

# **APPENDICES**

## **Degree Program Review Criteria and Guidelines**

**April 2008**

**APPENDICES**  
**Degree Program Review Criteria and Guidelines**

1. Operational Guidelines for the Review of Out-of-province Institutions Operating in British Columbia through Branch Operations; and
2. Operational Guidelines for Out-of-Province Institutions Operating in British Columbia through Collaborative Arrangements.
3. Operational Guidelines for Recognizing Prior Assessment and Accreditations
4. Use of External Experts
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## **Operational Guidelines for the Review of Out-of-Province Institutions operating in British Columbia through Branch Operations**

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The Organization Review Criteria state that “For institutions with headquarters in another jurisdiction that wish to operate a satellite or branch location in British Columbia or through a collaborative arrangement with another institution, the organization review will focus on the institution’s operations in British Columbia and will include a review of how these operations vary or are the same as operations in the home jurisdictions. Additionally, the organization review will include a review of how the home jurisdiction will ensure that the branch operation or collaborative arrangement maintains quality.”

Unlike collaborative arrangements, the applicant seeking consent to offer degree programs as a branch operation of an out-of-province institution will control directly all aspects of the administration and delivery of the degree program.

In the context of the board’s review, the division of governance, policymaking and administrative authority, and influence over organizational culture, between the branch and central operations need to be understood. As well, assurance of the equivalency of academic standards and coordination of quality assurance mechanisms between branch and central operations is a concern. Drawing on the guidelines for assessing collaborative arrangements, principles for consideration in reviewing the relationship between branch and central operations is provided below.

### *Main campus*

The campus that is responsible for the central administration of a branch campus location.

### *Branch Campus (Institution seeking consent to offer degree programs in British Columbia)*

A branch campus is any location of an institution other than the main, but under the same corporate structure as the main campus, that:

- 1) is permanent in nature;
- 2) has a separate student body;
- 3) has a resident administration;
- 4) normally offers a full program leading to a degree; and,
- 5) is geographically separate from the main campus such that students may not easily avail themselves of educational and administrative services of the main campus.

### **1. Responsibility for, and equivalence of, academic standards**

- a) The academic standards of all degree programs provided through the branch campus are comparable to those of similar programs provided by the institution’s other campuses.
- b) A plan for regular program review consistent with practices of the degree-granting institution’s main operations exists, and encompasses programs offered in British Columbia.
- c) The degree-granting institution can demonstrate that student achievements in programs delivered through branch campuses in British Columbia are comparable to those of students in similar degree programs offered at the degree-granting institution’s main campus.

### **2. Assuring the quality of programs and degrees**

- a) The policies and procedures for quality assurance must be explicit and documented, and must clearly delineate the division of responsibilities and control between the branch campus and the main campus or central administration.
- b) The curriculum and delivery methodologies used for degree programs delivered by a branch campus are substantively the same as those used for similar degree programs at the main campus, and any differences must be clearly identified at the time Ministerial consent is requested.
- c) Where appropriate, consideration has been given to ensure the curriculum demonstrates reasonable levels of Canadian content (e.g. course in history, law, education).

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British Columbia through Branch Operations**

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**3. Information for students, staff and faculty**

- a) Information given to faculty and staff of branch campuses, and to students registered in its programs, includes directions about the appropriate channels for concerns, complaints and appeals.

**4. Publicity and marketing**

- a) The branch campus retains effective influence to ensure the accuracy of all public information, publicity and promotional activity relating to the programs and degrees it offers, in particular when the information is published on its behalf. The branch campus must satisfy itself through active means that the public cannot be misled about the nature and standing of the degree programs offered in British Columbia.

**5. Policies, procedures and organizational culture**

- a) Branch operations are managed in accordance with the formally stated policies of the central administration.
- b) There are measures to ensure that the organizational culture of the main campus is transferred to the branch campus to a sufficient degree to ensure a culture appropriate to an institution offering their specific degree programs.
- c) There must be adequate safeguards against financial temptations that would compromise academic standards.

