# PEQAB's

# EXTERNAL EXPERT REVIEW PANEL REPORTS:

# AN ANALYSIS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Mary Catharine Lennon and Adrianna Militano
Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board
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# Executive Summary

The Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB) is a government agency mandated to conduct reviews of the quality of new and existing degree programs applying for ministerial consent from Ontario's public colleges, universities (with limited degree granting power), private providers, public-out-of-province providers. Program reviews are conducted by External Expert Reviewer Panels (EERP) applying the PEQAB Standards and Benchmarks. In each case, the EERP identifies program strengths and weaknesses relating to the specific Standards.

The purpose of this report is to explore the outcomes of those reviews and gain insight into trends in program quality and the review processes in order to support both the institutions' and PEQAB's quality assurance processes, policies and procedures. To conduct this research, the 140 reviews conducted between 2011 and 2016 were examined and comments from each were individually coded to identify themes. This report presents the findings and discusses common areas of concern identified by External Expert Review Panels. The analysis identifies that the majority of issues identified in program applications are 'minor' and are within the capacity of the institution and/or program to address. The analysis section also reveals common strengths in the degree program applications submitted to PEQAB, including the 'Academic Value' of the programming. In conclusion, the report identifies implications for PEQAB, institutions and programs. By interpreting the implications as action items this report identifies next steps and opportunities these groups in the spirit of continuous learning and growth to improve quality assurances activities and practices in Ontario.

# Contents

# Introduction

Ontario strives to provide a higher education system focused on accountability, accessibility and quality, and the continued commitment of government is aimed at supporting student achievement, responsible ways of ensuring high quality provision and establishing fair accountability measures of success (Ontario Government, 2010). As an arms-length government agency, the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB) supports this work by providing the Advanced Education and Skills Development Minister with recommendations on the quality of degree programs offered in Ontario's colleges and universities (with limited degree granting powers), private and out-of-province providers.

To do so, PEQAB has 11 Standards that programs must meet or exceed in order to demonstrate the quality of their programming[1]. These are: Degree Level Standard, Admission, Promotion and Graduation Standard, Program Content Standard, Program Delivery Standard, Capacity to Deliver Standard, Credential Recognition Standard, Regulation and Accreditation Standard, Nomenclature Standard, Program Evaluation Standard, Academic Freedom and Integrity Standard, and Student Protection Standard[2]. Each Standard has a set of Benchmarks that specify the expectations of how these Standards are met. The work of PEQAB Board and its Secretariat revolves around ensuring the Standards and Benchmarks are grounded in best practice and evidence, and that programs are evaluated on these Standards in an accountable, impartial, collegial and transparent manner. A key element of the process is the involvement of External Experts to provide rigorous reviews based on PEQAB Standards.

External Experts are individuals both with considerable expertise in the subject matter of the program under evaluation and experience in higher education administration. These experts (identified through PEQAB internal searches and through institutional nominations) are brought together into Panels consisting of two or more members, with one acting as Chair. The External Expert Review Panels (EERPs) are provided with an orientation to the PEQAB principles and the Standards and Benchmarks, as well as a discussion of the review process. A major component of the review process is a site visit, typically lasting one full day, where the EERPs meet with senior administration, program coordinators, faculty, students, alumni, support staff, and the Program Advisory Committee (see Appendix B for a sample site visit agenda). The product of the EERPs work is a report which outlines the strengths and weaknesses of the applicant program vis-a-vis the Boards Standards and Benchmarks. That report is shared both with the institution and with the PEQAB Board for consideration in the development of a recommendation to the Minister.

In this current research report, PEQAB analyses the results of EERP evaluations of program applications. The purpose of the analysis is to identify patterns and trends in the results of those reviews. In order to understand areas where applicant institutions are struggling and succeeding and to consider if there are implications for PEQAB. The goal is to identify areas to focus improvement efforts both within PEQAB and for the applicant institutions.

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[1] There are an additional 7 Standards for Organisation Reviews relevant only to private providers.
[2] The Standards and Benchmarks are provided in the Panel Guidelines in Appendix A of this report.

This report is set out in three main sections. The Methods section explains the methodology used to collect and code the data, followed by the Analysis section which presents application trends in the weaknesses identified within each of the Standards, followed by trends in program strengths identified by the EERP. The Discussion and Conclusion section identifies key findings in the application review trends and considers the implications for supporting continuous improvement in program and institutional quality and for PEQAB.

## Methods

The analysis examined 140 EERP reports received by PEQAB between 2011 and 2016. These reports are based on new programs, renewals of existing programs, re-reviews and progress report applications[3]. As noted, each program application is rigorously reviewed for its adherence to the quality Standards by PEQAB and the EERP. Each of the 11 Standards have several Benchmarks that provide more precise expectations of how the Standard must be met. Hence, each application is assessed to determine the extent to which a program "meets", "exceeds", or "does not meet" every Benchmark. EERPs are also asked to provide reasons for their judgments and indicate whether: 1) any commitments or important clarifications were made by the institution during the review that were critical to the judgments, 2) if any revisions are needed and 3) whether those revisions are minor or major. The EERPs are advised that "minor revisions can be implemented without significant time or resources, and the institution would appear to have the capacity to implement them. Major revisions are those required to meet the threshold, would take significant time and/or resources"[4].

For the purposes of this research, each EERP report was manually reviewed to collect the comments from the reviewers. Once all EERPs comments were analysed and coded by Standard, the comments were further examined for content and then grouped thematically. If the concern was raised numerous times across EERP reports, a category was created. For example, within the Capacity to Deliver Standard, common concerns raised by the EERPs related to facilities as well as the number of faculty with terminal credentials. The comments were also categorised to indicate if the program had either a minor or major weakness (as identified by the recommendations of major or minor revisions). Further, areas of strength as identified by the EERPs were reviewed and coded into categories of good practice and strength.

## Analysis and Findings

Between 2011 and 2016, PEQAB received 140 applications: 107 applications from Colleges of Arts and Technology (CAATs), six applications from public universities, nine applications from public out of province universities and eighteen applications from private institutions. Broken down by application type, 48% of the applications were for new programs, 43% were program renewal applications, and 9% were classified as other such as reports on conditions or re-reviews. The majority of bachelor's degree applications came

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[3] The collection excluded Organization Reviews and nomenclature amendment applications.
[4] See page 27 of Appendix A: Panel Report Guidelines

from the CAATs, and master's degree applications came exclusively from private and public out of province institutions.

Figure one below demonstrates that nearly all applications had at least one minor weakness and approximately half had major weaknesses identified by the External Expert Panels. One hundred and thirty applications had at least one minor weakness and of those, the average application had five minor weaknesses. Sixty-six applications had at least one major weakness with the five being the average number of major weaknesses identified. To reiterate, minor weaknesses require revisions that can be implemented without significant time or resources, and the institution would appear to have the capacity to implement them. Major weaknesses are those required to meet the threshold, would take significant time and/or resources to rectify, and/or should be addressed. Figure 1 shows the total number of applications that had *at least one* occurrence of a minor or major weakness from 2011-2016.

**Figure 1 Percentage of Applications with Major and Minor Weakness by Institution Type**
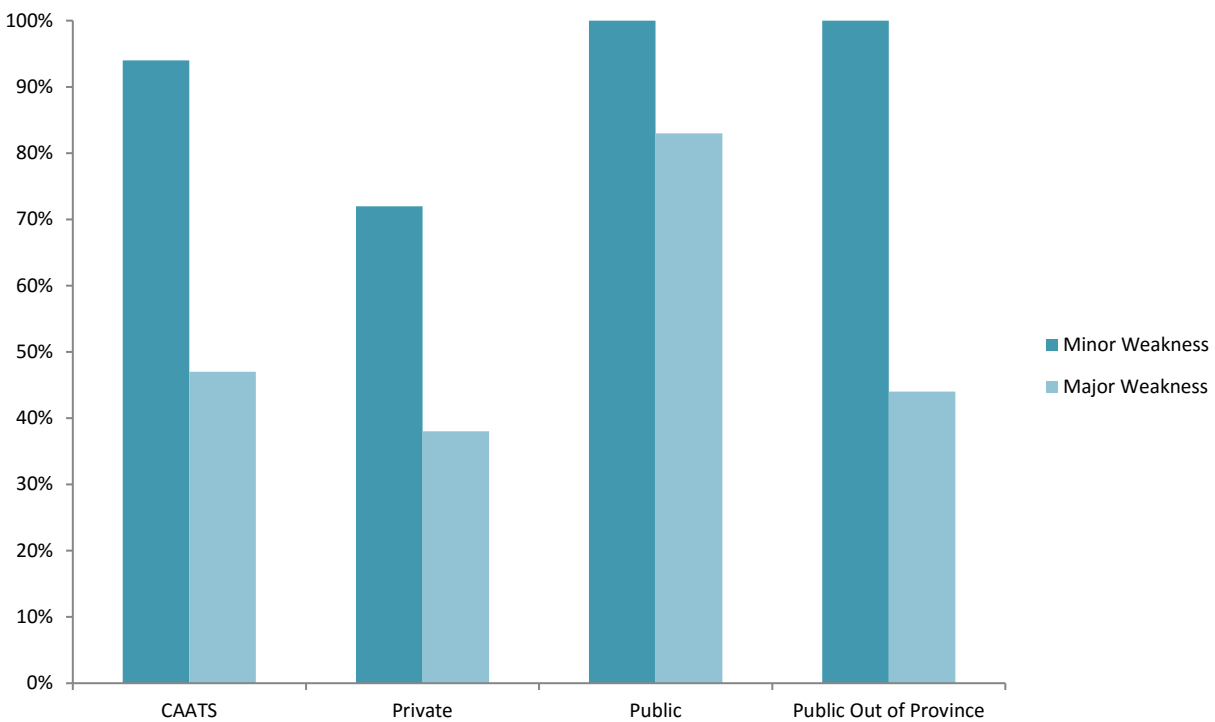


The primary purpose of this analysis was to identify trends and patterns in the weaknesses identified within program reviews. Figure 2 below reveals the instances of weaknesses identified across all 140 applications in the various PEQAB Standards. Note that applications can have more than one instance of a weakness under each Standard; hence the number of weaknesses identified is higher than the number of applications.

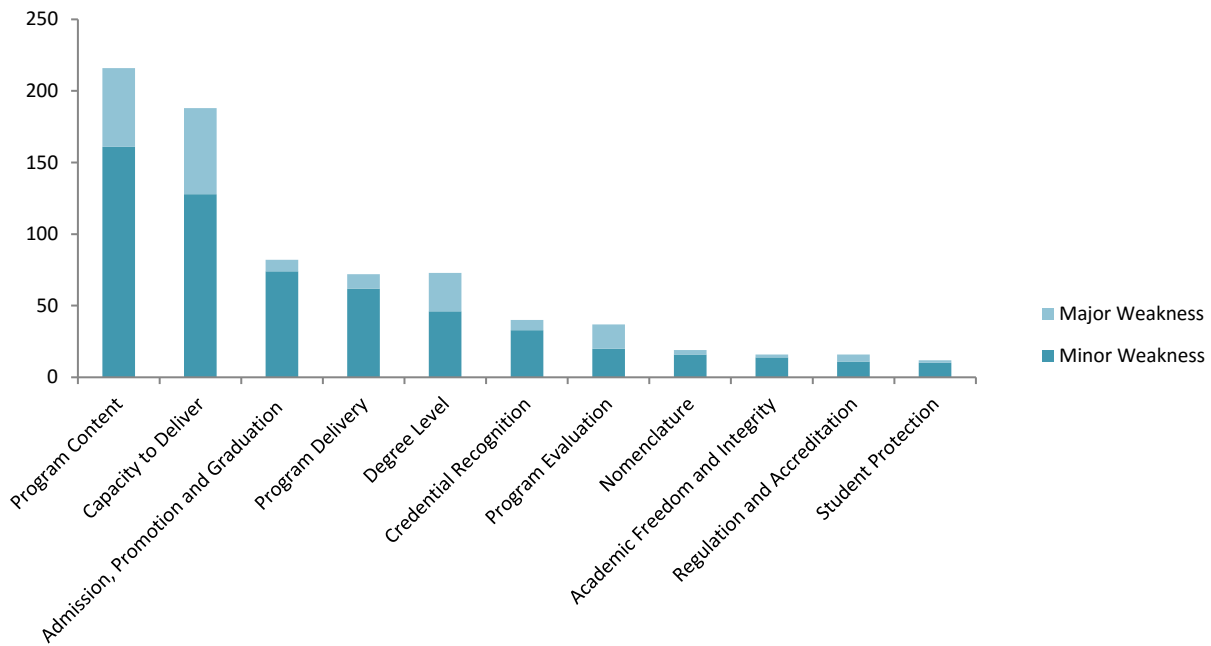**Figure 2 Number of Major and Minor Weaknesses by Benchmark**



Figure 2 above demonstrates that the Capacity to Deliver and the Program Content Standards have the highest number of reported weaknesses. 65% of applications had at least one minor weakness and 26% of applications had at least one major weakness with the Capacity to Deliver Standard. Within the Program Content Standard, 73% of applications had at least one minor weakness and 27% had at least one major weakness within the Standard. Admission, Promotion and Graduation, Program Delivery, and Degree Level Standards were also areas where program applications had weaknesses.

## Standard Specific Issues

The following section presents a deeper analysis of the types of weaknesses identified within each Standard. As discussed above, each EERP report was analysed in order unpack the reviewer comments and examine patterns of concerns within the Standards. While attempting to review the weaknesses compared to the expectations stated within the PEQAB Benchmarks, the analysis evolved to reveal unique groupings of weaknesses. The groupings are not always directly tied to a specific Benchmark, but represent the essence of the weaknesses as identified by the EERP. It is important to note that the high number of "other" as an area of concern can be explained by unique challenges of each individual program. Also note that the analysis showed no difference in institutional types, hence the following figures pool all institution types together to analyse the overall weaknesses identified in specific PEQAB Standards. Finally note that these weaknesses are addressed via institutional commitments, conditions of consent and report backs by the institution.

The Program Content Standard focuses on ensuring the program offers sufficient rigour, breadth, and depth to achieve the requisite knowledge and skills expected of a program in the discipline area. EERPs are asked to consider if the appropriate balance of theory and practice has been achieved, if the stated learning outcomes are adequate, if there is an appropriate balance of core and breadth curriculum, if assessments are appropriate and if the Program Advisory Committee (PAC) is fulfilling its role. One hundred and thirteen applications had at least one concern relating to this Standard. As noted in Figure 3 below, the primary weaknesses identified in this Standard related to 'course content', the 'PAC', followed by 'Breadth', 'Balance of Theory and Practice' and the 'Rigour of Courses'. Concerns within these groupings are addressed below. In total, there were 161 instances resulting in a minor weakness being identified and 55 instances leading to a major weakness being identified within this standard.

