PEQAB

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

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Expedited Renewal Process for Programs - Manual for Public and Private Organizations

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Introduction

At its best, external quality assurance supports and enhances continuous improvement in program delivery and is proportionate to an institution's ability to maintain and continuously improve the quality of its programs. Recognizing this, the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB) seeks to acknowledge and encourage capacity for each organization's internal quality assurance processes (IQAPs).

PEQAB's regular external quality assurance review processes for renewal of consent for degree programs has previously involved, for all such programs, a double examination of the programs and two site visits. The first is conducted by the organization itself through a Program Evaluation Committee (PEC) according to PEQAB's Internal Quality Assurance and Development Standard--typically more than a year prior to the end of the current consent. The second review and site visit are conducted by PEQAB after referral of the degree program. For some institutions' degree programs, this dual process can be reduced to a single, simplified and expedited process without risk to program quality.

An environmental scan of the Canadian quality assurance (QA) landscape has shown that QA agencies employ a number of processes for program renewal/program audit, many of which contain a recurring monitoring or auditing element reflecting the institution's internal QA processes. In addition, many Canadian and international QA agencies offer one of a variety of forms of expedited or partial reviews under certain circumstances. Based on these best practices, PEQAB has devised an Expedited Renewal process that focusses on the organizations' internal QA practices, with PEQAB staff attending the site visit of an organization's own PEC.

This simpler process eliminates approximately half of the current consent process for renewals, while preserving all the elements necessary for assurance of the quality of degree programs for mature organizations.

This *Manual* is directed to private and public out-of-province degree-granting organizations as well as to Ontario public organizations not empowered to grant degrees through other legislation and seeking to renew consent pursuant to the *Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000* (the Act) via this, PEQAB's **Expedited Renewal** process.

Organizations should note that the Board may revise any/all of its *Manuals* including this one with new editions, normally in January of each year, and the onus is on the organization to ensure that it is using one of the current Board *Manual*(s). This *Manual* addresses only the Board's requirements for applications under the Expedited Renewal process for consent. For an overview of the Board, and its assessment criteria and procedures, applicants should refer to any one of PEQAB's full *Manuals* at https://www.peqab.ca/ManualsGuidelines.html. Inquiries about the Board's criteria or procedures can also be directed to your PEQAB Senior Policy Advisor or peqab@ontario.ca.

Inquiries about the application and consent process, the Act and its regulations, the activities subject to the Act, and the Minister's requirements should be directed to the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, Postsecondary Education Programs Branch at postsecondaryeducationprogramsbranch@ontario.ca.

1. Eligibility Requirements

Ontario Colleges

Expedited Renewal Reviews can be considered by Ontario Colleges with degree programs that have received initial consent. A College wishing to undergo the Expedited Renewal process may do so by notifying the PEQAB Secretariat prior to its initiation of the Self-Study process. The PEQAB Secretariat may, in some circumstances, suggest the full PEQAB Renewal process. Ontario Colleges should also consider that if the PEQAB Board is not satisfied with the results and/or process of the Expedited Renewal, the Board may require additional information and processes, up to and including the full PEQAB Renewal process, prior to its making a recommendation to the Minister.

No College is required to use the Expedited Renewal process; a College may feel there are benefits to a comprehensive Renewal Review by a PEQAB appointed External Expert Panel. The requirements for full Renewal Reviews are set out in the relevant *PEQAB Manual for Ontario Colleges.* All applications for new programs undergo full PEQAB Review processes.

Private, Public or Out-of-Province Institutions

As of 2022, the opportunity to conduct a consent renewal as an Expedited Review was extended to private and out-of-province organizations. Any such organization wishing a program to undergo the Expedited Renewal process will notify the PEQAB Secretariat in advance; PEQAB, through a Board submission, will then determine eligibility of a program for the Expedited Renewal process based on the following criteria:
1. The size of the organization in terms of the number of its degree programs.
2. Its experience in offering degrees in Ontario i.e. the length of time that degree programs have been offered here by that organization.
3. The track record of the program and organization with PEQAB, i.e. past experience with commitments and conditions of consent.
4. The involvement of other external quality assurance agencies and processes that are required and their overlap with PEQAB's criteria and processes – including accreditation of programs in regulated professions as well as other external QA and accreditation agencies.

