

PEQAB

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

February 2024

PEQAB Manual for Breadth Review

PEQAB's Evolution: Breadth Reviews

For all undergraduate degrees, the Board requires that degree programs include an appropriate balance between the courses which make up the core/main field of study and courses which comprise the non-core/Breadth curriculum. This requirement derives from the [Ontario Qualifications Framework](#) (OQF) in which the learning outcomes for Depth and Breadth of Knowledge for 4 Year (Honours) degrees, require “developed critical thinking and analytical skills inside and outside the discipline” as well as under Application of Knowledge “the ability to . . . apply underlying concepts, principles and techniques of analysis, both within and outside the discipline.” Currently the Board requires a balance of 20% non-core/Breadth for Four Year degrees and 15% non-core/Breadth for Three Year degrees.

In conducting Program Reviews, PEQAB has often found that the non-core/Breadth courses available to students in one degree program are substantially the same as the non-core courses available to other degree programs at a particular institution. On this basis, it became common practice for the Board to partially exempt Breadth from a current Program Review based on a successful recent previous Program Review from the same institution, when the Program under Review drew on the same or substantially the same curriculum of Breadth courses. This was particularly the case with degrees offered by Ontario Colleges, which typically had an array of “Liberal Arts” courses designed to meet the non-core/Breadth requirement for all of their degree programs. In the case of the Board’s applying this partial exemption, no Reviewer from PEQAB’s Breadth Committee would be engaged for the Program Review, and the Program Reviewers themselves would be asked only to ascertain that the courses offered to students in the degree program as Breadth were truly non-core for that particular program.

PEQAB often applied this process: limiting the Breadth aspect of particular Program Reviews only to ascertaining that the courses proposed as non-core/Breadth were truly non-core for the that degree program. Originally this was only applied on a one-of, ad hoc and case by case basis. The result of this was that an applicant institution could never be certain in advance whether a full review of Breadth courses by a member of PEQAB’s Breadth Committee would be part of an upcoming Program Review or whether it would be only the much more limited core vs. non-core assessment by Program Reviewers.

In 2016, PEQAB began to offer institutions the option of a full Breadth Capacity Review. In this case, either in conjunction with a Program Review or as a stand-alone Breadth Capacity Review¹, the Board would appoint a member of the Breadth Committee to review **all** the courses that comprised the non-core/Breadth curriculum of a particular institution. This approach fit best with Ontario Colleges in which Breadth was provided for all courses through a Liberal Arts curriculum; however, it could be applied to other institutions as well. The results of

¹ A submission for a stand-alone Breadth Capacity Review is submitted directly to PEQAB; materials for a Breadth Review in the context of a Program Review are submitted to the Ministry as part of the Program Review materials to be referred to PEQAB. In both cases, there is no additional application fee for a Breadth Review, and in both cases there are additional charges for the cost of the additional Reviewer from PEQAB’s Breadth Committee.

successful full Breadth Capacity Reviews have been recorded and tracked by PEQAB and reported to the institutions, and these are now tracked at <https://www.pegab.ca/ManualsGuidelines.html>. As a result, these institutions have been exempted from full Breadth Reviews by PEQAB for a period of seven (7) years, during which all their Program Reviews, whether new or renewal, were subject only to the assessment by the Program Reviewers that courses offered to students as Breadth were truly non-core to that particular degree program.

For these institutions, the full re-Review of Breadth Capacity is triggered by the first Program Review following the seven (7) year period or by accumulated modifications resulting in major changes to Breadth. Such major modifications would include

- deletions and additions to courses amounting to 30% of the Breadth offerings
- changes to the essential resources (including human resources), where these changes may impair the delivery of the Breadth curriculum as approved.

PEQAB continues to track the seven (7) year periods for each institution which has this status. The Ministry remains the authority on determining what changes are permitted during the period of consent and, as such, determines when to require and to refer Amendments, including Amendments related to the Breadth curriculum, to PEQAB for Review.

For PEQAB Breadth Reviews, there are now four potential positions in which an institution could find itself.