**Figure 3 Concerns Related to Program Content Standard**
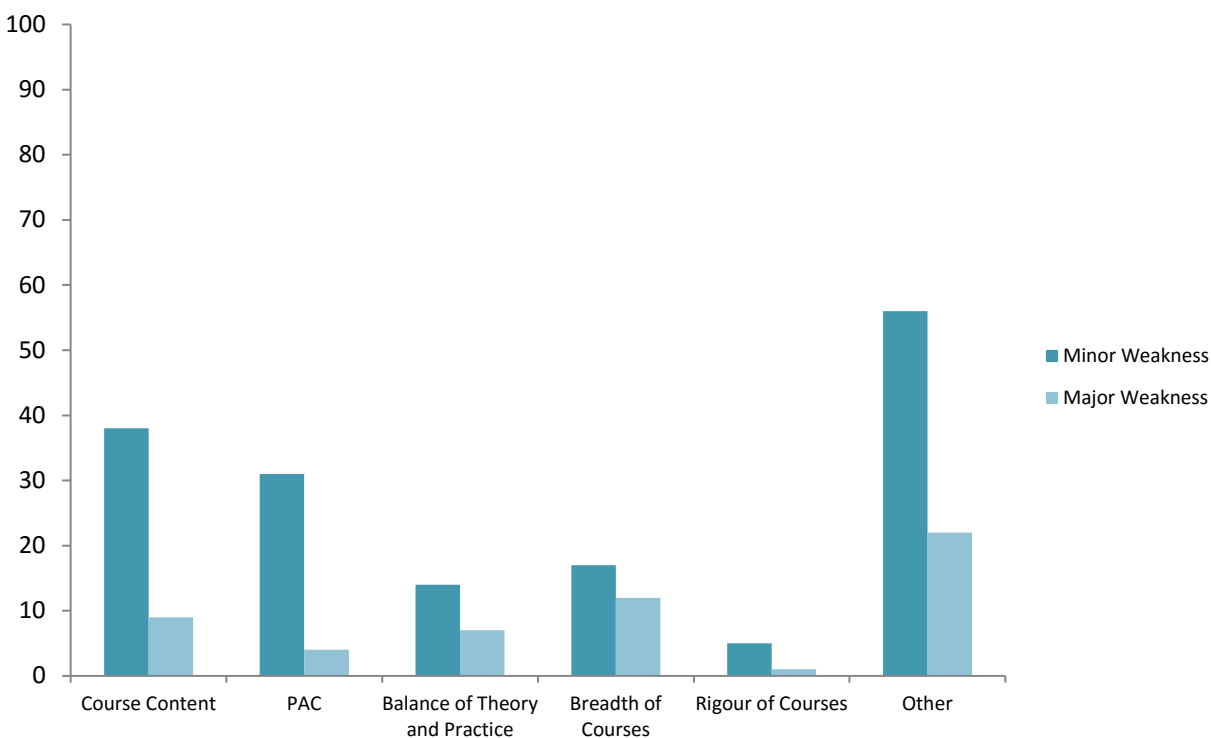


*Course Content*: Concerns in this area is primarily focused on curriculum and learning outcomes. For example, EERPs identified when programs were not providing adequate education in general knowledge and understanding of key concepts, methodologies, theoretical approaches, and assumptions in the specific discipline. Other issues related to course content included duplication, exclusion of content, sequencing of material, or unnecessary emphasis on some content.

*The Program Advisory Committee:* The PAC plays a critical role in shaping program development as it is made up of academics, employers, industry, and accreditation or professional association representatives related to the discipline. The PAC is critical in ensuring the program is up to date on theory and engaged

with industry. Reviewer concerns related to this Benchmark includes the PAC lacking relevant industry membership, inconsistency in PAC meetings, lack of engagement in PAC from members, or failure of the program to incorporate PAC feedback.

*Balance of Theory and Practice*: Concerns in this area were focused on the appropriate balance between theory and practice within degree programs. Examples of this include EERPs commenting on the need for a theory to become increasingly complex in upper years of study, b) an increased applied component to ensure students are "career ready "or c) that course content to reflect both theory and practice of the program's field of study. External experts have noted the importance of including theoretical knowledge and practical applications in tandem with one another as the program progresses from year one to four.

*Breadth of Courses*: All PEQAB degree programs must ensure 20% of the programming is non-core 'breadth' – which provides a range of knowledge not directly related to the discipline of the degree program. EERPs found some programs do not display a range of non-core courses sufficient to meet PEQAB Standards for depth and breadth of knowledge.

*Rigour of Courses*: Concerns related to rigor referred to an absence of thorough or exhaustive coverage of particular skills or knowledge throughout the degree program. This was noted as an issue if courses considered essential to the discipline were not present in the curriculum, or if there were issues in individual courses.

Beyond the five key areas of concern related to the Program Content Standard listed below, there are also other areas of concern including the need for better evaluation methods and tools, more research opportunities, expansion of Canadian content and examples in course work, issues surrounding co-ops/internships, and connections to professional associations.

## Capacity to Deliver Standard

The Capacity to Deliver Standard for Public and Private Institutions ensures programs have the appropriate legal characteristics, governance structure, and administrative capacity necessary to manage and organise an institution of higher learning capable of meeting students' needs and necessary learning objectives. For CAATs, this Standard is limited to ensuring the quality of education necessary for students to attain the stated and necessary learning outcomes. Benchmarks in this Standard include student and faculty learning resources and budgeting, faculty complement, capacities, and credentials. One hundred and six applications had at least one concern relating to the Capacity to Deliver Standard. Figure 4 identifies key areas of weakness identified within this Standard related to the terminal credentials of faculty members, faculty engagement in scholarship, facilities and resources, and additional staff. In total, there were 128 instances of a minor weakness being identified and 60 instances of a major weakness being identified within this standard.

Figure 4 Concerns Related to Capacity to Deliver Standard
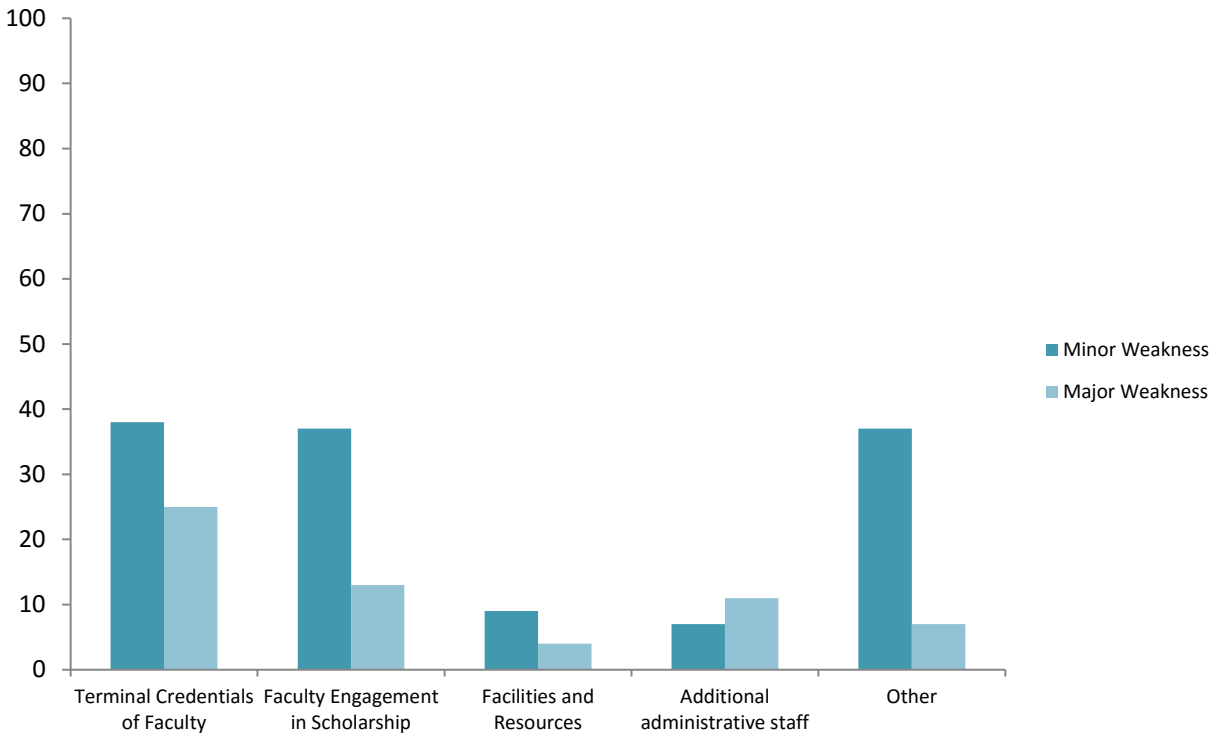


*Terminal Credentials of Faculty*: The PEQAB Benchmark requires that at least 50% of the students' experience in the professional or main field of study is in courses taught by a faculty member holding the terminal academic credential in the field or in a closely related field/discipline. A frequent weakness identified by reviewers is an absence of the required percentage of faculty having the necessary credentials to be considered terminal.

*Faculty Engagement in Scholarship*: In examining faculty engagement, the EERPs consider if and how faculty maintain currency and engagement with scholarship, research, and other creative activities. PEQAB engagement criteria includes a wide range of activities such as publishing papers, book reviews, engaging in industry partnerships or participation in conferences. EERPs commented on lack of evidence of faculty engagement or support for engagement from the institution.

*Facilities and Resources*: This includes the library, computing facilities, student support services and some classrooms and labs which all contribute to the institution's and program's capacity to deliver and support students' success in and outside of the classroom. EERPs noted either a full or partial absence of these required facilities and resources.

*Additional administrative staff*: Weaknesses identified in this area were linked to insufficient staffing numbers of support and administrative staff. A frequent concern is that one co-op coordinator or similar administrator is responsible for a program's work integrated learning and student experience. Hence, EERPs are concerned that if this person were to leave the institution there would be a great loss of institutional knowledge.

Other areas of concern resulting in a program not meeting the Benchmarks necessary to satisfy this Standard include the need for technology upgrades, student engagement in curriculum development, funding and integration of the program into institutional objectives.

### *Admission, Promotion and Graduation Standard*

The Admission, Promotion and Graduation Standard establishes that policies on progression requirements are consistent and reflect the character of degree granting organizations. Seventy applications had at least one concern relating to the Admission, Promotion and Graduation Standard. Figure 5 identifies four key areas of concern within this Standard including admissions Standards, co-op/work placements, transfer credits and prior learning assessment. In total, there were 74 instances of a minor weakness being identified and 8 instances of a major weakness being identified within this standard.

**Figure 5 Concerns Related to Admission Promotion and Graduation Standard**
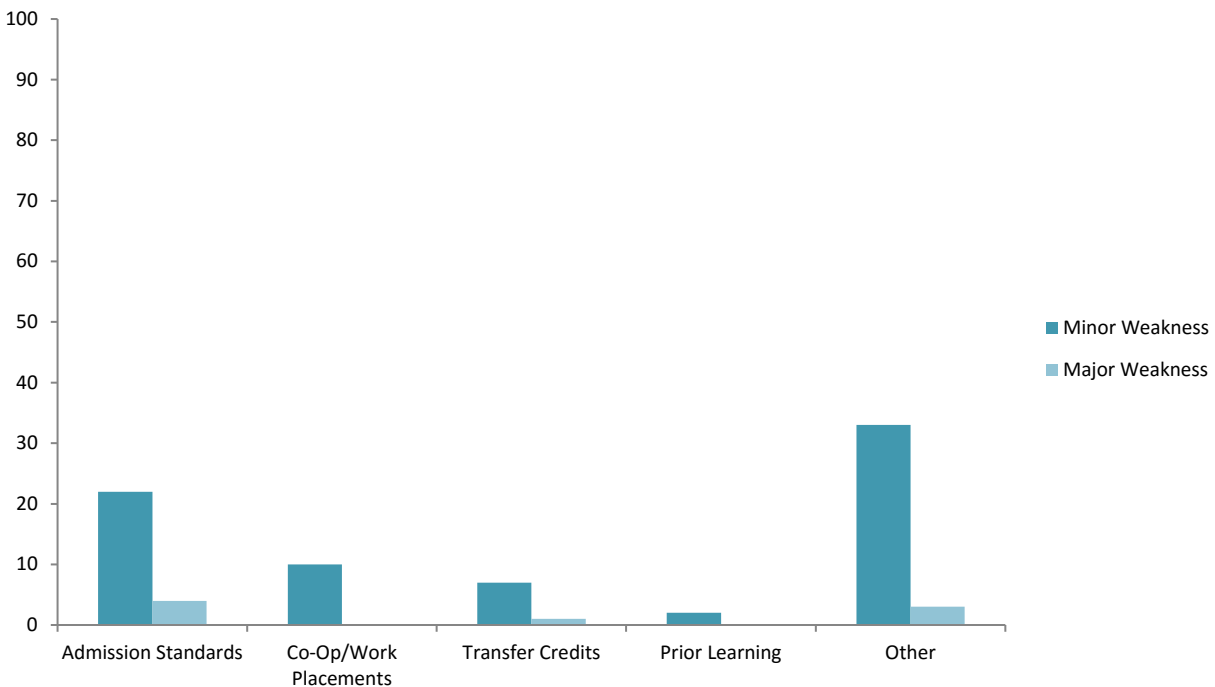


*Admission Standards*: EERP concerns in this area focus on the need for applicant screening and acceptance processes to be more thoroughly defined and include further criteria such as higher grade point averages, specific prerequisite courses or skills.

*Co-op/Work Placements*: All degree programs require the completion of one or more co-op terms. However, there were a variety of concerns including flexibility, hiring process, compensation for students or evaluation of students' on the job performance.

*Transfer Credits*: Concerns in this area relate to the institution's capacity to develop and implement appropriate policies and programs for transfer pathways and bridging options available to students within and between institutions.

*Prior Learning:* EERP comments indicate that some institutions lack the necessary policy and procedures to accurately convey to students the requirements for Prior Learning Assessment Recognition (PLAR).

Additional weaknesses identified under this Standard present in only one or two applications include the development of a recruitment plan, academic support for students, lack of clear policies or criteria, and the grading system not being consistent with those of other Canadian institutions.

## Degree Level Standard

The Degree Level Standard provides Benchmarks related to the expected knowledge and skills of graduates of a Bachelor, Honours Bachelor, Master's degree and Ph.D level credentials. These Benchmarks establish the expectations set out by the Ontario Qualifications Framework (OQF, and include: Depth and Breadth of Knowledge, Conceptual & Methodological Awareness/Research and Scholarship, Communication Skills, Application of Knowledge, Professional Capacity/Autonomy, and Awareness of Limits of Knowledge. Figure 6 below breaks down the weaknesses identified in the Degree Level Standard into six key areas of concern which are described below. Seventy-four applications had at least one weakness related to the Degree Level Standard. In total, there were 63 instances of a minor weakness being identified and 27 of a major weakness being identified within this standard.