For private and out of province organizations, the Board must first approve an Expedited Review. Even if approved and as with the Ontario Colleges, the Board may require additional information or processes, up to and including the full PEQAB Renewal process, on considering a completed Expedited Review and prior to making a recommendation to the Minister.

All applications for new programs by private or out-of-province organizations continue to undergo the full standard PEQAB Review process as per the relevant *PEQAB Manual*(s)*.*

2. Expedited Renewal Process

The Expedited Renewal process will follow the following general steps.

1. The Organization
    - Informs PEQAB of its wish for an Expedited Renewal, prior to initiating it with the Self-Study.
    - In all cases, the organization should consult the PEQAB Secretariat well in advance.
    - In the case of a private or out-of-province institution, the organization should allow additional time for the PEQAB Board to formally consider the application for Expedited Renewal.

2. PEQAB
    - Determines the eligibility of the organization and program to undergo the Expedited Renewal process.
    - Provides, through PEQAB Staff, the relevant Panel Guidelines to the organization, against which the organization will first conduct its Self-Study and later be evaluated by its Program Evaluation Committee (PEC).

3. The Organization
    - Conducts its Self-Study against PEQAB's Panel Guidelines.
    - Includes input from students, faculty and administrators associated with the program.
    - Selects appropriate members (see below) for its Program Evaluation Committee (PEC).
    - Consults with PEQAB Secretariat staff and PEC members to arrange a site visit and Orientation.
    - Orients the PEC to the Expedited Review process generally including the process for the site visit and the application of Standards and benchmarks in the Panel Guidelines.
    - Invites the relevant PEQAB Staff member to the site visit.

4. The PEC
    - Attends the site visit to gather further information and fully assess the program.
    - Writes a PEC Report, based on the Panel Guidelines.
    - Submits the PEC Report to the organization, within twenty days.

5. The Organization
    - Completes a Response to the PEC Report.
    - Submits to the Ministry an application for Expedited Renewal.

6. Minister
    - Refers the program to PEQAB for quality assurance.

7. PEQAB
    - Posts the application on the PEQAB website.
    - Reviews the Expedited Renewal application at its next meeting and makes a recommendation to the Minister.
    - Shares the PEQAB Final Report with the organization.

- Posts the recommendation date on its website.

8. Minister
   - Considers PEQAB's recommendation and any public policy or financial issues that may flow from the renewal of a consent.
   - Communicates the decision about consent to the organization.

9. PEQAB
   - Following the Minister's communication of the decision to the organization, posts the Board's recommendation and the Minister's decision on the PEQAB website.

If an accreditation review applies to the program, the role of the PEC may be played by a panel from a professional accreditation agency (such as the Canadian Engineering Accreditation Board or the Council for Interior Design Accreditation) if the accreditation review is sufficiently similar to that of PEQAB and it covers most areas typically addressed in a PEC Review. In such cases the organization supplements the Self-Study tailored toward the professional accreditation, with additional elements covering PEQAB criteria not sufficiently addressed through the accreditation review.

Composition of PECs for Expedited Reviews
During an Expedited Renewal, the applicant organization is responsible for selecting an external Program Evaluation Committee (PEC) qualified to provide an authoritative review of the program while providing constructive, thorough and reliable advice. The applicant's appointed PEC members should, hence, possess qualifications, professional qualities, current subject-matter expertise and a reputation that engender the confidence of the PEQAB Board, the Minister, the public, accrediting bodies, relevant regulatory bodies and other degree granting institutions. In addition, all members should be free of conflicts of interest, in accordance with PEQAB's conflict of interest guidelines. It is also recommended that the organization strive for diversity in the composition of PEC members.

Required
Two external subject-matter experts
   - Who are senior academics with strong track records in their fields—one of whom serves as the PEC Chair.
   - Each of whom holds an advanced academic credential (normally at the terminal level in the field) closely related to the subject area under review.

