dynamic demands of today's workforce.

AI in Quality Assurance: A Smart Step Forward for Ontario Colleges

Ontario's colleges are known for their commitment to quality education—and now, they're exploring smarter ways to uphold that standard. In a recent pilot led by OCQAS, artificial intelligence (AI) was used to support a full institutional audit alongside a traditional human panel. The results? Promising, efficient, and worth considering.

The AI Audit-Panel Assistant (APA) reviewed the same evidence package as the human panel, following the College Quality Assurance Audit Process (CQAAP). Out of 30 requirements, both panels agreed on 28—an impressive 93% alignment. The AI was able to process hundreds of documents in just a few hours, compared to the 60+ hours typically needed by human reviewers.

Importantly, the study emphasized that AI should not replace human judgment. Instead, it should act as a co-pilot—triaging data, surfacing patterns, and supporting decision-making. The human panel excelled in interpreting context, especially during interviews and nuanced discussions.

The pilot also highlighted the need for colleges to build AI fluency among QA professionals and update policies to ensure ethical use and data privacy. With proper safeguards, AI can help colleges streamline audits, reduce costs, and focus more on continuous improvement.

This is a call to action: if your college is looking for ways to enhance quality assurance without adding more workload, consider exploring AI tools. OCQAS's pilot shows that with the right balance of technology and human expertise, we can make QA smarter, faster, and more impactful.

Let's work together to build a future where quality assurance is not just rigorous—but also innovative.

Mini Quiz

Find the **false fact** (s).

1. Since November 1, 2024, aligning to a single CIP Code is mandatory for every new program submission.
2. CVS can issue a new MTCU code when a program is created for a new field of study.
3. CIP Codes originated with the U.S. National Center for Education Statistics and were adapted for Canada by Statistics Canada.
4. The validated program title must appear on the credential granted to students
5. If no comparator program exists in the system, CVS will validate entirely new titles based on the program-level vocational learning outcomes.

Scroll down for the answer

False Answer: 2. The creation of a new MTCU Code is the sole responsibility of the Ministry (MCURES); the CVS may inform the Ministry that a new code may be required, but it cannot create one.

Quirky but True

Ontario is home to the only quality assurance agency in Canada that plays two roles at once. At OCQAS, we're a true “**double double**” in quality assurance:

Program Validation: making sure individual programs meet high standards.

Institutional Audits: reviewing entire colleges to ensure their internal quality systems are strong and consistent.

No other agency in Canada offers this two-for-one blend of oversight. Like your morning coffee order, it's a uniquely Ontario flavour—extra strong and built on trust.

Why this fact stands out

A Double Duty Agency: Unlike other provinces, OCQAS isn't limited to one side of QA—we take on both program-level and institutional-level quality assurance.

Efficiency with Trust: Colleges enjoy the autonomy to approve their own programs, while OCQAS ensures that both the details and the big picture hold up to scrutiny.

Ontario's Special Brew: This “double double” model is a homegrown innovation in quality assurance that reflects confidence, accountability, and collaboration across the college system.

Just like ordering a double-double at Tim Hortons, Ontario's QA approach is familiar, reliable, and distinctly ours.

Q&A with QA is Back this Fall!

Our Thursday morning **drop-in sessions** are back—new time, same great conversations! Starting **September 4, 2025**, join us every Thursday from **8:30–9:30 a.m.** for an informal space to:

- Ask your quality assurance questions
- Connect with colleagues across the Ontario college sector
- Share ideas, challenges, and a few “aha!” moments

We’ve shifted the time earlier to accommodate those 9:00 a.m. weekly meetings, so you can still start your day with a dose of QA inspiration.

This fall’s sessions will run from **September 4 to December 18**, and—judging by last year’s engaging discussions—we’re in for another great season of learning, sharing, and connecting.

Email us at cvs@ocqas.org to get the Zoom link and join the conversation.

Bring your questions, your curiosity, and your coffee—we’ll bring the conversation.

Join the QA Book & CQAAP Group

Every second Tuesday | 3:00–4:00 PM

It’s never too early—or too late—to prepare for your CQAAP. The QA Book and CQAAP Group meets every second Tuesday, bringing participants together to explore quality assurance topics, share strategies, and build confidence in the process.

This isn’t a new session, but participation changes as the schedule moves forward—so each meeting offers fresh perspectives and conversations.

When: Every second Tuesday, 3:00–4:00 PM

How to Join: Request your invitation by emailing cvs@ocqas.org

On the Road Again...Almost

Last year, Karen and Sylvie visited all 24 Ontario colleges as part of our system tour. The conversations, insights, and questions we heard along the way shaped the new OCQAS Strategic Plan in meaningful ways.

One message came through loud and clear: colleges want more support with training. We've since been asked to speak with different groups—faculty, associate deans, administrators, and of course QA staff.

While we won't be repeating a 24-college tour this year, we'd be delighted to return to individual colleges—or even host a regional training session at your campus. And there's no cost to you; we'll cover our own expenses.

So, if you're planning events or activities where our expertise could help, think of us—we'll take care of the rest.

eCampusOntario TESS Conference!

We're excited to be presenting about our VLO Bot at the eCampusOntario Technology Enabled Seminar + Showcase (TESS) Conference in Toronto on November 11 and 12, 2025.

Join us to explore ideas, share insights, and connect with colleagues passionate about quality and innovation in higher education.

If you're attending, be sure to stop by our session and say hello—we'd love to connect!

Upcoming Training Opportunities at OCQAS

We're excited to share that OCQAS will be hosting a variety of training sessions designed to support your professional growth and deepen your knowledge of quality assurance.

These sessions will cover a range of topics and provide practical insights you can apply directly to your work. Whether you're preparing for an upcoming CQAAP,

looking to strengthen program validation practices, or simply eager to expand your QA toolkit, there's something here for everyone.

Schedule: See the full list of dates, times, and links below.

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|---------------|------------------|------------------|------------------------------|
| CVS Basics* | Monday Sept 8 | 2:30-4:00 p.m. | Zoom Meeting |
| CVS Basics 2* | Friday Sept 12 | 10:30-11:30 a.m. | Zoom Meeting |
| CIP Code | Tuesday Sept 16 | 12-1p.m | Zoom Meeting |
| VLO Bot | Thursday Sept 18 | 2:30-3:30 p.m. | Zoom Meeting |

** Please note: CVS Basics 1 and CVS Basics 2 are mandatory to submit validations to CVS.*

These training sessions are available in French upon request.

Appel à la participation – Groupe de travail SAQCO franco

Dans le cadre de nos efforts pour appuyer le bilinguisme, nous cherchons à rétablir un groupe de travail SAQCO franco.

Le groupe se réunira une première fois au mois d'octobre, puis au besoin selon les matériaux francophones développés. Nous aimerions compter sur 6 participant·e·s, afin de ne pas solliciter toujours les mêmes collègues.

Faites-nous signe si ce projet vous intéresse!

A Few Reminders

If anyone in your institution needs a new CVS user account, please send them directly to the CVS AA Tool at cvs.ocqas.org where an account can be requested.

If anyone would like to be added to OCQAS communications, including the Newsletter and occasional updates (we send an average of 8 emails per year), a request can be emailed to cvs@ocqas.org