**Figure 6 Concerns Related to Degree Level Standard**
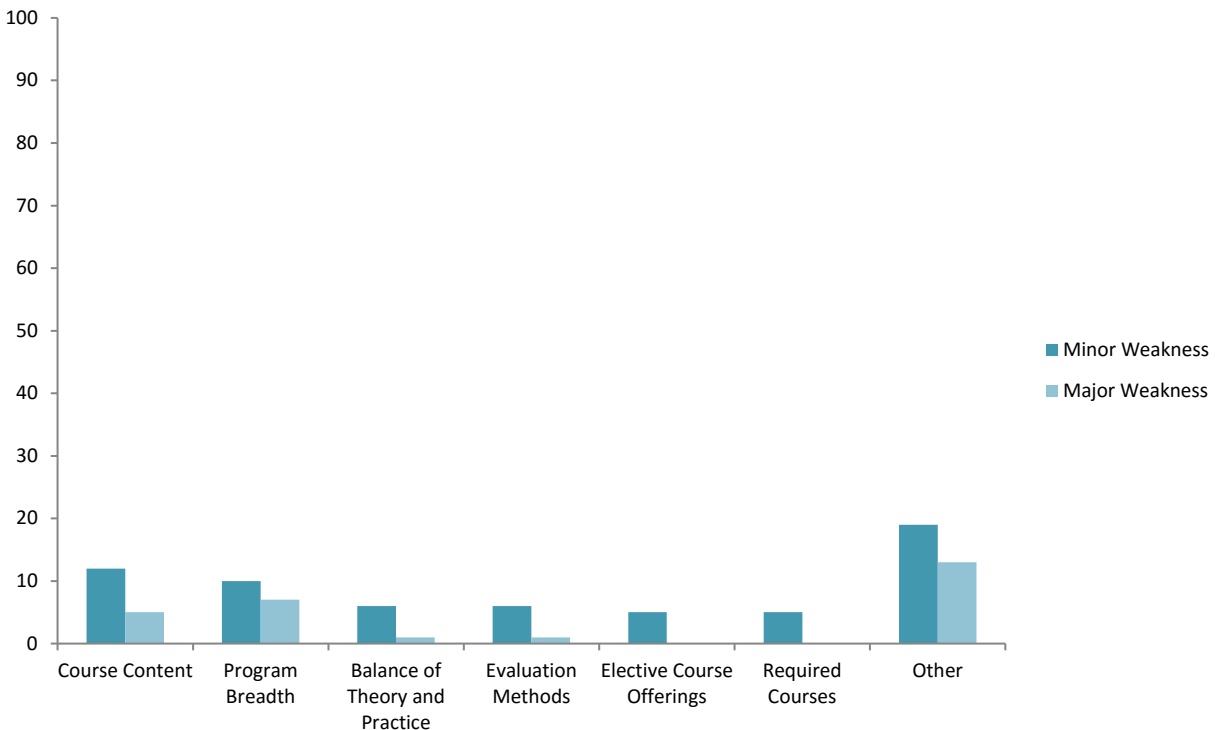


*Course Content:* Weakness identified in this area focused on information included within courses and their learning objectives. Typical concerns include the lack of general knowledge and understanding of many key concepts, methodologies, theoretical approaches, and assumptions in a discipline. Other issues

included duplication, exclusion of content, sequencing of material, or unnecessary emphasis of some content.

*Breadth:* Breadth refers to the range of non-core knowledge covered throughout the degree program. Panels' concerns were often related to the development of critical thinking and analytical skills within breadth programming.

*Balance of Theory and Practice:* Concerns in this area were focused on the appropriate balance between theory and practice within degree programs. Programs in this category were found to have problems either within the program and/or individual courses. Reviewers' comments frequently indicated programs focus extensively on providing education in one area (theory or practice) and fail to provide similar emphasis on the other.

*Evaluation Methods:* Weaknesses were identified in evaluation methods when degree programs lacked effective and accountable mechanisms for measuring student learning outcomes. This included excessive emphasis placed on evaluation methods such as multiple choice or similar testing techniques which limit a student's ability to display critical thinking. EERPs recommend ensuring evaluation methods are effective and transparent.

*Elective Course Offerings*: Weaknesses include a lack of substantial elective course offerings for students, which undermine exposure to an appropriate range of knowledge in a variety of subjects at the degree level.

*Required Courses:* Weaknesses in this area relate to the need for further or different required courses in order for students to gain all necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to be successful in their current academic program, respective career field or further studies.

There is also a wide range of "other" concerns which EERPs raised such as capstone courses and thesis, inclusion of indigenous knowledge, students' critical thinking skills, sequencing of courses, specific course content needed, international placement opportunities, rigour of grading, inadequate opportunities for faculty and student research, and limited access to student work samples.

Readers may note that some of the concerns addressed under this Standard may not, in fact, be directly related to Degree Level outcomes. This issue will be further addressed in the discussion and conclusion as it presents one of the most significant findings of the study.

## Program Delivery Standard

The Program Delivery Standard ensures that the delivery methods support the achievement of the expected and actual learning outcomes. The Benchmarks examine delivery methods and academic support services, and ensure there are appropriate safeguards for examinations and online coursework. Sixty-five applications had at least one concern relating to the Program Delivery Standard are grouped into four key areas described below. In total, there were 62 instances of a minor weakness being identified and 10 instances of a major weakness being identified within this standard.

*Faculty:* The EERP's had a range of concerns related to faculty including the need for faculty evaluations, greater faculty engagement in the institution, broader faculty complement, teaching style, faculty engagement in scholarship, faculty expertise, terminal credentials of faculty, succession planning, reliance on part-time faculty and quality of teaching.

*Learning Outcomes*: Learning outcomes must be appropriate and contribute to the overall evaluation of student achievement, and provide appropriate information to students about their achievement levels. EERP reports indicated as weaknesses where courses that do not have well defined or appropriate learning outcomes for the field of study, or comments address the currency of learning outcomes related to changes and developments in the field of study.

*Institutional Polices:* Institutions are required to develop and integrate a variety of policies for effective and transparent operations. This includes internal policies related to quality assurance, organization effectiveness, student feedback opportunities, provisions for pre-registration, examination procedures and academic advising, interventions for poor student progress, and technical support. EERPs comment on the lack of policies or the need for revisions of existing polices.

*Evaluation Methods:* EERPs noted that evaluation methods can lack effective and accountable mechanisms for measuring student learning outcomes. This included excessive emphasis placed on evaluation methods such as multiple choice or similar testing techniques, and a lack of rubric use.

Additional weaknesses addressed within this Standard include the need for expanded facilities, independence of academics, interventions for students in jeopardy, issues with program self-study and online privacy of students.

## Credential Recognition Standard

The Credential Recognition Standard ensures the program is designed to maximise graduates' potential for employment and promotion in their field and for future study. The Benchmarks outline the need for documented consultations with employers, relevant occupational groups and professional associations. Thirty-five applications had at least one weakness related to this Standard. Some EERPs comments related to the lack of capacity or engagement with relevant professional associations and with employers to provide opportunities for students, faculty and the program as a whole. This may also include the absence of an alumni association and/or data collection of alumni opportunities and challenges. Weaknesses in this area concern the lack of engagement and endorsement of alumni, professional organizations, other institutions and the community which is considered as critical to the program's success. Other concerns EERPs identify including credit transfer policies, faculty engagement in a professional community, or a lack of resources to build program status within the broader community. In total, there were 36 instances of a minor weakness being identified and 7 instances of a major weakness being identified within this standard.

*Program Evaluation Standard*

The Program Evaluation Standard ensures appropriate internal quality assurance mechanisms and procedures are in place for periodic evaluation. Two key areas of weakness identified in this standard include challenges with the Program Evaluation Committee (PEC) and the Self-Study. The PEC's overarching purposes are to support program performance, to assess program quality, and to recommend any changes needed to strengthen that quality. EERPs comments in this area include lack of a PEC, lack of academic input on the PEC, or need for further engagement of the PEC with the program. Weakness within the self-study pertains to critical information absent from the study including lack of relevant participants, minimal reference to PEQAB Standards, the absence of details, or oversimplification of analysis regarding the program. Thirty-five applications had at least one weakness related to the Program Evaluation Standard. In total, there were 20 instances of a minor weakness being identified and 17 of a major weakness being identified within this standard.

*Nomenclature Standard*

The Nomenclature Standard ensures that the program name facilitates public understanding of the qualification and assists students, employers, and other post-secondary institutions in understanding the level, nature, and discipline of study. While concerns related to this Standard are primarily related to the title of degrees some programs also had issues related to differentiation from non-degree programs, the need for more relevance to Canadian context or inability to assess the Benchmark. Thirty-eight applications had at least one weakness related to the Nomenclature Standard. In total, there were 20 instances of a minor weakness being identified and 19 of a major weakness being identified within this standard.

*Regulation and Accreditation Standard*

The Regulation and Accreditation Standard ensures programs that are subject to a government or other relevant accrediting body meet these requirements. Issues related to this Standard are related to the programs' ability to coordinate with a relevant professional association or regulation body. Other weaknesses in this Standard include curricular issues or an inability to fairly assess the Standard. Sixteen applications had at least one weakness with the Regulation and Accreditation Standard. In total, there were 11 instances of a minor weakness being identified and 5 instances of a major weakness being identified within this standard.

*Academic Freedom*

The Academic Freedom and Integrity Standard examines if the program maintains an atmosphere in which academic freedom exists and in which students and academic staff are expected to display a high degree of intellectual independence. Benchmarks look to ensure there are robust policies on academic freedom, ethical research, and intellectual property. Two frequent concerns identified as weaknesses revolved around a) the lack of, or shortcomings in, institutional policies related to quality assurance, organization effectiveness, student feedback opportunities, provisions for pre-registration and academic advising, interventions for poor student progress, and technical support. Further, EERPs notes weakness if there is

a lack of encouragement or formal policy, programs or practices related to issues in ethics and integrity. Fifteen applications had at least one weakness related to the Academic Freedom Standard. In total, there were 14 instances of a minor weakness being identified and 2 instances of a major weakness being identified within this standard.

### *Student Protection*

The Student Protection Standard ensures the program is upholding integrity and ethical conduct in its relations to students. Benchmarks include the need for truthful public reports and materials, policies, and procedures to protect students, including the requirement that students are fully informed in online or hybrid courses. Primary weaknesses in this Standard are related to access to information such as course calendars, descriptions of degrees, history of the institution, institution's mission and goals and policies, which protect student and consumer interests. Other concerns leading to weakness identified by EERPs include program components not being delivered as advertised. Twelve applications had at least one issue with the Student Protection Standard. In total, there were 10 instances of a minor weakness being identified and 2 instances of a  major weakness being identified within this standard.

## Areas of Strength and Good Practice

In addition to areas of concern within the Benchmarks, EERPs often comment on areas of strength or good practice within the program. Not all EERPs choose to provide feedback to the programs regarding their areas of strength; however, every judgment that a program meets or exceeds the relevant Standard is, in effect, a positive judgment on the strength of the program. Of the 133 comments that did provide information on specific strengths, six common strengths were present. These six areas of good practice are displayed in Figure 6 below.

**Figure 7 Areas of Good Practice across All Institution Types**
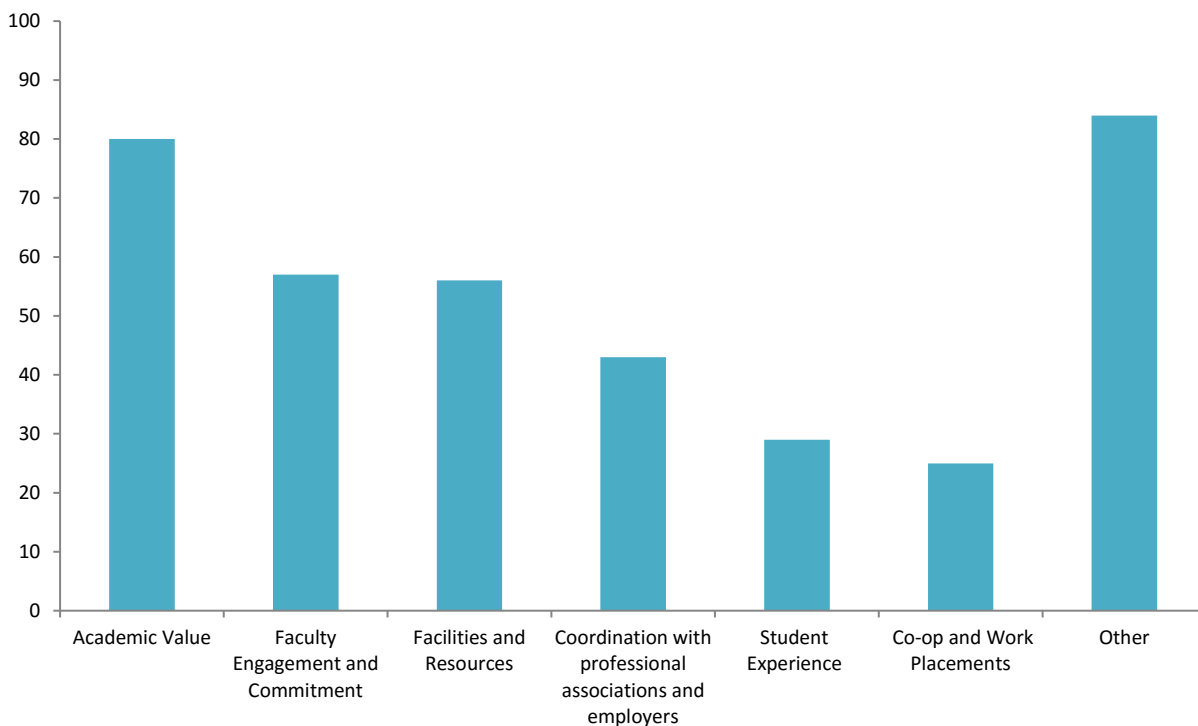


*Academic Quality and Value:* Good practice in this area can be broken down into four sub-categories related to academic quality or in-class activities. These include a) an appropriate balance of theory and practice, b) learning outcomes appropriately designed for the program, c) a variety of breadth programming, and d) value and thoughtfulness of the capstone project. These contribute to the overall value of the degree in preparing students for future studies or employment.

*Faculty Engagement and Commitment:* Good practice in this area refers to faculty's engagement with the program, the institution and the broader academic community. Reports often referred to activities such as regular meetings between staff members, collaboration on research with students, industry collaboration and general enthusiasm for the program.

*Facilities and Resources:* Programs were acknowledged for having access to high quality study space, labs, libraries, books/online materials, project materials, or simulation space. Programs with strength in this area were noted to support student success beyond traditional classroom instruction by having facilities and resources which support the whole student experience.

*Coordination with Professional Associations and Employers*: Accreditation by and coordination with relevant professional associations and employers can provide students and programs with valuable certifications and credentials, or opportunities for co-op placements and employment post-graduation. Many programs were acknowledged to have strong ties to their professional communities.

*Student Experience:* Success in providing a strong student experience was acknowledged in the overall opportunities and strengths the program and institution in their academic and co-curricular offerings.