## Operational Guidelines for Out-of-Province Institutions Operating in British Columbia through Collaborative Arrangements

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In order to assure that the quality of degree-programming offered in British Columbia through collaborative arrangements is maintained, the Degree Quality Assessment Board, in its assessment of degree program proposals, requests and reviews the collaborative agreements between partners. In reviewing agreements, documents and evidence provided by applicants, the Board is guided by the following guidelines. These guidelines may also assist applicants in preparing their submissions and negotiating collaborative arrangements.

### Definitions

#### *Degree-granting institution*

The institution that is seeking, or holds the Minister's consent, approval or authorization under an Act of the British Columbia Legislature to provide degree programs, and grant degrees.

#### *Collaboration Partner*

An institution that is authorized or accredited by a body that is recognized by the board, has entered into a collaborative arrangement to provide all or part of a degree program, where the degree is conferred by the degree granting institution.

#### *Collaborative Arrangement*

An agreement or partnership between a degree-granting institution and a collaboration partner whereby the collaborative partner provides administrative support and/or part of a program leading to a degree conferred by the degree-granting institution.

### **1. Responsibility for, and equivalence of, academic standards**

- a) The degree-granting institution is ultimately and solely responsible for the academic standards of all programs that lead to degrees granted in its name.
- b) The academic standards of all degree programs provided through a collaborative arrangement are equivalent to those of other comparable programs provided by the degree-granting institution.
- c) The degree-granting institution reviews regularly the extent to which programs and/or courses have achieved their intended objectives (i.e., meet the degree-level standards and expected student learning outcomes).
- d) A plan for regular program review consistent with practices of the degree-granting institution's main operations exists, and encompasses programs and/or courses offered in British Columbia through collaborative arrangements.
- e) The degree-granting institution is able to demonstrate that student achievements in programs and/or courses delivered through a collaborative arrangement are comparable to those of students in similar degree programs offered at the degree-granting institution's main campus.

### **2. Assuring the quality of programs and degrees**

- a) The degree-granting institution is accountable for the quality and standards of all programs and degrees granted in its name.
- b) The policies and procedures for quality assurance must be explicit and documented, and must clearly delineate the division of responsibilities and control between the degree-granting institution and the collaboration partner.
- c) The curriculum and delivery methodologies used for degree programs delivered by a collaboration partner should be substantively the same as, or of comparable quality to, those used for similar degree programs at the degree-granting institution's main campus, or a sound rationale for any differences must be clearly identified at the time Ministerial consent is requested.
- d) Where appropriate, consideration has been given to ensure the curriculum demonstrates reasonable levels of Canadian content (e.g. course in history, law, education).

## **Operational Guidelines for Out-of-Province Institutions Operating in British Columbia through Collaborative Arrangements**

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- e) All faculty meet the minimum qualifications established by the degree-granting institution and those requirements must be comparable to the standard used for similar programs at its main campus.
- f) The degree-granting institution retains authority to approve faculty teaching in degree programs delivered through collaborative provision.
- g) There is appropriate provision for staff appointment, induction and development, to meet the requirements of the degree-granting institution for its degree programs.
- h) The degree-granting institution ensures that effective measures exist to review the proficiency of staff and faculty.
- i) The degree-granting institution determines the admission requirements for students entering a program under the collaborative agreement. Particular care needs to be taken with any arrangements for the assessment of prior and experiential learning.
- j) Program resources available for degree programs delivered under a collaborative arrangement must be clearly identified by the degree-granting institution at the time Ministerial consent is requested and must be adequate to achieve the stated desired outcomes of the arrangement.
- k) Any course transfer arrangements made between the partners inside or outside the degree program must be done through a written articulation agreement which outlines policies and procedures are in place to determine equivalency and that there is periodic review of those arrangements.