For these two, strongly recommended:
   - Demonstrated strength and experience in teaching and learning, which may include teaching recognition, affiliation or work with teaching and learning centres, curriculum design, and/or quality assessment experience (e.g., as appraisers for accrediting bodies or as reviewers of degree programs) and/or senior administrative experience.
   - A record of active scholarship in their disciplines and/or in the scholarship of teaching & learning.
   - Currently or recently associated with the same kind of program and with an organization offering credentials at least at the same level as that under review.

And that the two
- Not be from the same institution and
- At least one be new to the review of the program (i.e. an individual who has not reviewed the program in the past seven years).

Optional/Desirable:
- **One student or recent graduate** from the degree program under review or from another program at the same institution or from a comparable program at a different institution.
- **One senior academic peer** internal to the organization but outside the program or a member (external to the organization under review) of the Private and Out of Province Degrees in Ontario Group (POPDOG) or the College Degree Operating Group (CDOG).

Orientation of PEC Members

The organization will lead the orientation of their PEC members—which orientation should encompass the entirety of the Expedited Review process, including the Panel Guidelines and should occur well in advance of the site visit (normally weeks in advance). PEQAB Secretariat staff will provide the institution with the appropriate Panel Guidelines for the PEC. It is recommended that PEQAB staff also participate in the orientation of your PEC.

If chosen as a PEC member, the student will participate in the PEC orientation but may also require additional information on quality assurance in Ontario and the role of students in QA. PEQAB staff can also be involved in the additional orientation of the student PEC member and/or can make its student orientation materials available to the organization. It is suggested that the compensation of any student member be comparable to that of other PEC members (see below).

Payment of PEC Members

PEQAB's per diem for External Expert Reviewers is $800, and these are typically compensated for 3-4 days. It is recommended that organizations pay their PEC members at the same or a similar rate.

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3. Submission Requirements

Organizations applying for Expedited Renewals are required to submit the following materials electronically:
- Copy of a letter of application to the Minister of Colleges and Universities stating the program/programs for which Expedited Renewal is sought
- Copy of the signed *Applicant Acknowledgement and Agreemen*t form as provided in the *Directives and Guidelines for Applying for Ministerial Consent under the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000*
- Completed Ministry *Summary of Application Form* (Appendix C or D)
- Program Self-Study[1]

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[1] Or the self-study, tailored toward the professional accreditation, supplemented with a self-study against any PEQAB criteria not sufficiently addressed through the relevant accreditation review.

- Program Evaluation Committee (PEC) Report[2]
- Organization's Response to the program Self-Study and the PEC Report[3]
- Organization's Action Plan based on the Self-Study and PEC Report
- Course Outlines
- Faculty CVs.

For other templates, including Site Visit templates and Collection of Student Samples of Work, see the relevant sections in the full Manuals: https://www.peqab.ca/ManualsGuidelines.html.

For posting on the PEQAB website: The Program Abstract and a Course Schedule that shows for each academic year, and by semester
- Title of each course/other requirement
- Type of course/other requirement (core or non-core)
- Modes of delivery: in person, distance learning
- Hours per course
- Course prerequisites, co-requisites, and restrictions
- Highest earned qualifications of proposed instructors and required credentials for faculty to be hired.[4]

Course outlines and faculty CVs can be submitted as separate, searchable files. All other submission documents for PEQAB should be provided as a single, searchable electronic file saved in PDF format including any supporting documentation (e.g., CVs of the PEC).

Send all materials to
> The Ministry of Colleges and Universities, Postsecondary Education Programs Branch at postsecondaryeducationprogramsbranch@ontario.ca.

The information submitted according to this *Manual* is collected pursuant to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and the *Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000*.

4. PEQAB Review and Recommendation

After referral, the PEQAB Board will normally review at its next Board meeting
- Program Self-Study
- Program Evaluation Committee (PEC) Report
- Organization's Response to the program Self-Study and the PEC Report
- Organization's Action Plan based on the Self-Study and PEC Report.

The Board may then
- Recommend to the Minister renewal of consent for up to seven years

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[2] Or a report of the appropriate accreditation agency
[3] Or a response to the recommendation from the accreditation report
[4] Please ensure that these two electronic files are compliant with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

- Recommend another duration of consent and/or conditions of consent
- Request further materials or further review processes
- Require a second site visit with an External Expert Panel and the full PEQAB Review processes.