*Co-op and Work Placements:* Experiential learning is a critical component of college degree programs. Through co-op and work placements, students are able to gain knowledge, skills, and connections within relevant industries or departments related to their field of study. Many colleges have well-resourced co-op departments which are dedicated to assisting students throughout the entire co-op and work placement process.

## New Program and Renewal Program Reviews

New programs and program renewal reviews are fundamentally different. In a new application to PEQAB, the program is in the conceptual phase. Often only a few faculty, if any, are in place, courses have not been finalised, and there is no student work available to indicate the academic rigor of the program. In the renewal reviews, which take place seven years after initial consent or a subsequent renewal review, EERP's identify more weaknesses, as they are able to comment in detail on the operational program with renewals having, on average, two more concerns per Standard.

Understandably, the two areas that are not fully developed in the new applications receive more attention in the renewals. The Program Content Standard had 24 more instances of concern in renewal applications (new 87 instances vs renewal 111 instances), and there were 28 more instances of a weakness identified in the Capacity to Deliver Standard in renewal applications had (new 74 instances VS renewal 102 instances) of concern in renewal applications. Together, these two Standards consistently have the highest numbers of instances and cases of concern across all analysis down throughout the research and analysis of EERP trends.

# Discussion and Conclusion

In analysing the comments of the 140 EERP reports, this research has identified general trends in strengths and weaknesses in degree applications to PEQAB. It is intended to provide information to the programs and the institutions on the types of challenges experienced by program applications, as well as to inform PEQAB of the patterns emerging from the reviews.

The analysis revealed commonalities in the areas of concern and areas of good practice across institution types. The Program Content and Capacity to Deliver Standard were the most frequently mentioned Standards to have either a minor or major weakness addressed by an EERP report. Additionally, the research identified the academic value of the program as the most common areas of good practice and strength. Together, the high instance of areas of good practice identified and a consistently higher number of minor compared to major weaknesses suggest the external experts believe in the quality of the programs.

## Significance of findings

Despite being able to identify the frequency of weaknesses, distilling the significance of the weaknesses is slightly more challenging. One way to consider the weight of the weaknesses is through an examination of the PEQAB recommendations and the resulting decision of the Minster. In considering this approach to the weight of the weaknesses, it must be acknowledged that comments from the EERPs are thoughtful, well-intentioned and provided in relation to PEQAB Standards and Benchmarks. However, the relative importance of identified weaknesses may vary among EERPs.

The PEQAB Board plays a significant role in unpacking the reviewers' comments, and their deliberations acknowledge that a minor weakness in one report might be presented as a major weakness in another. It is thus the role of the Board to interpret the 'weight' and significance of the weaknesses in developing recommendations for the Minister on whether to confer or deny consent, and any conditions of consent (which require the institution to report back to the Minister and/or PEQAB). Prior to 2017 these recommendations were confidential to the Minister and are, therefore, not analysed here. However, examining Ministerial consent trends demonstrates the issues on which the PEQAB Board and the Minister place the greatest amount of importance.

Of the 140 applications, PEQAB recommendations resulted in 123 programs applications receiving Ministerial consent. Of those, 48 had conditions attached to their consent. Most often the conditions of consent are unique to the program application and thus fall in the 'other' category as established in the earlier analysis. The second most common condition relates to faculty where there were 36 instances of applications having one or more issues related faculty, primarily referring to the need to hire one of more faculty in order to satisfy the Benchmark that states that 50% of the program must be taught by faculty with the terminal credential in the main – or a closely related - discipline. Other common conditions include the need meet PEQAB breadth requirements, to strengthen the role of the Program Advisory Committee, or to seek and receive accreditation from a regulatory or professional association.

## Implications for programs and institutions

A significant finding of this research is that many programs and institutions are challenged by similar issues. For the most part, the weaknesses fall into categories that are, arguably, within the control of the program to change. Issues such as program content, learning outcomes, evaluation activities and the involvement of the PAC, are within the domain of the program to manage and monitor.

Slightly more complicated to address are issues that are outside of the control of the program and lie within the realm of the larger institution: particularly, those in the Capacity to Deliver Standard. The number of faculty with terminal degrees is an example. Indeed, programs have the discretion to hire the most appropriate individual but the institutions must agree to finance that faculty position, and a full-time faculty member position for a Ph.D holder is significantly more costly than a professionally designated sessional position. Furthermore, some issues even go beyond the control of the institution. Recognising that the vast majority of the PEQAB applications are from CAATs, it must be considered that they operate

in a unionized environment which, amongst other issues, dictates many of the parameters of workload and complicate a faculty member's ability to engage in scholarship and research.

Hence, the value of this report might be in revealing to programs, institutions and to faculties where they need to focus attention, and what elements are within their control. Beyond the analysis provided in this report, each institution has their own institutional report identifying trends in their own EERP program reviews. The purpose of the institutional reports is to highlight areas of common and/or ongoing concern across programs and the institutions to ensure quality assurance is done in a consistent and comprehensive way that allows both challenges and opportunities to be addressed.

## Implications for PEQAB

This research has highlighted the ways in which PEQAB's criteria and processes are being actualized in degree level program quality assurance at Ontario's colleges and universities (with limited degree granting powers), private and out-of-province degree providers.

One of the most significant implications of this analysis is the importance of how EERPs interpret PEQAB Standards. For example, some weaknesses identified within a Standard do not actually relate to the Standard. Consider, for example, that one of the main weaknesses of the Program Delivery Standard is related to learning outcomes. The Standard does not have Benchmarks or criteria relating to learning outcomes, yet, the EERPs consistently address learning outcomes as evidence for this Standard. Again, improved training might support improved interpretation, perhaps the Panel Guidelines (as provided in Appendix A) could be examined for clarity.

More significant was the revelation that the Degree Level and the Program Content Standards have nearly the exact same weaknesses identified by EERP (see Figure 7 below). The expectations set by those Standards (as discussed previously) and the associated Benchmarks of these two Standards are very different. Yet, the EERPs' interpretation and application of those Standards is similar. The EERP comments in both cases appear to reflect the expectations of Program Content rather than Degree Level Standards. There are a few possible explanations for this.

**Figure 8 Weaknesses identified in the Degree-level and Program Content Standards**
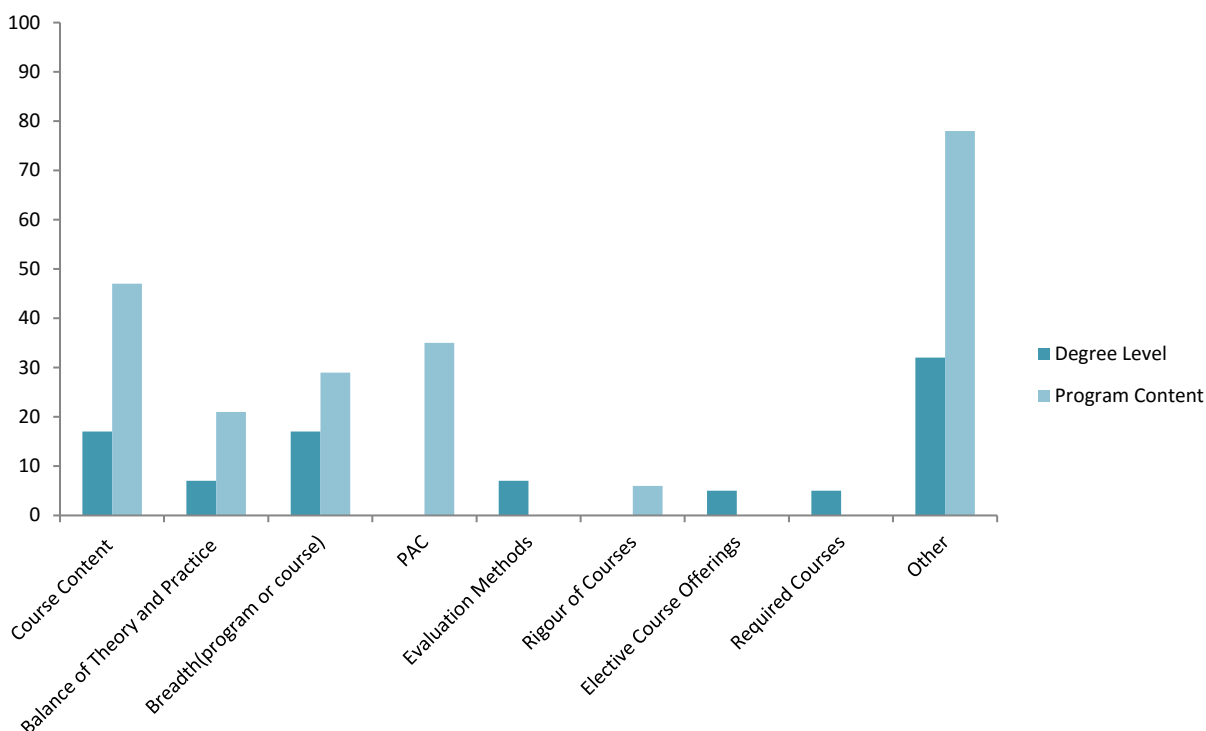


One possibility is that is that there is an EERP selection and training issue such that a) PEQAB is not recruiting the right EERPs, b) the EERPs are not being adequately trained on the criteria, and/or c) the Standards are difficult to interpret resulting in inconsistent application.

It could be argued that PEQAB's selection of EERPs has focused on the relevant disciplinary expertise of candidates, with some consideration of whether they have administrative experience (a requirement for the Chair position), if they have experience in the college sector, or if they have some interest in teaching and learning[5]. As a result, EERPs are predominantly made up of 'subject matter' experts - not 'teaching and learning' experts, and therefore may not have a perspective on credential-level differences. In general 'expertise' in academia is at the level of the discipline—so it is not just the case that PEQAB external expert reviewers are expert in their disciplines/programs and not experts in what in general should constitute a degree in all disciplines). So inevitably, even while purportedly thinking about degree-level outcomes, EERPs revert to their program level understanding and expertise. Thus, PEQAB's orientations could focus more attention on supporting EERPs to more fully understand the essence and application of the Degree

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[5] Prior to 2016, every EERP Chair came from PEQAB's Standing Organisation Committee, which consists of individuals with senior administrative experience. The rationale then was that administrative matters, such as relevant policies, were significant concerns for Colleges and other institutions undertaking degrees for the first time. Subsequently, as policies have been excluded from reviews on the basis of having been previously reviewed, and found satisfactory as Colleges have become mature in degree offering, policies and administrative concerns have become less the focus. Hence the mandatory presence of Organisation Committee members on panels was removed and panels now typically consist of two subject matter experts who provide discipline specific knowledge.

Level Standard. This is a reasonable recommendation considering that many other quality assurance agencies conduct reviewer training that often includes a full day, in-person, orientation and training session, whereas PEQAB's orientation of EERPs through the Secretariat is less intensive.

Another possible explanation for the challenges in distinguishing issues related to Program Content versus the Degree-Level Standard is that it is, in fact, extremely difficult to extrapolate from the level of a Standard meant to apply to all degrees to the content of a specific degree program. This argument has been made frequently, most influentially in Europe, where the application of the introduction of the European Qualifications Framework in the early 2000's was extremely challenging, and left programs and institutions foundering to demonstrate achievement. This problem was the stimulus for the "Tuning Process" where program level learning outcomes were developed by faculty members from across Europe in order to provide a link between the high-level European Qualification Framework credential expectations and the granular program content objectives. These program learning outcomes became the basis for program development and evaluation and provide a clearer and more direct link between the degree level expectations and the program activities. A similar 2013 'Tuning' activity based in Ontario examined the learning outcomes for different sectors of disciplines (life and health science, physical science, and social sciences) at the various credential levels (2 year diploma, 3 year diploma, 4 year honours bachelor degree, and Master's degree), as a tool for programs and institutions to more easily embed the high-level concepts of credential-level learning outcomes into programing and to demonstrate student achievement of the OQF.

The implications of the findings of this research and the subsequent interpretations of the main issues are significant. They suggest PEQAB may want to reconsider the training package and framework for EERPs, explore more direct ways of supporting a clear understanding of the Degree Level Standard, and consider the potential of creating more nuanced learning outcomes to support the application of the degree level Standards and the Ontario Qualifications Framework.

**PEQAB**

THE POST SECONDARY EDUCATION QUALITY ASSESSMENT BOARD
COMMISSION D'ÉVALUATION DE LA QUALITÉ DE L'ÉDUCATION POSTSECONDAIRE

**2017**

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**Panel Report Guidelines**

**Review of an Application from**
**xxx to renew its consent to offer an**

***xxx***

**PREFACE**

In Ontario, organizations that wish to offer degree programs or part of a program leading to a degree (that do not have legislative authority to do so) must request the consent of the Minister Advanced Education and Skills Development. Pursuant to the regulations under the *Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000* (PSECE Act/the Act), the legislation that governs degree granting in Ontario, the Minister may reject an application on policy grounds identified in regulation; refer an application to another body; or refer an application to the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB) for review and recommendation. In cases where the Minister refers an application to PEQAB, PEQAB reviews the application for program and institutional quality and makes a recommendation to the Minister. If the Minister is satisfied that the organization can deliver a quality program, s/he grants a time-limited consent that requires the program and the organization to be reviewed on a regular basis (typically every 5-7 years).

The Board seeks expert advice from qualified academics and professionals on the quality of the submission and the applicant's capacity to deliver the program. As part of formulating its recommendation to the Minister, the Board appoints an expert panel to conduct a review and assess the program against the Board's relevant Standards and Benchmarks. The review of an initial application for consent involves an evaluation of the program *proposal*. At the 5-7 year mark and thereafter, when the organization seeks to renew consent, the Board (and panel) evaluate the *actual delivery* of the program and the organization's implementation of policies and procedures to support program delivery.

**For applications to renew consent, PEQAB employs the following review approaches:**

1) **Direct Program Review:** the organization is required to submit information on a full range of matters (curriculum, faculty credentials, admissions practices, learning and physical resources, etc.) and a panel of discipline experts (the panel) reviews the program and provides advice to the Board about its quality; and
2) **Audit:** the organization is required to have policies and procedures to ensure its ongoing quality. At renewal of consent, PEQAB audits whether the consent holder has successfully implemented those processes in the context of the program.

**GUIDELINES FOR YOUR REVIEW**

XXX has applied for a renewal of its consent to offer an Honours Bachelor of Therapeutic Recreation. The program first received consent in 2008.

The primary obligation of the panel is to provide its best judgement on the program. To this end, the panel is asked to assess applications against the Standards and Benchmarks set by PEQAB and, when members

of the panel deem it appropriate, to identify and address any other organization-related issues arising from the proposal.

For your review, we have enclosed the following materials related to the college's application to renew its consent: the program abstract; course schedules; program self-study; course outlines; faculty CVs; academic calendar; and policies; and any additional materials provided by the college. The college's self-study documents and samples of student work are the core components of the review.

Your assignment, discussed in detail below, is to conduct a review of the program against the Board's requirements for a Bachelor's Honours Degree in an applied area of study, including the audit-described above.