### **3. Student assessment requirements**

- a) The examination and assessment requirements for programs provided ensure that the academic standards and grading practices are equivalent to the same or comparable programs of the degree-granting institution.
- b) The degree-granting institution must ensure that the partner organization understands and follows the requirements for the conduct of assessments.

### **4. Degrees and transcripts**

- a) The issuing of degrees and transcripts must remain under the control of the degree-granting institution. The words and terms used on the degree certificate should be consistent with those used by the degree-granting institution for the same or comparable programs it provides.

### **5. Information for students**

- a) Information given by the partner organization or an agent to prospective students and to those registered in a program, about the nature of a program, the academic standards to be met and the quality of the program must be approved by the degree-granting institution. Such information clearly defines the nature of the collaborative arrangement and outlines the respective responsibilities of the parties.
- b) Information is monitored regularly by the degree-granting institution and updated as appropriate.
- c) Information includes directions to students about the appropriate channels for concerns, complaints and appeals.
- d) Information given to the student cannot mislead the student as to which institution he or she is enrolled in.

### **6. Publicity and marketing**

- a) Effective control over the accuracy of all public information, publicity and promotional activity relating to the programs and degrees for which a degree-granting institution has responsibility must be retained by the degree-granting institution, in particular when the information is published on its behalf. The degree-granting institution must satisfy itself through active means that this control is exercised consistently and fairly and that the public cannot be misled about the collaborative nature or about the nature and standing of the degree programs.

## **Operational Guidelines for Out-of-Province Institutions Operating in British Columbia through Collaborative Arrangements**

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### **7. Policies, procedures and information**

- a) The commitment and support of both the degree-granting institution and the collaboration partner's central authorities must underpin any arrangement.
- b) Collaborative arrangements must be negotiated, agreed upon and managed in accordance with the formally stated policies and procedures of the degree-granting institution.
- c) The degree-granting institution ensures that the financial aspects of the arrangement are satisfactory to the Ministry of Advanced Education and that activities are costed and accounted for accurately and fully.
- d) There are measures to ensure that the organizational culture of the degree granting institution is transferred to the collaborative partner to a sufficient degree to ensure a culture appropriate to an institution offering their specific degree programs.
- e) There must be adequate safeguards against financial temptations to compromise academic standards.

### **8. Selecting a partner for collaboration**

- a) The degree-granting institution provides the rationale for its choice of partner.
- b) The degree-granting institution is satisfied that the partner is in good standing, financially stable, and that the institutional missions of both institutions are compatible with respect to the purposes of collaboration before entering into any agreement.
- c) The legal status of a partner organization and its capacity to contract with the degree-granting institution has been examined, together with its ability to provide the infrastructure and learning resources necessary to ensure the required quality and standard of the degree will be achieved, prior to entering into any agreement.

### **9. Selecting an agent**

- a) Where a degree-granting institution or its partner uses agents to broker or facilitate the collaboration, the degree-granting institution ensures that an agent's interests do not conflict with the institution's interests or that of the students recruited for the programs.
- b) In choosing an agent, the agent's financial standing and reputation should be considered by the degree-granting institution.
- c) There must be written and legally binding contracts with any agents involved with collaborative arrangements.

### **10. Written agreements**

- a) There must be a written and legally binding agreement or contract between the degree-granting institution and the partner signed by the appropriate senior official in each organization, including:
  - The relationship between the degree-granting institution and the partner organization; and
  - The arrangements relating to individual degree programs and locations.
- b) The agreement must include termination and arbitration provisions and financial arrangements and must specify the respective responsibilities of the two parties for academic standards and quality. The residual obligations to students on termination of the agreement must be specified.
- c) The agreement must clearly delineate how funds collected from students are collected, dispersed and accounted for between the two parties.

## Operational Guidelines for Recognizing Prior Assessments and Accreditations

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### A. Prior Assessments and Accreditations

The degree quality assessment process allows for private and out-of-province public institutions to submit prior assessments for the board's consideration. While there is no mention in the degree program review criteria of recognition for program specific assessments, the Degree Quality Assessment Board (the board) may consider program accreditations in its review at its discretion, and on a case-by-case basis. Prior assessments/accreditations are more likely to have occurred at the institutional level, thus satisfying all or part of the organization review criteria.