1. The first is the position of an institution which has undergone a full PEQAB Breadth Capacity Review of all the courses which are offered as non-core/Breadth to students in their degree programs. Institutions that have done so and have received a PEQAB Board determination that they be exempted from Breadth Reviews, when submitting Program Reviews within seven (7) years of that determination, no Breadth Reviewer will be assigned. Program Reviewers will be asked simply to assess whether the Breadth courses are truly non-core to the Program under Review. In this case, submit only the following:

- The date of the PEQAB letter or Board recommendation or date from the *Full Breadth Capacity Review* document at <https://www.pegab.ca/ManualsGuidelines.html> with that determination.
- Brief descriptions of the non-core/Breadth courses relevant to the program under Review.

2. The second is the position of an institution submitting a Program Review for which the associated non-core/Breadth curriculum has not been reviewed within the past seven (7) years. Such institutions will submit for Breadth as part of the application just the material associated with the non-core Breadth courses relevant to that Program; PEQAB will appoint a member of its Breadth Review Committee as a part of the Review Panel. In this case, submit the following for all courses which the institution intends to offer to students in this particular program as non-core/Breadth:

- Course outlines/teaching and learning plans (TLPs) in the format used at your institution for all relevant non-core courses (See Appendix 1.1 below).
- CVs of all faculty and professional staff who will be assigned to deliver these Breadth/non-core courses. (See Appendix 1.2 below).
- If a Program Renewal, samples of student work from Breadth courses (See relevant PEQAB Manual for Degrees <http://www.pegab.ca/ManualsGuidelines.html> Section “9.4 Guidelines for Collecting and Providing Samples of Student Work.” In this case, provide at least 12 samples for each of the categories, minimally acceptable, average, and exemplary for a minimum of 36 samples, drawn from the full range of Breadth courses.

3. The third is the position of an institution submitting a Program Review for which the associated non-core/Breadth curriculum is the same or substantially the same as that of another one of its degree Programs—one which has been assessed by PEQAB within the past seven (7) years. In that case, the institution will submit as a part of the application just the non-core/ Breadth courses relevant to that Program, with the name and date of the recent PEQAB Program Review which involved the same or substantially the same non-core/Breadth curriculum. The Board will then **not** appoint a member of the Breadth Review Committee and will ask only that the Program Reviewers assess whether the Breadth courses offered are truly non-core for that particular degree Program. In this case, submit the following:

- The degree program name and the date of the of the consent letter for the Review which included a Breadth Review of the same or substantially the same non-core/Breadth curriculum
- Brief descriptions of the non-core/Breadth courses relevant to the degree program under Review
- CVs of all faculty and professional staff who will be assigned to deliver these Breadth/non-core courses. (See Appendix 1.2 below).

4. The fourth is the situation of an institution which does not have a current PEQAB approval based on a successful Breadth Capacity Review and would like to pursue one. Either as part of a Program Review or as a stand-alone Review, the institution would submit **all** of its Breadth course materials to PEQAB and request a full Breadth Capacity Review. The Board will then appoint a member of the Breadth Committee to review the full complement of Breadth courses. On successful Breadth Capacity Review, PEQAB will acknowledge that the institution is “good for Breadth” for seven (7) years, and no member of PEQAB’s Breadth Committee will be appointed as part of that institution’s Program Reviews while that is in effect. In this case, institutions should submit:

- Course outlines/teaching and learning plans (TLPs) in the format used at your institution for all non-core courses (See Appendix 1.1 below).
- CVs of all faculty and professional staff who will be assigned to deliver these Breadth/non-core courses. (See Appendix 1.2 below).

- If a Program Renewal, samples of student work from Breadth courses (See relevant PEQAB Manual for Degrees <http://www.pegab.ca/ManualsGuidelines.html> Section “9.4 Guidelines for Collecting and Providing Samples of Student Work.” In this case, provide at least 12 samples for each of the categories, minimally acceptable, average, and exemplary for a minimum of 36 samples, drawn from the full range of Breadth courses.

Standards and Benchmarks for Breadth Reviews

The Board has four Standards applicable to Breadth Reviews, whether program-specific or full Breadth Capacity Reviews. These are consistent with the Standards and benchmarks as applied to the core courses for Program Reviews, just re-focused and adjusted for non-core/Breadth below, where appropriate.