**Review Process**

Please note that in the *Background* and the *Instructions for the Review* Section (p. 34) of these *Guidelines* you will find information, that we will also cover in the orientation, about degree granting in Ontario, and some tips about the review which you might find helpful.

The panel for this review consists of two members:
1) **Chair:** with expertise in reviewing Organization capacity and institutional policies and procedures
2) **Subject-matter expert:** with expertise in the program (core) area and the resources required to support it.

The panel **chair** is responsible for overseeing the entire review and ensuring that the application is considered against all Benchmarks unless indicated otherwise. In particular, the chair is responsible for reviewing the organization's general policies and conducting the audit against relevant Standards and Benchmarks. In cases where the institution has already been subjected to a comprehensive audit of its institutional policies and procedures, the panel chair is responsible for reviewing only the implementation of certain policies and procedures related to internal quality assurance in the context of the particular program as indicated in the individual Standards and Benchmarks below.

The **subject-matter expert** is responsible for
• reviewing the program against the Board's relevant Standards and Benchmarks
• reviewing samples of student work for evidence that the expected learning outcomes related to the degree-level Standard have been achieved.

Samples of student work are randomly selected by the panel. The objective of this requirement is to assess whether the college has appropriately assessed the level of student performance. At the time of the site visit, the panel will request that the college have enough student work sorted into what it considers

exemplary, average, and minimally acceptable performance categories to allow for the random selection of samples from among these three categories. Please confirm in the panel's report that a review of samples of student work was undertaken, indicate how many samples were reviewed, and provide details around your findings.

The panel will prepare a report for the Board. The panel should provide its best judgement with respect to the quality of the program, the reasons for its judgements and be of sufficient detail to enable the Board to determine the extent to which its criteria are satisfied. The key issues are whether

- the program meets the Standards set by the Board
- you think the program is of sufficient quality to be recommended to the Board and eventually to the students of Ontario
- the college has the capacity to assure program quality on an ongoing basis.

Should we receive any additional information, either from the organization or interested stakeholders, we will forward it to you. Please make any requests for additional information directly to the organization. Should you receive additional information, please submit it with your report for our files.

**SPECIFICS OF THIS REVIEW/ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONS**

XXX College currently delivers the program at its XXX**.** The site visit will occur at this location.

*Review of Institutional Policies*

XXX has undergone other renewal reviews under the Board's current requirements. As such, XXX has submitted institutional policies that have previously been reviewed and found to be satisfactory by the Board. For your reference, in cases where institutional policies have been reviewed previously and do not require your scrutiny, the *Guidelines* will indicate "√ institutional policies previously reviewed." However, in some cases, the Board asks that you review the implementation of the policies in the context of the program. In these cases, the *Guidelines* will indicate:

| √ institutional policies previously reviewed. Implemented in program? |
| --- |
|  |

□ Y □ N

*Review of Breadth/Non-core courses*

The Board requires that bachelor programs include breadth curriculum that meets several Benchmarks, as specified in the *Guidelines*. The Board defines breadth/non-core courses are those that contribute to knowledge in fields unrelated to the main field(s) of study. Core courses are those that contribute to the development of knowledge in the main field(s) of study. The main field(s) of study is the field(s) identified in the degree nomenclature. Core courses can be in the main field(s) of study, or in related fields.[6]

On a previous occasion, a separate breadth panel assessed the capacity of the college to deliver liberal arts education in the context of its degree programs. In these *Guidelines* we have marked as "√ breadth capacity previously reviewed" those Benchmarks that have been previously reviewed during the breadth capacity review and that do not require your scrutiny. We have marked these Benchmarks as:

√ breadth capacity previously reviewed.

One matter related to breadth will, however, require assessment. Within the Program Content Standard, the SME is asked to assess whether, in the context of this program, the breadth electives and core courses are appropriately categorized as non-core or core.

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[6] E.g., psychology, history, and statistics are different fields of study. Because the field of psychology uses the scientific method as one of its methodological approaches, statistics would be a core course in a psychology degree program. Statistics is not related to scholarship in history, however, and would not be a core course in a history degree program.

Distance Education Review

**Assessment against Standards and Benchmarks**

While the roles and responsibilities for the panel members have been set out in the Guidelines, the intention is not to limit the panel's comments. Should you wish to comment on any aspects of the application, the Board invites you to do so.

The Board has 9 (out of 11) Standards relevant to this review:

Degree Level Standard

Admission, Promotion and Graduation Standard

Program Content Standard

Program Delivery Standard

Capacity to Deliver Standard

Credential Recognition Standard

Regulation and Accreditation Standard

Nomenclature Standard

Program Evaluation Standard

Academic Freedom and Integrity Standard – previously assessed

Student Protection Standard – previously assessed

Each Standard has several Benchmarks against which the college's performance will be assessed.

**Definitions of Assessment Categories**

When assessing the proposal against the Board's Benchmarks, you are asked to indicate whether the applicant **meets or exceeds the Board's Benchmark** (this aspect of the proposal meets or exceeds the threshold set by the Board in the Benchmark) or **does not meet the Board's Benchmark** (this aspect of the proposal does not meet the threshold set by the Board in the Benchmark).

For each Benchmark, indicate whether the college

Meets or exceeds the Benchmark (check "**Y**")

Does not meet the Benchmark (check "**N**").

The Board also asks that you please indicate

the reasons for your judgements

any commitments or important clarifications the college made during the review that were critical to your judgements

any revisions needed

whether revisions are minor or major (see definitions below)

**Minor revisions** can be implemented without significant time or resources, and the institution would appear to have the capacity to implement them. **Major revisions** are those required to meet the threshold, would take significant time and/or resources to rectify, and/or should be addressed.

**Completed Report:**

The Chair is asked to send the final report electronically. This submission will be considered affirmation that the SME is aware and approves the content of the final report. Electronic submissions should be forwarded to: XXX

Alternatively, the Chair may send a signed hard copy version of the report to:

Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board Secretariat

c/o XXX

900 Bay Street

23rd Floor, Mowat Block

Toronto, ON M7A 1L2

**Panel Guidelines Summary**

**DESCRIPTION OF REVIEW PROCEDURE**

(Please use the space below to identify the location of the site-visit, reviewers involved in assessment, methods and materials used in assessment)

**OVERALL PANEL RECOMMENDATION**

(Please use the space below to provide a summary judgment about the quality of the program/organization)

**RECOMMENDATION FOR FOLLOW-UP ACTION OR CONDITIONS OF CONSENT**

 (Please use the space below to provide a summary of any remedial actions necessary to meet PEQAB's Standards or any potential conditions of consent)

**FEATURES OF GOOD PRACTICE**

 (Please use the space below to provide a summary of the positive aspects of the program or organization)

## Panel Guidelines

**1. HONOURS BACCALAUREATE/BACHELOR'S DEGREE STANDARD**

A degree in **applied area of study** is normally designed to require a level of conceptual sophistication, specialized knowledge, and intellectual autonomy similar to that in an honours or specialist degree program but with the disciplinary content oriented to an occupational field of practice.

Students in applied programs learn by doing, with a focus on preparing for entry into an occupational field of practice. Applied programs incorporate a blend of theory and practice, and normally include a terminal project or other practice-based exercises intended to develop and demonstrate the student's readiness for employment in the occupational field of practice.

In addition to personal and intellectual growth, the programs are primarily designed to prepare students for employment in the field of practice and second-entry professional degree programs, or, depending on the content of the program and the field, entry into either graduate study or bridging studies for an appropriate graduate program.

Classroom instruction is typically eight semesters in duration (normally 120 credits, or the equivalent) and may be supplemented by required work experience (e.g., two to four supervised co-operative work terms).

**Standard:**

Depth and Breadth of Knowledge

A developed knowledge and critical understanding of the key concepts, methodologies, current advances, theoretical approaches, and assumptions in a discipline overall, as well as in a specialized area of a discipline

A developed understanding of many of the major fields in a discipline, including, where appropriate, from an interdisciplinary perspective, and how the fields may intersect with fields in related disciplines

A developed ability to

gather, review, evaluate, and interpret information

compare the merits of alternate hypotheses or creative options, relevant to one or more of the major fields in a discipline;

A developed, detailed knowledge of and experience in research in an area of the discipline

Developed critical thinking and analytical skills inside and outside the discipline

The ability to apply learning from one or more areas outside the discipline.

## Conceptual & Methodological Awareness/Research and Scholarship

An understanding of methods of enquiry or creative activity, or both, in their primary area of study that enables the student to

evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems using well established ideas and techniques

devise and sustain arguments or solve problems using these methods

describe and comment upon particular aspects of current research or equivalent advanced scholarship.

## Communication Skills

The ability to communicate information, arguments and analysis accurately and reliably, orally and in writing, to specialist and non-specialist audiences using structured and coherent arguments, and, where appropriate, informed by key concepts and techniques of the discipline.

## Application of Knowledge

The ability to review, present, and critically evaluate quantitative and qualitative information to

develop lines of argument

make sound judgements in accordance with the major theories, concepts, and methods of the subject(s) of study

apply underlying concepts, principles, and techniques of analysis, both within and outside the discipline

where appropriate, use this knowledge in the creative process

The ability to use a basic range of established techniques to

initiate and undertake critical evaluation of arguments, assumptions, abstract concepts and information

propose solutions

frame appropriate questions for the purpose of solving a problem

solve a problem or create a new work

The ability to make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources.


Professional Capacity/Autonomy

The qualities and transferable skills necessary for further study, employment, community involvement, and other activities requiring

the exercise of initiative, personal responsibility, and accountability in both personal and group contexts

working reflectively with others

decision-making in complex contexts

The ability to manage their own learning in changing circumstances, both within and outside the discipline, and to select an appropriate program of further study

Behaviour consistent with academic integrity and social responsibility

Awareness of Limits of Knowledge

An understanding of the limits to their own knowledge and ability, and an appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity, and limits to knowledge and how this might influence analysis and interpretations.

| Benchmarks: | Meets or exceeds the Benchmark (Y/N)? | Please comment on<br><br>the reasons for your judgements<br><br>any commitments or important clarifications the institution made during the review that were critical to your judgements<br><br>any revisions needed<br><br>whether revisions are minor or major (see definitions below[7]) |
|---|---|---|
| The program meets or exceeds the degree level Standard and the applicant demonstrates how the program meets the Standard. | □ Y □ N | |
| Assessment of individual student work in the terminal stage of the program that reflects exemplary, average, and minimally acceptable performance demonstrates that the degree-level Standard has been achieved. | □ Y □ N | |

Identify, for this Standard

Strengths

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[7] Minor revisions can be implemented without significant time or resources, and the institution would appear to have the capacity to implement them. Major revisions are those required to meet the threshold, would take significant time and/or resources to rectify, and/or should be addressed.

Weaknesses needing MINOR revisions

Weaknesses requiring MAJOR revisions

Suggestions/advice

The program

□ meets or exceeds the Board's Standard.

□ does not meet the Board's Standard.

Was the information provided in the submission combined with any additional information sought from the institution (including at the site visit) sufficient, reliable, and valid for the purposes of this review?

□ Yes

□ No (if no, please comment)

Please complete the following table regarding samples of student work.

|  | Exemplary | Average | Minimally Acceptable |
|---|---|---|---|
| Number of samples available (if too many to count, indicate ample) | | | |
| Number of samples reviewed | | | |
| Number without personal identifiers removed (if all or majority, indicate such) | | | |
| Examples of assessment methods used | | | |
| Number of students enrolled in program (if available): | | | |
| Additional comments: | | | |

2. ADMISSION, PROMOTION, AND GRADUATION STANDARD

**Standard:**

Admission, promotion, and graduation requirements are consistent with the postsecondary character of degree-granting organizations.

| Benchmarks: | Meets or exceeds the Benchmark (Y/N)?[8] | Please comment on<br><br>the reasons for your judgements<br><br>any commitments or important clarifications the college made during the review that were critical to your judgements<br><br>any revisions needed<br><br>whether revisions are minor or major (see definitions below[9]) |
|---|---|---|
| Admission requirements are appropriate to the learning outcome goals of the program and the degree level Standard.[10] | □ Y □ N | |
| Admission to a bachelor program normally requires at a minimum an Ontario Secondary School Diploma or equivalent[11], six university or university/college courses at the Grade 12 level, a minimum average of 65 per cent, and any additional requirements. | □ Y □ N | |
| Mature students[12] have demonstrated academic abilities equivalent to those of Ontario high school graduates, verified by successful completion of courses at the postsecondary level or an entrance examination. | √ institutional policies previously reviewed. | |

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[8] Indicate whether the College
- Meets or exceeds the benchmark (check "**Y**" for "yes"); or
- Does not meet the benchmark (check "**N**" for "no").

[9] Minor revisions can be implemented without significant time or resources, and the institution would appear to have the capacity to implement them. Major revisions are those required to meet the threshold, would take significant time and/or resources to rectify, and/or should be addressed.

[10] See Standard 1 for a description of the degree level Standard.

[11] For credentials earned in Quebec, applicants should have a Secondary V diploma and at least one year (minimum 12 academic courses) in a CEGEP academic diploma program, with subjects at stated levels relevant to the degree program.