Where prior institutional assessments/accreditations concern policies and practices that are institution wide, success in previous assessments against established standards may satisfy many of the board's organizational requirements. However, the board's primary concern is the quality of programs that are offered through British Columbia operations, and might not be satisfied that prior assessments satisfy criteria to the extent that an organization review of British Columbia operations is wholly unnecessary.

The onus is on the applicant to describe to the board how its prior assessments satisfy the criteria, and to what extent. The applicant must also supply documentation to support its rationale. In recognition of a prior assessment, the board may choose to limit the scope of its review, through giving special instructions to expert review panels. The following guidelines are intended to assist the board in determining the scope of review necessary to assess applications where a request for the recognition of prior assessments has been made.

### B. The Scope of Degree Quality Assessment Board Reviews

Where an application is made by an accredited private or out-of-province public institution to offer degree programs, for exempt status, or for consent to use the word "university" in British Columbia, the Degree Quality Assessment Board may determine that an organization review is necessary, and whether any prior accreditations can be considered as satisfying its criteria in whole or in part. Where the board chooses to recognize a prior accreditation in whole or in part, a specified approach is necessary in determining the scope of the review necessary to assess the application.

There are three types of application that the board considers: degree program, exempt status, and use of the word "university". The scope of every review, including those where prior assessments/accreditations are recognized, must be sufficient to ensure the board that an institution offering degree level programming in British Columbia provides a program that meets published standards of quality, and has the organizational capacity to deliver that program. Further description of the scope of review associated with the three types of application is provided below.

#### 1. Degree Program Proposals

In the context of a private or out of province public institution's first degree proposal application, organization reviews are generally necessary to determine the institution's organizational capacity to operate as a degree granting institution in British Columbia. The organization review is conducted above and beyond the first degree program review not only to ensure that the proposed program meets established standards of quality, but that the applicant also has the capacity to deliver a degree program to meet those standards. An exception to this practice may be justified in the case of out-of-province public institutions from other Canadian jurisdictions applying to offer degree programs in British Columbia.

#### 2. Exempt Status Applications

Where an application is made for exempt status, a discretionary criterion allows the board to apply any other condition it deems necessary to determine the applicant's organizational capacity. For example,

## Operational Guidelines for Recognizing Prior Assessments and Accreditations

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specific elements or criteria from degree program reviews, or any other condition, may be included in the scope of the exempt status review under the discretionary criterion. Through this avenue, the board may be ensured that the applicant has the organizational capacity to ensure that quality is maintained in the delivery of its programs, and that the programs themselves meet the standards of degree level education in British Columbia.

### 3. Applications to Use the Word “University”

Where an application is made for consent to use the word “university”, criteria require that the applicant provide adequate information to the board to determine that the organizational capacity of the institution merits university status. In order to ensure that the applicant fully meets criteria for the range of programming expected of a university in British Columbia, the board has adopted the practice of requiring that a successful applicant be able to offer at least one program at both the undergraduate and graduate level. Therefore, applications for the use of the word “university” include both an organizational and program review component, and assure not only the quality of the proposed program, but the applicant’s capacity to deliver it as well.

## C. **Operational Guidelines for Determining the Scope of Reviews of Institutions Requesting Recognition of Prior Assessments**

Given that an applicant has achieved institutional accreditation/approval by a recognized accreditation/quality assessment agency, much of the organizational review criteria can be considered to be satisfied with regard to the institution as a whole. However, attention to British Columbia operations would still be required to ensure the organizational capacity to deliver quality degree programming in British Columbia.