1. Degree Level Standard
2. Program Content Standard
3. Program Delivery Standard
4. Capacity to Deliver Standard

1. Degree Level Standard

The non-core/Breadth curriculum is at the level of the appropriate degree on the Ontario Qualifications Framework.

Benchmarks:

1. The non-core/Breadth curriculum meets or exceeds the relevant Degree Level Standard and the applicant demonstrates how the curriculum meets the Standard.
2. 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.

2. Program Content

The non-core/Breadth curriculum offers current knowledge in the field of sufficient rigour, breadth and depth to achieve the knowledge and skills identified in the Degree Level Standard.

Benchmarks:

1. The non-core curriculum 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.
2. The non-core curriculum reflects current knowledge in its field.
3. Non-core courses provide knowledge of Indigeneity, that is First Nations, Métis and/or Inuit cultures and at least two others of the following outside the core: i) humanities, ii) sciences, iii) social sciences, iv) global cultures, v) mathematics
4. Non-core/Breadth courses normally represent 20% of the total program hours for Four Year degrees and 15% in Three Year degrees.
5. At least one non-core course is an elective, freely chosen by the student.

6. Non-core courses provide more than introductory knowledge of the distinctive assumptions and modes of analysis of a discipline outside the core fields of study.

3. Program Delivery

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

Benchmarks:

Student assignments and their assessments

- a) demonstrate the achievement of the stated program and degree level learning outcomes and
- b) provide appropriate information to students about their achievement levels.

4. Capacity to Deliver

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

Benchmarks:

1. The institution provides and maintains sufficient numbers of current faculty and other staff or associated hiring and/or succession plans for the non-core curriculum so as to ensure its sustainability in the context of normal staff turnover.²

Faculty Qualifications³

2. All faculty⁴ teaching non-core courses:
 - a) have, where relevant, professional credentials and related work experience
 - b) hold an academic credential at least one level (one column on the OQF) higher than that offered by the program⁵
 - c) engage in a level of scholarship, research, or creative activity sufficient to ensure their

² The required minimum faculty and staff members will depend upon the method of delivery, enrolments, and the complexity and variety of specializations and other factors; however, a single faculty member, in the absence of a practicable hiring or succession plan, would normally be insufficient to meet this benchmark. It remains up to the External Expert Reviewers to determine if a given faculty complement arrangement is sufficient for the program in question.

³ 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 to submit their CVs to the Board. See Appendix 1.2 below.

⁴ 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 and approved by the Vice-President Academic or equivalent (through delegation). The signed documents must be kept for Review at the time of any request for consent or renewed consent.

⁵ Exceptions must be a) based on the relative scarcity of related postsecondary credentials or other supporting circumstances (e.g., in studio-driven disciplines or when a faculty member has obtained significant professional and practical skill within industry or area itself that fully qualifies him/her to teach in a particular program) and b) justified in writing and approved by the Vice-President Academic or equivalent (through delegation). The signed documents must be kept for review at the time of any request for consent or renewed consent.

currency in the field⁶
d) are adequately trained for the delivery mode/s.

3. At least 50% of the students' experience in the non-core/Breadth curriculum for 4 Year Degrees and 40% in 3 Year Degrees is in courses taught by a faculty member holding the terminal academic credential in the field or in a closely related field/discipline.^{7,8}

4. Include in this section of your submission the following attestation:

" _____ [institution] has on file and available for inspection, for all faculty and staff whose CVs are included in this submission, signatures that attest to the truthfulness and completeness of the information contained in their CVs and agreeing to the institution's indirect collection of their personal information for PEQAB and the inclusion of their CVs in any documents/websites associated with the submission, review, and final status of the application." See Appendix 1.2 below.

⁶ 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 a) publishing and/or reviewing professional publications in their fields, b) participation and/or presentations at provincial, national, and international conferences, competitions, or exhibitions in their fields, c) engagement with the scholarship of teaching and learning as it applies to their fields, d) participation in regulatory and accrediting association workshops, degree audits, or related work in their fields, e) engagement in basic and/or applied research, labour market research, and/or related industry needs assessments, f) application of conceptual knowledge to current practice in their fields, such as reports to industry or consulting work, g) creative contributions to their fields through exhibitions or related forms and h) development of case studies in their fields.