[12] Mature students are applicants who have not achieved the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) or its equivalent, who are at least 19 years of age on or before the commencement of the program in which they intend to enrol.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Where any type of advanced standing into the program is proposed, policies and procedures pertaining to bridging requirements, advanced standing, credit, and credential recognition<br><br>have as a principal criterion that the credits accepted for admission to a degree program are in proportion to the affinity with and/or applicability to the specialist content of the program and other curricular requirements<br><br>are fair (award credit where credit is due), reasonable (do not award credit where none is due), and consistent<br><br>identify the bases on which such decisions are made, including<br><br>the minimum acceptable grade or achievement level<br><br>the requirements for comparability of program content of earlier studies with that of the proposed program<br><br>the procedures for determining the credit to be awarded<br><br>the procedures that students will follow when requesting credit and appealing transfer of credit decisions<br><br>the limit on the number of credits that will be awarded for prior degree[13] level study toward the degree program | √ institutional policies previously reviewed. Implemented in program?<br><br><br>□ Y □ N | |

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[13] Credits recognized for advanced standing must be earned at a postsecondary institution which is
  a)  a Canadian public university
  b)  an organization authorized to offer the degree program on the basis of an Ontario ministerial consent
  c)  an organization that has the legal authority to grant degrees, is accredited by a recognized accrediting body where relevant, applies quality assurance policies to programs consistent with the program evaluation policy requirements of the Board, and is a member of a recognized association of degree granting institutions
  d)  another institution acceptable to the Board.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| require in all cases a gap analysis of the program content and outcomes of the studies for which transfer credit is being awarded<br><br>ensure that the degree level Standard and all program learning outcome Standards of the degree program are met;<br><br>identify any requirements for bridging studies that facilitate entry into the proposed program. | | |
| For a degree completion arrangement a detailed gap analysis demonstrates the academic integrity of the degree program and that the degree level Standard and degree program learning outcomes are met. | □ Y □ N | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Colleges proposing to award credit for learning that takes place outside formal post-secondary educational institutions<br><br>have policies and procedures pertaining to prior learning assessment, which must include at a minimum<br><br>key principles informing the prior learning assessment<br><br>methodology used for portfolio assessment, and examination challenge for credit;<br><br>policies on credit limits, appeals, and confidentiality<br><br>assessment documents, guidelines, brochures for potential students<br><br>demonstrate that<br><br>credit will be awarded only for learning and not for experience<br><br>credit will be awarded only for degree level learning<br><br>the determination of competence levels and credit awards will be made by academic experts in the appropriate subject matter. | □ Y □ N | |
| The institution<br><br>does not offer any credits for "life experience", unless that experience is assessed for its appropriate learning value to the specific degree program<br><br>does not waive comprehensive examinations, academic reports, research projects and/or theses, if these are Standard requirements of the program | □ Y □ N | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| does not award advanced standing for more than 50% of the total number of the credits of the program based on prior learning assessment[14]<br><br>requires that at least 50% of the individuals enrolled in a program at any given time are actively taking required elements of that program. | | |
| Administrative procedures for assessing advanced standing include the following elements.<br><br>Credit awards and their transcript entries are monitored to avoid giving credit twice for the same learning.<br><br>Policies and procedures applied to assessment, including provision for appeal, are fully disclosed and publicly accessible.<br><br>All personnel involved in the assessment of learning should receive adequate training for the functions they perform, and provision should be made for their continued professional development.<br><br>Advanced standing decisions are regularly monitored, reviewed, and evaluated to ensure their ongoing validity for the degree program. | □ Y □ N | |

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[14] In the context of this benchmark, prior learning assessment only refers to the assessment of learning gained outside a traditional classroom (through work experience, volunteering, outside study, etc.) and excludes (and therefore allows) transfer credits and transfer agreements which may amount to more than 50% advanced standing.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Promotion and graduation requirements are consistent with the learning outcome goals of the program and include<br><br>policies governing academic remediation, sanctions, and suspension for students who do not meet minimum achievement requirements<br><br>a grading system that is easily understandable, meaningful, and convertible to students, other postsecondary institutions, and potential employers, whether expressed as letter grades, percentages, or grade points<br><br>regardless of the grading scheme, grades for acceptable performance correspond to student work that demonstrates the degree level Standard has been achieved<br><br>minimum overall average acceptable achievement for progression (across all degree requirements, including the breadth and discipline-related requirements), is not lower than the level typically designated by C- or 60 - 62%<br><br>minimum overall average acceptable achievement in discipline-related requirements for progression in the program not lower than the level typically designated by C- or 60 - 62%<br><br>a level of overall achievement expected in the core discipline(s) of study higher than the overall average. | √ institutional policies previously reviewed. Implemented in program?<br><br><br>□ Y □ N | |

**Identify, for this Standard**

**Strengths**

**Weaknesses needing MINOR revisions**

**Weaknesses requiring MAJOR revisions**

**Suggestions/advice**

**The program**

□ **meets or exceeds the Board's Standard.**

□ **does not meet the Board's Standard.**

**Was the information provided in the submission combined with any additional information sought from the college (including at the site visit) sufficient, reliable, and valid for the purposes of this review?**

□ **Yes**

□ **No (if no, please comment)**

3. PROGRAM CONTENT STANDARD

**Standard:**

The program offers an education of sufficient rigour, breadth, and depth to achieve the knowledge and skills identified in the degree level Standard.

| Benchmarks: | Meets or exceeds the Benchmark (Y/N)? | Please comment on<br><br>the reasons for your judgements<br><br>any commitments or important clarifications the college made during the review that were critical to your judgements |
|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |

| | | **any revisions needed** <br><br> **whether revisions are minor or major (see definitions below[15])** |
|---|---|---|
| The program ensures an appropriate balance of theory and practice | □ Y □ N | |
| The Program Advisory Committee[16] <br><br> includes experts in the field external to the organization and for degrees in applied and professional areas of study, employers and representatives from industry and professional associations | □ Y □ N | |
| is engaged and positioned to regularly comment on the currency of the curriculum in relationship to developments in the discipline/field of study as well as the relevant labour market | □ Y □ N | |
| confirms the currency of the curriculum, and as appropriate, its relevance to the field(s) of practice | □ Y □ N | |
| endorses the program as represented in the application. | □ Y □ N | |
| Learning outcomes in the subjects/courses enable graduates to meet or exceed the requirements | □ Y □ N | |

[15] Minor revisions can be implemented without significant time or resources, and the institution would appear to have the capacity to implement them. Major revisions are those required to meet the threshold, would take significant time and/or resources to rectify, and/or should be addressed.

[16] It is considered best practice that
•        the PAC Chair be an external member of the committee
•        the PAC have at least eight members
•        the PAC Chair set the agenda
•        the PAC meet at least twice a year
•        institution/program staff serve as the secretariat to the PAC supporting the PAC with setting up meetings, booking times & spaces etc.
•        PAC membership include representation from the relevant labour market and from the discipline/field of study
•        PAC meetings be minuted
The PAC formally endorse the curriculum as part of the institutions Self-Study.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| for graduates from similar programs in Ontario and other jurisdictions | | |
| of the field(s) of study and/or practice | □ Y □ N | |
| of any relevant professional or accrediting body. | □ Y □ N | |
| All courses provide exposure to increasingly complex theory at the degree level and, in applied or professional courses and where otherwise appropriate, the application of that theory to practice and the demands of practice in the field(s). | □ Y □ N | |
| Time allotments assigned to the program as a whole and to its components are appropriate to the stated learning outcomes. | □ Y □ N | |
| All bachelor programs have a breadth requirement that includes coherent and substantive non-core[17] offerings. This requirement informs the design of non-core courses and provides the basis of at least some of the assessment of student outcomes. The non-core curriculum (core and non-core) contributes to the achievement of  a) critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, written and oral communication skills  b) knowledge of society and culture, and skills relevant to civic engagement. | √ breadth capacity previously reviewed.  Implemented in program?  □ Y □ N | |
| The non-core curriculum provides  a) knowledge in at least two of the following: | √ breadth capacity | |

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[17] Non-core courses are those that contribute to knowledge in fields unrelated to the main field(s) of study. Core courses are those that contribute to the development of knowledge in the main field(s) of study. The main field(s) of study is the field(s) identified in the degree nomenclature. Core courses can be in the main field(s) of study, or in related fields. For example, psychology, history and statistics are different fields of study. Because the field of psychology uses scientific method as one of its methodological approaches, statistics would be a core course in a psychology degree program. Statistics is not related to scholarship in history, however, and would not be a core course in a history degree program.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| i) humanities<br><br>ii) sciences<br><br>iii) social sciences<br><br>iv) global cultures (including Indigenous cultures)<br><br>v) mathematics | previously reviewed.<br><br><br>Implemented in program?<br><br>□ Y □ N | |
| b) more than introductory knowledge of the distinctive assumptions and modes of analysis of a discipline outside the core fields of study. | □ Y □ N | |
| The curriculum reflects current knowledge in the core field(s). | □ Y □ N | |
| The curriculum reflects current knowledge in the fields represented in the non-core/breadth offerings. | √ breadth capacity previously reviewed. | |
| 10. In undergraduate programs, the balance of core and non-core/breadth studies is normally achieved as follows:<br><br>a) 20% of the program hours are in courses in the non-core curriculum[18] | □ Y □ N | |
| b) at least one non-core course is a free elective. | □ Y □ N | |

[18] An applicant may demonstrate through alternative approaches that the degree program meets the breadth/non-core requirements typical of such programs as offered at other postsecondary institutions. For example, undergraduate programs associated with accrediting bodies or other industry/professional regulatory bodies may depart from this norm, especially if meeting the 20% non-core benchmark would drive the total program to an extraordinary number of credit hours.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 11. The type and frequency of student assessment demonstrate the achievement of the stated learning outcomes and provide appropriate information to students about their achievement levels. | □ Y □ N | |
| 12. Any work-integrated learning experience[19]<br><br>is appropriate to the field of the program | □ Y □ N | |
| has articulated, appropriate learning outcomes | □ Y □ N | |
| is supervised by both a college representative with appropriate academic credentials and an employer/staff member who collaborate to evaluate the student performance | □ Y □ N | |
| amounts to no less than 14 weeks of full-time equivalent work (420 hours), either in one block, or in multiple cumulative blocks appropriate to achieving the learning outcomes. | □ Y □ N | |
| Where applicable, the curriculum reflects appropriate levels of Ontario and Canadian content. | □ Y □ N | |

1.     In the context of this program, are the breadth (non-core) electives and core courses appropriately categorised as non-core or core?

□ Yes

□ No (if no, please comment)

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[19] The normal and expected work-integrated learning experience is one that occurs outside of the academic term (as per section 5.1 of the Board's Handbook for Ontario Colleges). Colleges may allow part-time work-integrated learning experiences, bearing in mind that any such learning experiences are subject to review upon program renewal and that part-time employment should not compromise the feasibility of academic studies (i.e. part-time employment should not create undue or excessive student workload).

Identify, for this Standard

Strengths

Weaknesses needing MINOR revisions

Weaknesses requiring MAJOR revisions

Suggestions/advice


The program

□ meets or exceeds the Board's Standard.

□ does not meet the Board's Standard.


Was the information provided in the submission combined with any additional information sought from the college (including at the site visit) sufficient, reliable, and valid for the purposes of this review?

□ Yes

□ No (if no, please comment)


4. PROGRAM DELIVERY STANDARD

**Standard:**

The delivery methods support achievement of the expected and actual learning outcomes.

| Benchmarks: | Meets or exceeds the Benchmark (Y/N)? | Please comment on<br><br>the reasons for your judgements<br><br>any commitments or important clarifications the college made during the review that were critical to your judgements<br><br>any revisions needed<br><br>whether revisions are minor or major (see definitions below[20]) |
|---|---|---|
| The institution conducts sustained, evidence-based and participatory inquiry as to whether courses and the program (whether delivered using traditional, web facilitated, blended, hybrid, or online methods) are achieving the intended learning outcomes. | □ Y □ N | |
| The results of such inquiry are used to guide curriculum design and delivery, pedagogy, and educational processes. | □ Y □ N | |
| Assessment of the delivery methods includes consideration of<br><br>their quality and effectiveness | □ Y □ N | |
| Standardized and regular feedback from students | □ Y □ N | |
| provisions for pre-registration and ongoing academic advising | □ Y □ N | |
| policies concerning interventions for poor student progress | □ Y □ N | |
| availability and suitability of technical and other supports. | □ Y □ N | |

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[20] Minor revisions can be implemented without significant time or resources, and the institution would appear to have the capacity to implement them. Major revisions are those required to meet the threshold, would take significant time and/or resources to rectify, and/or should be addressed.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Delivery methods are appropriate to course content and design. | □ Y □ N | |
| The institution has the expertise and resources (including appropriate technological resources) to support the proposed delivery methods and to ensure their effectiveness. | □ Y □ N | |
| The delivery methods contribute to and enhance the creation of academic community among students and between students and faculty. For greater clarity concerning online learning elements, this includes ensuring that<br><br>the program/course design and the course syllabus make appropriate provisions for instructor-student and student-student interaction | □ Y □ N | |
| the technologies used to achieve interactions among faculty and students online (e.g., chat rooms, web-based discussions, computer conferences, threaded discussions) are adequate. | □ Y □ N | |
| 7. The technology used to deliver courses, both pedagogically and administratively, is adequate to facilitate program delivery. | □ Y □ N | |
| 8. Faculty involved in course delivery are adequately trained for the delivery mode. | □ Y □ N | |
| 9. There are adequate resources and processes to acquaint faculty, students, and course designers with new software or systems as they are adopted for the delivery mode of the program. | □ Y □ N | |
| 10. Academic support services are appropriate to the delivery mode of the program. | □ Y □ N | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 11. An institution offering distance courses/programs ensures that there is a sufficient number of faculty qualified to develop, design, and teach the courses/programs.[21] | □ Y □ N | |
| 12. Appropriate safeguards assure the authentication of student identity and the integrity of student work for online courses/programs. Policies and procedures assure the verification of student identity for coursework and examinations, and for the control of examinations, including but not limited to security, time limits, and the selection of proctors/invigilators. | □ Y □ N | |

Identify, for this Standard

Strengths

Weaknesses needing MINOR revisions

Weaknesses requiring MAJOR revisions

Suggestions/advice

The program

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[21] NB: this benchmark is only relevant for a course/program offered exclusively online.

□ meets or exceeds the Board's Standard.

□ does not meet the Board's Standard.


Was the information provided in the submission combined with any additional information sought from the college (including at the site visit) sufficient, reliable, and valid for the purposes of this review?

□ Yes

□ No (if no, please comment)


5. CAPACITY TO DELIVER STANDARD

**Standard:**

The college has the capacity to deliver the quality of education necessary for students to attain the stated and necessary learning outcomes.


| **Benchmarks**: | **Meets or exceeds the Benchmark (Y/N)?** | **Please comment on**<br><br>**the reasons for your judgements**<br><br>**any commitments or important clarifications the college made during the review that were critical to your judgements**<br><br>**any revisions needed** |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

| | | whether revisions are minor or major (see definitions below[22]) |
|---|---|---|
| The program is appropriate to the college's mission, goals, and strength. | □ Y □ N | |
| The college provides for reasonable student and faculty access to learning and information resources (e.g., library, databases, computing, classroom equipment, laboratory facilities) sufficient in scope, quality, currency, and kind to support the program. | □ Y □ N | |
| The college makes a commitment in its budgets and policies to provide and maintain the necessary learning, physical, technological, human, and other resources for the program, and to supplement them as necessary. | □ Y □ N | |
| Students have access to an appropriate range of academic support services (e.g., academic counselling, tutoring, career counselling, placement services). | √ institutional policies previously reviewed. | |
| Policies pertaining to faculty: define the academic/professional credentials required of present and future faculty teaching all courses in the program require the college to have on file evidence, supplied directly to the college from the granting agency, of the highest academic credential and any required professional credential claimed by faculty members fairly and consistently verify the equivalency of international credentials to those similarly named credentials offered by Canadian institutions require the regular review of faculty performance, including student evaluation of teaching and/or supervision | √ institutional policies previously reviewed. Implemented in program? □ Y □ N | |

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[22] Minor revisions can be implemented without significant time or resources, and the institution would appear to have the capacity to implement them. Major revisions are those required to meet the threshold, would take significant time and/or resources to rectify, and/or should be addressed.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| identify the means of ensuring that faculty knowledge of the field is current<br><br>support the professional development of faculty including the promotion of curricular and instructional innovation, as well as technological skills, where appropriate<br><br>identify faculty teaching and supervision loads and availability to students. | | |
| There are sufficient numbers of academic and other staff to develop and deliver the program and to meet the demands of the projected student enrolment.[23] | □ Y □ N | |
| All faculty[24,25] teaching in the professional or main field of study and, where appropriate, acting as thesis supervisors, and/or members of examining committees<br><br>have, where relevant, professional credentials and related work experience; | □ Y □ N | |

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[23] The required minimum faculty and staff members will depend upon the method of delivery, enrolments, and the complexity and variety of specializations.