### 1. Degree Program Reviews

Where an applicant is seeking degree program approval, substantial overlapping between degree program review criteria and organization review criteria allow that the quality of British Columbia programs and operations can be assured through:

- 1) Current and positive accreditation review from one of the six regional accrediting bodies in the United States, or other widely recognized accrediting/quality assessment agency.
- 2) An organization review by an appropriately configured and directed team of experts, focused on British Columbia specific criteria that are not covered in the context of a degree program review, such as:
  - a. A five-year business plan for British Columbia operations
  - b. Disclosure of legal or administrative actions pending against the organization
  - c. Student enrollment contract and written confirmation of awareness of policies
  - d. Financial resources and practices for British Columbia operations
- 3) A full degree program review by an appropriately configured and directed team of experts
- 4) Ongoing reporting and monitoring

### 2. Exempt Status Reviews

In the context of an application for exempt status the quality of British Columbia programs and operations can be assured through:

- 1) A current and positive accreditation review from one of the six regional accrediting bodies in the United States, or other widely recognized accrediting/quality assessment agency.

## Operational Guidelines for Recognizing Prior Assessments and Accreditations

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- 2) An organization review by an appropriately configured and directed team of experts, focused on British Columbia specific criteria, such as:
  - a. A five-year business plan for British Columbia operations
  - b. Disclosure of legal or administrative actions pending against the organization
  - c. Student enrollment contract and written confirmation of awareness of policies
  - d. Financial resources and practices for British Columbia operations
  - e. Publications, student/faculty handbooks, academic calendars and policy documents that apply in British Columbia
  - f. Planning, evaluation and review policies and procedures for British Columbia programs
  - g. Governance and administration of British Columbia operations and their relations to the central administration
  - h. Policies for dispute resolution that apply in British Columbia
  - i. Criteria relating to faculty, limited to those faculty involved in British Columbia operations
  - j. Criteria relating to Admissions, Student Recruitment and Transfer for British Columbia students
  - k. Policies on academic freedom, honesty and integrity
  - l. British Columbia facilities and learning resources
- 3) Submission of documentation from internal program reviews for one or more programs, as requested by the board.
- 4) An exempt status review by an appropriately configured and directed team of experts, that includes consideration of the institution's scope of programming, as well as curriculum content, learning methodologies, and degree level standards for one or more programs.
- 5) Upon having been granted exempt status, the submission of programs to the Minister for approval, whereupon a full program review by the Degree Quality Assessment Board can be required if any concerns arise.
- 6) Ongoing reporting and monitoring.

### 3. Use of the Word "University" Reviews

Where an applicant is seeking consent to use the word "university", the performance of both a degree program review and an organization review criteria allow that the quality of British Columbia programs and operations can be assured through:

- 1) Current and positive accreditation review from one of the six regional accrediting bodies or other recognized accrediting/quality assessment agency.
- 2) An organization review by an appropriately configured and directed team of experts, focused on British Columbia specific criteria that are not covered in the context of a degree program review, such as:
  - a. A five-year business plan for British Columbia operations
  - b. Disclosure of legal or administrative actions pending against the organization
  - c. Student enrollment contract and written confirmation of awareness of policies
  - d. Financial resources and practices for British Columbia operations
- 3) A full degree program review by an appropriately configured and directed team of experts
- 4) Ongoing reporting and monitoring

## **USE OF EXTERNAL EXPERTS**

When the Degree Quality Assessment Board (DQAB) receives an application, it will determine whether it is necessary to have it reviewed by a panel of external experts established to conduct a review based on published criteria:

1. Organization Review, focusing on the characteristics of the institution; and/or
2. Degree Program Review, focusing on the specifics of a proposal for a particular degree-level and discipline/area of study.

External experts appointed to either an organization or degree program review panel must possess the following characteristics:

- Be committed to the principles and practices of quality assurance in postsecondary education;
- Be recognized by their peers for having a broad outlook, open mind, and sound judgment;
- Provide full disclosure and be free of any actual or perceived conflict of interest regarding an applicant/institution, in accordance with the Board's policy; and,
- Have demonstrated oral and written communication skills, preferably including conducting reviews and writing formal reports to strict deadlines.