⁷ Generally and in the context of a practicable schedule of teaching assignments, the percentage can be achieved if the required percentage (40% or 50%) of all faculty teaching core and non-core courses in the program hold the terminal academic credential in the field or in a closely related field/discipline or if the required percentage of all core and non-core courses or all hours in the courses in the program are taught by faculty with a terminal academic credential in the field or in a closely related field/discipline.

⁸ Although a doctorate is normally the terminal academic credential in traditional disciplines, in developing areas of study, a variety of credential packages may be deemed to constitute the terminal credential. In such areas, organizations are encouraged to apply to PEQAB in advance for a pre-determination of what will "count" as the terminal credential package. For instance, to teach a degree in Culinary Arts it was determined by the Board, on the advice of an EERP, that a Certified Chef de Cuisine plus (any) master's degree plus relevant experience would constitute the terminal credential "package." See also the list of "Precedents for Non-Doctoral Terminal Credentials" at <http://www.peqab.ca/ManualsGuidelines.html>.

Appendices

Appendix 1.1

Sample Listing/Schedule of Non-core/Breadth Courses

This is not a required format but an indication of the range of information that the Reviewer will require.

In determining the following breadth schedule, you will of course draw on instructors who have taught the various courses in the past, but the focus should be on instructors whom you anticipate will teach each section of the course going forward.

Course Title	Year Level	Total Course Semester Hours	Course Prerequisites and Co-requisites	Instructor(s)	Instructor's Highest Qualification Earned and Discipline of Study
Communications: Critical Thinking & Writing	1	42	NA	Prof. Lee Prof. Chan	PhD Rhetoric PhD English
Contemporary Canadian Literature	2	42	NA	Prof. Cooper	PhD English
Global Perspectives	2	42	NA	Faculty to be appointed	MA minimum, PhD preferred
Ethical Practices in Research	3	42	Philosophy 101	Prof. Berger	PhD Philosophy
Indigenous Perspectives	2	42	NA	Prof. Nez	MA Sociology
Extinction: Biodiversity and Human Action	3	48	Biology 101	Prof. Adamovic	MSc Biology

Provide a second Schedule, with the same information as above, deleting the column identifying faculty by name.

Appendix 1.2

Notice of Collection: Curriculum Vitae Release

_____ [institution] is collecting your personal information, including the personal information set out in your CV, for The Ministry of Colleges and Universities (MCU) pursuant to paragraph 1 of s. 15(1) of the *Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities Act*. Your personal information will be handled by MCU's PEQAB Secretariat, which provides administrative services to the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB) to support PEQAB in fulfilling its functions under the *Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000* (the "PSECE Act").

The institution will be disclosing this personal information to the Secretariat within MCU and to PEQAB to enable PEQAB to complete a quality assurance review. PEQAB will be collecting this personal information and conducting this review in accordance with and as authorized by the PSECE Act. Your personal information may be shared and used within PEQAB, including with PEQAB Board members and with the Reviewers who will be assessing the degree program, institution and its faculty against various PEQAB Standards.

By submitting your CV to the institution, you are consenting to the institution's disclosure of your personal information to MCU and PEQAB in accordance with s. 42(1)(b) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* ("FIPPA"), as well as to PEQAB's indirect collection of your personal information in accordance with s. 39(1)(a) of FIPPA.

If you have any questions about the collection, use, or disclosure of your personal information, please contact: pegab@ontario.ca.

Should you wish to discuss the collection, use or disclosure of your personal information with your institution, please contact: *[intuitional representative, business title and email]*

By signing this form, the faculty member listed below:

- Affirms that all information provided on their curriculum vitae is true and complete
- Authorizes [the institution]_____ to include their curriculum vitae in its submission for the degree program(s) below:

- Agrees to the inclusion of their curriculum vitae in any documents associated with degree program approval and renewal.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____