[24] To satisfy the following benchmarks, and in compliance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, the applicant has obtained the written consent of individual faculty members of others to submit their CVs to the Board.

[25] Exceptions to any benchmarks pertaining to faculty must be

a) based on the absence of a related program credential in a university or other extraordinary circumstances
b) justified in writing with specific reference to the Board's Capacity to Deliver Standard and approved by the President, or, on explicit delegation, the applicant's senior academic officer. The signed document must be kept for review at the time of any request for renewed consent.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| hold an academic credential at least one degree higher than that offered by the program in the field or in a closely related field/discipline | □ Y □ N | |
| engage in a level of scholarship, research, or creative activity sufficient to ensure their currency in the field.[26] | □ Y □ N | |
| At least 50% of the students' experience in the professional or main field of study is in courses taught by a faculty member holding the terminal academic credential in the field or in a closely related field/discipline.[27,28] | □ Y □ N | |
| 9. All faculty[29,30] teaching non-core courses | √ breadth capacity | |

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[26] In assessing faculty members' currency and engagement with scholarship, research, or creative activity, the following may be considered, provided that these contributions are in a form (in a phrase adapted from Boyer) "subject to critical review and allowing use/exchange by other members of the scholarly community." In all cases, such contributions may take digital form. In general, the Board seeks evidence that faculty are intellectually engaged with developments in their fields, including but not limited to
- publishing and/or reviewing professional publications in their fields
- participation and/or presentations at provincial, national, and international conferences, competitions, or exhibitions in their fields
- engagement with the scholarship of pedagogy in their fields
- participation in regulatory and accrediting association workshops, degree audits, or related work in their fields
- engagement in basic and/or applied research, labour market research, and/or related industry needs assessments
- application of conceptual knowledge to current practice in their fields, such as reports to industry or consulting work
- creative contributions to their fields through exhibitions or related forms
- development of case studies in their fields.

[27] Generally and in the context of a practicable schedule of teaching assignments, the percentage can be achieved if 50% of all faculty teaching core courses in the program hold the terminal academic credential in the field or in a closely related field/discipline or if 50% of all core courses or all hours in core courses in the program are taught by faculty with a terminal academic credential in the field or in a closely related field/discipline.

[28] The doctorate is normally the terminal academic credential in all fields or disciplines with the exception of certain fields where a master's degree in the field/discipline is more typical. The Board expects that the faculty will hold the terminal academic credential
a) in the same field/discipline area as the proposed program area
b) in a field/discipline that can be shown to be closely related in content
c) with a graduate level specialty in the same field/discipline.

[29] To satisfy the following benchmarks, and in compliance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, the applicant has obtained the written consent of individual faculty members of others to submit their CVs to the Board.

[30] Exceptions to any benchmarks pertaining to faculty must be

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| have, where relevant, professional credentials and related work experience<br><br>hold an academic credential at least one degree higher than that offered by the program in the field or in a closely related field/discipline<br><br>engage in a level of scholarship, research, or creative activity sufficient to ensure their currency in the field.[31] | previously reviewed. | |
| 10. At least 50 % of the students' experience in the non-core areas is in courses taught by a faculty member holding the terminal academic credential in the field or in a closely related field/discipline.[32,33] | √ breadth capacity previously reviewed. | |

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a)   based on the absence of a related program credential in a university or other extraordinary circumstances

b)   justified in writing with specific reference to the Board's Capacity to Deliver Standard and approved by the President, or, on explicit delegation, the applicant's senior academic officer. The signed document must be kept for review at the time of any request for renewed consent.

[31] In assessing faculty members' currency and engagement with scholarship, research, or creative activity, the following may be considered, provided that these contributions are in a form (in a phrase adapted from Boyer) "subject to critical review and allowing use/exchange by other members of the scholarly community." In all cases, such contributions may take digital form. In general, the Board seeks evidence that faculty are intellectually engaged with developments in their fields, including but not limited to

•   publishing and/or reviewing professional publications in their fields

•   participation and/or presentations at provincial, national, and international conferences, competitions, or exhibitions in their fields

•   engagement with the scholarship of pedagogy in their fields

•   participation in regulatory and accrediting association workshops, degree audits, or related work in their fields

•   engagement in basic and/or applied research, labour market research, and/or related industry needs assessments

•   application of conceptual knowledge to current practice in their fields, such as reports to industry or consulting work

•   creative contributions to their fields through exhibitions or related forms

•   development of case studies in their fields.

[32] Generally and in the context of a practicable schedule of teaching assignments, the percentage can be achieved if 50% of all faculty teaching core courses in the program hold the terminal academic credential in the field or in a closely related field/discipline or if 50% of all core courses or all hours in core courses in the program are taught by faculty with a terminal academic credential in the field or in a closely related field/discipline.

[33] The doctorate is normally the terminal academic credential in all fields or disciplines with the exception of certain fields where a master's degree in the field/discipline is more typical. The Board expects that the faculty will hold the terminal academic credential

a)   in the same field/discipline area as the proposed program area

b)   in a field/discipline that can be shown to be closely related in content

c)   with a graduate level specialty in the same field/discipline.

Identify, for this Standard

Strengths

Weaknesses needing MINOR revisions

Weaknesses requiring MAJOR revisions

Suggestions/advice


The program

□ meets or exceeds the Board's Standard.

□ does not meet the Board's Standard.


Was the information provided in the submission combined with any additional information sought from the college (including at the site visit) sufficient, reliable, and valid for the purposes of this review?

□ Yes

□ No (if no, please comment)


6. CREDENTIAL RECOGNITION STANDARD

**Standard:**

While meeting particular needs, the program is designed to maximize the graduates' potential for employment and promotion in their field and further study.

| Benchmarks: | Meets or exceeds the Benchmark (Y/N)? | Please comment on<br><br>the reasons for your judgements<br><br>any commitments or important clarifications the college made during the review that were critical to your judgements<br><br>any revisions needed<br><br>whether revisions are minor or major (see definitions below[34]) |
|---|---|---|
| Documented consultations with employers, relevant occupational groups, professional associations, and other postsecondary education organizations indicate the credential will be (for new programs) or is (for existing programs) recognized for purposes of employment and further study. | □ Y □ N | |

Identify, for this Standard

Strengths


Weaknesses needing MINOR revisions

Weaknesses requiring MAJOR revisions

Suggestions/advice

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[34] Minor revisions can be implemented without significant time or resources, and the institution would appear to have the capacity to implement them. Major revisions are those required to meet the threshold, would take significant time and/or resources to rectify, and/or should be addressed.

The program

□ meets or exceeds the Board's Standard.

□ does not meet the Board's Standard.


Was the information provided in the submission combined with any additional information sought from the college (including at the site visit) sufficient, reliable, and valid for the purposes of this review?

□ Yes

□ No (if no, please comment)

7. REGULATION AND ACCREDITATION STANDARD

**Standard:**

Programs leading to occupations which are subject to government regulations are designed to prepare students to meet the requirements of the relevant regulatory and/or accrediting body.

| Benchmarks: | Meets or exceeds the Benchmark (Y/N)? | Please comment on<br><br>the reasons for your judgements<br><br>any commitments or important clarifications the college made during the review that were critical to your judgements<br><br>any revisions needed<br><br>whether revisions are minor or major (see definitions below[35]) |
|---|---|---|
| Documented consultations with the relevant regulatory and accrediting body(ies) indicate the credential will be recognized for purposes of employment and further study. | □ Y □ N | |

Identify, for this Standard

Strengths

Weaknesses needing MINOR revisions

Weaknesses requiring MAJOR revisions

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[35] Minor revisions can be implemented without significant time or resources, and the institution would appear to have the capacity to implement them. Major revisions are those required to meet the threshold, would take significant time and/or resources to rectify, and/or should be addressed.

Suggestions/advice

The program

□ meets or exceeds the Board's Standard.

□ does not meet the Board's Standard.

Was the information provided in the submission combined with any additional information sought from the college (including at the site visit) sufficient, reliable, and valid for the purposes of this review?

□ Yes

□ No (if no, please comment)

8. NOMENCLATURE STANDARD

**Standard:**

The program nomenclature reflects the postsecondary education achieved, facilitates public understanding of the qualification, and assists students, employers, and other postsecondary institutions to recognize the level, nature and discipline of study.

| Benchmarks: | Meets or exceeds the Benchmark (Y/N)? | Please comment on<br><br>the reasons for your judgements<br><br>any commitments or important clarifications the college made during the review that were critical to your judgements<br><br>any revisions needed<br><br>whether revisions are minor or major (see definitions below[36]) |
|---|---|---|
| The degree title conveys accurate information about the<br><br>degree level[37] | □ Y □ N | |
| nature of the degree[38] | □ Y □ N | |

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[36] Minor revisions can be implemented without significant time or resources, and the institution would appear to have the capacity to implement them. Major revisions are those required to meet the threshold, would take significant time and/or resources to rectify, and/or should be addressed.

[37] Pursuant to the *Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000* (the Act) Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology may apply for the Minister's consent to offer bachelor degrees in applied areas of study. Consequently, bachelor level and not master's or doctoral level nomenclatures are available for designating these degrees.

[38] There are a variety of ways to connote with nomenclature whether a degree is applied/professional- or research-oriented. With the exception of Bachelor of Applied Science, which connotes research-oriented degrees, research-oriented degrees are normally of the form: *Bachelor of Faculty (Subject)*, e.g., Bachelor of Arts (Psychology) or Bachelor of Science (Chemistry). The level of study at the Bachelor level can be further differentiated as "Honours" for research-oriented degrees.

Because colleges are enabled by the Act to offer only degrees in applied areas, research-oriented nomenclatures (e.g., Bachelor of Arts/Science/Applied Science), and the term "honours", are not available for designating college degrees.

The typical approaches to nomenclature for Bachelor degrees in applied areas, available for designating college degrees, are

| discipline and/or subject of study | □ Y □ N | |
|---|---|---|

Identify, for this Standard

Strengths

Weaknesses needing MINOR revisions

Weaknesses requiring MAJOR revisions

Suggestions/advice

The program

□ meets or exceeds the Board's Standard.

□ does not meet the Board's Standard.

Was the information provided in the submission combined with any additional information sought from the college (including at the site visit) sufficient, reliable, and valid for the purposes of this review?

□ Yes

□ No (if no, please comment)

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1) *Bachelor of Faculty (Subject)*, for example, Bachelor of Technology (Information Technology)

2) (With the exception of *Applied Science*) *Bachelor of Applied Faculty (Subject)*, for example, Bachelor of Applied Arts (Justice Studies)

3) *Bachelor of Subject*, for example, Bachelor of Interior Design.

**9. PROGRAM EVALUATION STANDARD**

**Standard:**

The quality of the program is assured by procedures for periodic evaluation that meet the requirements outlined below.[39]

| Benchmarks: | Meets or exceeds the Benchmark (Y/N)? | Please comment on<br><br>the reasons for your judgements<br><br>any commitments or important clarifications the college made during the review that were critical to your judgements<br><br>any revisions needed<br><br>whether revisions are minor or major (see definitions below[40]) |
|---|---|---|
| The college has a formal, institutionally approved policy and procedure for the periodic review of programs embodying the following characteristics:<br><br>program reviews at regular intervals, normally not exceeding five to seven years. The first such evaluation should occur before a request for renewal of ministerial consent<br><br>criteria for program reviews that include | √ institutional policies previously reviewed. | |

[39] The following benchmarks are based on the criteria employed by Ontario public universities and Redeemer University College.
[40] Minor revisions can be implemented without significant time or resources, and the institution would appear to have the capacity to implement them. Major revisions are those required to meet the threshold, would take significant time and/or resources to rectify, and/or should be addressed.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| assessment of the continuing consistency of the program with the college's mission, educational goals, and long-range plan | | |
| assessment of the learning outcome achievements of students/graduates by comparison with | | |
| the program's stated learning outcome goals and Standards | | |
| the degree level Standard | | |
| the opinions of employers and students/ graduates | | |
| the Standards of any related regulatory, accrediting or professional association | | |
| where appropriate, assessment of | | |
| graduate employment rates | | |
| graduate satisfaction level | | |
| employer satisfaction level | | |
| student satisfaction level | | |
| graduation rate | | |
| the default rate on the Ontario Student Assistance Program or other student loan plan | | |
| student retention rates | | |
| in the case of graduate programs, time to completion | | |

| assessment of the continuing relevance of the program to the field of practice it serves, including evidence of revisions made to adapt to changes in the field of practice | | |
|---|---|---|
| assessment of the continuing appropriateness of the method of delivery and curriculum for the program's educational goals and Standards | | |
| assessment of the continuing appropriateness of admission requirements (i.e., achievement level, subject preparation) for the program's educational goals and Standards | | |
| assessment of the continuing appropriateness of the program's structure, method of delivery, and curriculum for its educational goals and Standards | | |
| assessment of the continuing adequacy of the methods used for evaluating student progress and achievement | | |
| assessment of the efficient and effective utilization and adequacy of existing human, physical, technological, and financial resources | | |
| indicators of faculty performance, including the quality of teaching and supervision and demonstrable currency in the field of specialization | | |
| assessment of individual student work in the terminal stage of the program that reflects exemplary, average, and minimally acceptable performance and demonstrates that the degree-level Standard has been achieved. | | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| The program review procedure includes<br><br>A self-study<br><br>A study undertaken, with student input, by faculty members and administrators of the program based on evidence relating to program performance against the criteria stated above, including strengths and weaknesses, desired improvements, and future directions.<br><br>A Program Evaluation Committee<br><br>A committee struck by the senior administration to evaluate the program based on<br><br>the self-study<br><br>a site visit during which members of the committee normally meet with faculty members, students, graduates, employers, and administrators to gather information. A majority of the members must be senior academic peers (both scholars and administrators) with relevant expertise from both outside the institution and internal to the institution but outside the program, and free of any conflict of interest.[41]<br><br>The report of the Program Evaluation Committee<br><br>The overarching purpose of the Program Evaluation Committee report is to assess program quality and recommend any changes needed to strengthen that quality. The report must be addressed to the senior administration and shared with the academic council, governing board, faculty members and students in the program, together with a plan of action responding to the recommendations in the report. | √ institutional policies previously reviewed. | |

[41] A conflict of interest policy similar to that of the board should be implemented in selecting members of a Program Evaluation Committee.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| The implementation of the policy and procedures for the periodic review of programs<br><br>is aligned with the Board's requirements for such evaluations | □ Y □ N | |
| achieves its intended aim of continuous improvement of the program(s). | □ Y □ N | |

Identify, for this Standard

Strengths

Weaknesses needing MINOR revisions

Weaknesses requiring MAJOR revisions

Suggestions/advice

The program

□ meets or exceeds the Board's Standard.