It is the Board's responsibility to appoint all external experts. An applicant/institution may suggest individuals who might make appropriate external experts based upon the established criteria for the Board's consideration.

### **Organization Review Experts**

If necessary, the Board will establish an organization review panel of qualified external assessors (normally three) to review an applicant organization against the established criteria. Panel members may have expertise in one or more of the following areas:

- Senior management experience in a post-secondary institution;
- Accounting expertise and certification with experience in corporate financial management;
- Experience in the admissions and registrar functions at a post-secondary institution, including admissions policies and academic records management;
- Experience in managing learning resources and/or infrastructure; and,
- Private sector consultants specializing in organization design and behavior, or assessment and evaluation.

### **Degree Program Review Experts**

Where necessary and deemed appropriate, the Board will appoint one or more qualified external subject matter experts to review a degree program application against the established criteria. Since the panel's main purpose is to conduct a quality assessment of a degree proposal, panels will normally possess the following specific criteria:

- An advanced academic credential related to the subject area under review (normally at the doctoral level in the discipline or terminal level if in a particular field);
- Relevant academic experience in areas such as quality assessment (e.g., as appraisers for accrediting bodies or as reviewers of degree programs), curriculum design, teaching and learning, and administration;
- Any required or desired professional credentials and/or related work experience.

## **Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Policy Board Members and External Experts**

This policy applies to members of the Degree Quality Assessment Board (the Board) and to external experts engaged to conduct an organization review or degree program review at the Board's request. This policy also applies to applicants wishing to declare a conflict of interest with an individual Board member or external expert.

Board members must also adhere to the *Guidelines for Conduct of Government Appointees to BC Agencies, Boards and Commissions* developed by the Board Resourcing Development Office. External experts are also expected to adhere to the spirit of these guidelines.

**Board members (as Ministerial appointees) and external experts (as Board appointees) must avoid any actual or perceived conflict of interest including that which might impair or impugn the independence, integrity or impartiality of the Board. There must be no apprehension of bias, based on what a reasonable person might perceive.**

Board members and external experts must not reveal or divulge confidential information received in the course of their duties. Confidential information must not be used for any purpose outside the Board's mandate.

Except at the direction of the Chair, Board members and external experts must not make public comments concerning any application.

Board members and external experts must be committed to the principles and practices of quality assurance in postsecondary education and be recognized by their peers for having a broad outlook, open mind and sound judgment. Individuals appointed in these capacities must possess the qualifications to engender the confidence of the Minister, applicants, the public, accrediting bodies, other degree-granting institutions, and other jurisdictions.

### Definition of a Conflict

An actual or potential conflict of interest arises when a member or expert is placed in a situation in which:

- his or her personal interests, financial or otherwise, or
- the interests of an immediate family member or of a person with whom there exists, or has recently existed, an intimate relationship,

conflict or appear to conflict with the member's responsibilities to the Board, the Minister, and the public interest. No Board member shall knowingly participate in any decision that appears to directly or preferentially benefit the member or any individual with whom the member has an immediate family, intimate or commercial relationship.

Board members and external experts appointed by the Board should not have any connection to the applicant under review within the previous two years, or for a period of up to three months following the completion of their duties in connection with the degree quality assessment process. Some examples of an unacceptable connection to an applicant organization include:

- Preparing an application or providing expert advice used in developing the proposal, beyond information on the Board's criteria, guidelines and procedures;

## **Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Policy Board Members and External Experts**

- Making public comment for or against an application or institution that might result in the apprehension of bias;
- Working for or previously employed by the institution;
- Being a student or a recent graduate of the institution;
- Working as a consultant for the institution;
- Serving in an advisory capacity or on a board or committee at the institution;
- Having financial or other business interests with the institution;
- Supervising students or employees of the institution;
- Collaborating regularly with the institution; and/or,
- Teaching at the institution.