□ does not meet the Board's Standard.

Was the information provided in the submission combined with any additional information sought from the college (including at the site visit) sufficient, reliable, and valid for the purposes of this review?

□ Yes

□ No (if no, please comment)

10. ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND INTEGRITY STANDARD

**Standard:**

The college maintains an atmosphere in which academic freedom exists and in which students and academic staff are expected to display a high degree of intellectual independence. Academic activity is supported by policies, procedures, and practices that encourage academic honesty and integrity.

| Benchmarks: | Meets or exceeds the Benchmark (Y/N)? | Please comment on<br><br>the reasons for your judgements<br><br>any commitments or important clarifications the college made during the review that were critical to your judgements<br><br>any revisions needed<br><br>whether revisions are minor or major (see definitions below[42]) |
|---|---|---|
| The college has a policy on academic freedom that recognizes and protects the rights of individuals in their pursuit of knowledge without fear of reprisals by the college or by third parties, and the right of individuals to communicate acquired knowledge and the results of research freely. | √ institutional policies previously reviewed. | |

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[42] Minor revisions can be implemented without significant time or resources, and the institution would appear to have the capacity to implement them. Major revisions are those required to meet the threshold, would take significant time and/or resources to rectify, and/or should be addressed.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| The college has appropriate policies pertaining to academic honesty and procedures for their enforcement. | √ institutional policies previously reviewed. | |
| The college provides an appropriate plan for informing students and faculty about and ensuring their understanding of the policies and procedures concerning academic honesty. | √ institutional policies previously reviewed. | |
| The college has an appropriate policy on the ownership of the intellectual products of employees and students. | √ institutional policies previously reviewed. | |
| The college upholds formal ethical research Standards. Where the college conducts research in Ontario that involves the management of research funds, the use of animals in research or human research participants, the policies of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada and/or the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada will govern the research. | √ institutional policies previously reviewed. | |
| There are appropriate policies and procedures concerning compliance with copyright law. | √ institutional policies previously reviewed. | |
| Where courses/programs are delivered online, the college has appropriate policies and procedures to address copyright and | √ institutional policies | |

| intellectual property issues (e.g., digital rights management and the use of object learning repositories). | previously reviewed. | |

## 11. STUDENT PROTECTION STANDARD

**Standard:**

The college values and upholds integrity and ethical conduct in its relations with students.

| Benchmarks: | Meets or exceeds the Benchmark (Y/N)? | Please comment on<br><br>the reasons for your judgements<br><br>any commitments or important clarifications the college made during the review that were critical to your judgements<br><br>any revisions needed<br><br>whether revisions are minor or major (see definitions below[43]) |
|---|---|---|
| Public reports, materials, and advertising are produced in a thorough, accurate, and truthful manner. | √ institutional policies previously reviewed. | |
| Recruitment policies follow ethical business practices. | √ institutional policies | |

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[43] Minor revisions can be implemented without significant time or resources, and the institution would appear to have the capacity to implement them. Major revisions are those required to meet the threshold, would take significant time and/or resources to rectify, and/or should be addressed.

| | previously reviewed. | |
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| Key information about the college's organization, policies, and programs is published in its academic year calendar and is otherwise readily available to students and the public, specifically including<br><br>the organization 's mission and goals statement<br><br>a history of the organization and its governance and academic structure<br><br>a general description of each degree program (e.g., purpose, outcomes, length)<br><br>the academic credentials of faculty and senior administrators<br><br>individual descriptions of all subjects in these programs and their credit value. | √ institutional policies previously reviewed. | |
| The college has policies and procedures that protect student and consumer interests in the following areas:<br><br>the resolution of students' academic appeals, complaints, grievances, and/or other disputes<br><br>security of academic student records<br><br>payment schedule of fees and charges<br><br>student dismissal | √ institutional policies previously reviewed. | |

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| withdrawals and refunds. | | |
| Prior to registration, students are provided with, and confirm in writing their awareness of, policies (and procedures) pertaining to<br><br>admissions<br><br>credit transfer arrangements for incoming students<br><br>credit transfer arrangements with and recognition by other institutions<br><br>entrance examinations<br><br>prior learning assessment<br><br>grading<br><br>the ability of international students admitted to the program to meet program requirements for degree completion<br><br>method of course delivery<br><br>academic honesty<br><br>intellectual property rights<br><br>student dismissal | √ institutional policies previously reviewed. | |

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| dispute resolution<br><br>student support and services<br><br>tuition<br><br>scholarships and other financial assistance<br><br>payment of fees and charges<br><br>withdrawals and refunds<br><br>institutional closure<br><br>where appropriate, supervision, preparation, and examination of theses/dissertations. | | |
| Potential students are fully informed about the kind of support and protection available to them and, if applicable<br><br>the technological requirements of participation and the technical competence required of them<br><br>the nature of learning and the personal discipline required in an anytime/anywhere environment<br><br>any additional costs, beyond tuition and ancillary fees, associated with e-learning aspects of course/program delivery. | √ online capacity previously reviewed. | |

**12. ADDITIONAL MATTERS FOR REVIEW**

None.

**BACKGROUND**

**Degree Granting in Ontario**

**Applications for Ministerial Consent**

Under the terms of the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000 (the Act), the consent of the Ontario Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development is required for anyone without legislative authority seeking in Ontario, either "directly or indirectly," to

grant a degree

provide a program or part of a program of postsecondary study leading to a degree to be conferred by a person inside or outside of Ontario

advertise a program or part of a program of postsecondary study offered in Ontario leading to a degree conferred by a person in or outside Ontario

sell, offer for sale or provide by agreement for a fee, reward or other remuneration, a diploma, certificate, document or other material that indicates or implies the granting or conferring of a degree

operate or maintain a university

use or be known by a name of a university or any derivation or abbreviation of a name of a university

hold oneself out to be a university;

make use of the term university or any derivation or abbreviation of the word in advertising relating to an educational institution in Ontario

make substantial changes to programs offered pursuant to a consent.

Anyone wishing to engage in these activities must apply to the Minister for consent. Pursuant to the regulations under the Act, the Minister may reject an application on policy grounds identified in regulation, refer an application to another body, or refer an application to the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB) for review and recommendation. In cases where the Minister refers the application to PEQAB, PEQAB reviews the application for program and institutional quality and makes a recommendation to the Minister.

**Role of the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board**

Established in 2000, and continued under the Act, the Board is composed of a chair appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, a vice-chair and up to nine other members appointed by the Minister. The Board makes recommendations to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities concerning applications for ministerial consent under the terms of the Act and other matters referred to it by the Minister pursuant to the Act. The Board establishes the criteria and processes for its reviews, consults experts as required and undertakes necessary research.

**Role of the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board Secretariat**

PEQAB secretariat staff

support the Board in fulfilling its mandate

communicate on the role of the Board and its operations to applicants, assessors, stakeholders and others

manage all applications for consent.

**Instructions for the Review**

Under the coordination of the panel chair, the panel develops a report which should provide the best collective judgement of the panel with respect to the quality of the program and organization, the reasons for its judgements, and be of sufficient detail to enable the Board to determine the extent to which its criteria are satisfied. The key issues are whether the program meets the Standards set by the Board, and whether panel members think the program is of sufficient quality to be recommended to the Board and eventually to the students of Ontario. More specifically, the report must include at least the following:

an assessment of the program against each of the Board's Standards and Benchmarks

an assessment of the program in terms of any additional matters raised by the Board

an assessment of the sufficiency, reliability and validity of the evidence provided by the organization

an assessment of evidence found during any site visit, resulting from the panel's research, or submitted to the panel by other parties

a recommendation, with reasons, on whether the program meets the Board's criteria and is of sufficient academic quality to continue to be offered to the people of Ontario.

**Quality Assessor Procedures**

A typical review proceeds as follows:

assessors peruse the materials submitted by the organization

panels often work through the Guidelines as they do a desk audit, making preliminary judgements on the strengths and weaknesses of the program and noting items that require follow-up at the site visit. Reviewing the materials and conducting a desk audit prior to the site visit typically aids in the drafting of the report

set questions for discussion/clarification to be raised when meeting with other member(s) of the panel

set tentative questions for the site visit

identify who needs to respond to the panel's questions at the visit

determine what is needed in the way of additional information.

**Additional Information provided by the Organization**

The Board provides panels with the organization's complete submission for review as well as any supplementary information the Board has received from the organization. The Board asks the panel to direct any requests for additional information to the organization through the panel chair. Additional information pertaining to the application received by the panel should be forwarded to the Secretariat together with the panel's report.

**The Site Visit**

In most cases, panels are expected to undertake a site visit (typically 1.0 to 1.5 days) where they can test the validity of claims made in the application. Where several locations are proposed, the chair decides which one(s) to include in the visit. Ultimately, the chair will determine, in consultation with the PEQAB Secretariat, if a site visit is needed. The chair will establish the site visit strategy and develop an appropriate schedule in consultation with the applicant.

**Duties of the Institutional Liaison**

The institutional contact person ensures that the visit is arranged so that the agenda can be realised, including scheduling meetings and rooms for the panel. It is strongly recommended that panel members organize their own transportation and accommodation. If degree providers assist panel members, however, in making travel arrangements, these must be within the established guidelines of the Government of Ontario else costs incurred cannot be reimbursed. Further, organizations must not cover assessor costs. PEQAB is responsible for administering the costs of the review, and organizations who involve themselves financially with assessors will breach the PEQAB conflict of interest guidelines.

During the visit the team will likely wish to interview senior administrators, faculty, students and alumni to gain a cross-section of views and a variety of perspectives on key issues. You may also wish to meet with support or collaborating staff and examine facilities and other resources. Panel members are encouraged to take careful notes of each interview session as they will be invaluable when writing the report. The panel is encouraged to keep interviews to a manageable number. Too many interviews may limit the panel's ability to explore an issue comprehensively. The panel might decide to include a meeting among themselves at the end of the site visit to conclude and reach consensus about the content of the report.

**Writing the Report**

Under the coordination of the panel chair, the panel will prepare a report for the Board. The report should provide the best collective judgement of the panel with respect to the quality of the program, the reasons for its judgements, and include sufficient detail in narrative form to enable the Board to

determine the extent to which its criteria are satisfied and provide the Board with the information it needs to make an informed decision. Deficiencies should be documented particularly carefully.

**Diverging Opinions**

The members of a panel may not always agree on all matters. The Board is interested in knowing about areas of substantive disagreement, the nature of the disagreement, and the reasons for the disagreement. The Board does not want to receive minority reports. It requires a single report, which should include divergent opinions fully and fairly.

**Organization Commitments**

During the review, the organization may make commitments that alter what the panel's judgement would be for the submission alone. It is important to document such commitments in the report and their role in your judgements. The panel's final assessment should be based on all information provided by the organization, including additional materials and commitments made during the review. The organization will have to confirm its commitments and its intention to honour them. The Board will then be in the position of determining whether the commitments are reasonable and whether the organization is capable of honouring them (hence the importance of your advice in this regard).

**Ownership of Reports**

The panel report and all related attachments are the property of the Minister. The panel will hold its deliberations and preliminary report in confidence. Following the Minister's decision on the application and in accordance with the Board's terms of reference, the Board may post on its web site all official report(s) of the quality assessment panel and the applicant responses to them, or make these reports otherwise available to the public subject to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

Following the Submission of the Report

Organization Responses to Reports

To ensure a transparent and fair assessment process, the Board will provide the organization with the opportunity to respond to the panel's report. In rare cases, the Board may ask the panel to respond to the organization's remarks.

**Next Steps**

In formulating its recommendation, the Board will consider

the organization's submission

the findings of the panel

the organization's response to the panel report

any additional materials provided by the applicant to the Board

any commitments made by the organization during the review process.

The Board will communicate its recommendation to the Minister. The Minister considers the Board's recommendation and any public policy matters, and makes a decision about consent. Once the Minister has made his/her decision.

# Appendix B: Site visit example

**Institute Name**

**Program name**

**Planning for PEQAB Visit**

**Site Visit: DATE (Location)**

**Quality Assessment Panel Chair:**

**External Expert Review Panel:**

**PEQAB Representative:**

| Time | Topics/Areas of Focus/Session | Participants |
|---|---|---|
| 8:00- 8:30 am | **Welcome and Coffee**<br>**Overview of Agenda, College and School** | (President and Vice Chancellor)<br>(Vice President Academic and Provost)<br>(Vice Provost)<br>(Dean, Faculty X)<br>(Dean, Centre for Teaching and Learning) |
| 8:30 – 10:00 | **Academic Program Overview/ Overview of Program Development, Content, Outcomes, and Delivery** | (Dean, Faculty X)<br>(Program Coordinator and Professor)<br>(Associate Dean, Faculty X)<br>(Manager, Co-operative Education) |
| 10:00 – 10:15 | **Break** | |
| 10:15 – 11:15 | **Tour of Campus Facilities**<br>**Mechatronics Lab. C131**<br>**PLC Lab. C147**<br>**CAD Lab. C238**<br>**Power Systems Lab. C242**<br>**Energy Lab. A305**<br>**Electronics Lab. B315**<br>**Electronics Lab. B400 and PCB Facility** | |
| 11:15-12:00 | **Meeting with current Engineering Students and Alumni** | |
| 12:00 – 12:45 | **Working Lunch (panel only)** | |
| 12:45 – 2:00 | **Program Content and Delivery and Capacity to Deliver: Meeting with Faculty and Technologists** | **Group A:**<br><br>**Group B:**<br><br>**GROUP C:** |

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| 2:00 – 2:45 | **Institutional Support for Students** | (Manager, Co-operative Education)<br>(Library Liaison,)<br>(Registrar)<br>(Coordinator, Student Advisement)<br>(Dean, International)<br>(Director, Financial Aid and Awards)<br>(Manager, Accessible Learning)<br>(Manager, Career Services)<br>(Dean, Centre for Teaching & Learning)<br>(Associate Dean, X) |
| 2:45 – 3:00 | **Break** | |
| 3:00 -3:30 | **Institutional Support for Program** | (Registrar, Chair of Academic Policy Committee)<br>(Director, Brand Strategy)<br>(Manager, Talent Acquisition)<br>(Director, Applied Research & Innovation)<br>(Chair of Administrative Policy committee; General Counsel and Corporate Secretary)<br>(Manager, Employee Development, Centre for People and Organization Development)<br>(Associate Dean, Teaching & Learning, CTL)<br>(Dean, Centre for Teaching & Learning)<br>(Associate Dean, X)<br>(Dean, X) |
| 3:30-4:15 | **Program Currency and Relevance to the Field(s) of Practice: Representatives of the Ad Hoc Professional Advisory Council, and Industry Partners** | |
| 4:15-4:45 | **Panel Caucus (panel only)** | |
| 4:45 – 5:00 | **Concluding Meeting/ Exit Interview** | (President)<br>(Vice President Academic and Provost)<br>(Vice Provost)<br>(Dean, X)<br>(Associate Dean, X)<br>(Dean, Centre for Teaching and Learning) |