Some Board members are appointed as representatives of private sector membership organizations that broadly represent private sector interests. A public or private institution making application to the Board may also hold membership in one of these organizations that a Board member represents. In such instances, there would not normally be a conflict of interest unless the member has been actively involved in developing, promoting, or publicly commenting on an application.

### Disclosure of Conflict

Where there is an actual or potential conflict of interest, the member must disclose his/her circumstances and consult with the Board Chair. If unsure if a conflict exists, the member should seek advice from the Chair. It is the responsibility of the Board Chair to determine whether a conflict of interest exists and to inform members of his/her decision. If a member has an actual or potential conflict in regards to an application under consideration by the Board, the member must withdraw from any discussion and decision-making process leading to a recommendation on the proposal.

All external experts selected by the Board shall make full written disclosure to the Board of any potential conflict of interest, within the terms of this policy, as soon as the individual knows the applicant's identity. Similarly, if an applicant has evidence of a conflict of interest regarding an individual appointed by the Board, then the applicant shall make full written disclosure to the Board, as soon as the applicant knows the individual's identity.

### Action Required When a Conflict Exists

In accordance with this policy, the Board will exercise its discretion in determining if an actual or potential conflict of interest exists and notify the parties accordingly.

If it is determined that a Board member has an actual or potential conflict of interest in regards to an application under consideration, the member must withdraw from any discussion and decision-making process leading to a recommendation on the proposal.

An external expert with an actual or potential conflict in regards to an application must decline to serve as an expert.

## Attachment 1 British Columbia Guidelines for Conduct

### **BC Guidelines for Conduct of Government Appointees to BC Agencies, Boards and Commissions**

Government appointees are expected to meet high standards of conduct which enhance and maintain public confidence in the operation of BC's public agencies, boards and commissions. They must act to instill public confidence in their actions and decisions.

#### *Who is affected?*

These guidelines apply to anyone appointed by the provincial government to any agency, board or commission operating in BC, unless they are already subject to ethical guidelines specifically created by government specifically for their particular agency, board or commission, or are appointed to act as a consequence of being a government employee.

#### *How do the guidelines work?*

The provincial government respects the independence of its agencies, boards and commissions. It appreciates the efforts and willingness to serve of dedicated individuals.

It also expects all government appointees to agencies, boards and commissions to work within these guidelines.

Specific agencies, boards or commissions may have their own explicit needs, guidelines or standards. If no such standards yet exist, public bodies are encouraged to design their own.

The chair or registrar of an agency, board or commission, or government itself may take action if these guidelines are breached. Such action may include dismissal, suspension, reprimand, warning or other sanction.

When and where possible, appointees or their chair or registrar may seek the opinion of provincial government staff with whom their particular board works, for clarification or resolution of any matter.

#### *Conflict of Interest*

Appointees must avoid any conflict of interest that might impair or impugn the independence, integrity or impartiality of their agency, board or commission. There must be no apprehension of bias, based on what a reasonable person might perceive.

Appointees who are in any doubt must disclose their circumstances and consult with their chair or registrar.

In practical terms, appointees should ensure that:

- All personal financial interests, assets and holdings are distinct from and independent of any decision, information or other matter that may be heard by or acted upon by their particular agency, board or commission.
- Activities undertaken as a private citizen are kept separate and distinct from any responsibilities held as a member of an agency, board or commission.
- Activities undertaken as a member of an agency, board or commission are kept separate and distinct from any activities undertaken as a private citizen.
- They remain impartial at all times toward individuals who deal with their agency, board or commission and as a member avoid taking any action that may result in preferential treatment for any individual.
- Personal employment is not dependent on any decision, information or other matter that may be heard by or acted upon by the agency, board or commission.
- Other memberships, directorships, voluntary or paid positions or affiliations remain distinct from work undertaken in the course of performing their duties as public appointees.

## Attachment 1 British Columbia Guidelines for Conduct

- Actions taken in the course of performing duties as public appointees neither cause nor suggest the reality or perception that their ability to perform or exercise those duties has been or could be affected by private gain or interest.

### *Other guidelines...*

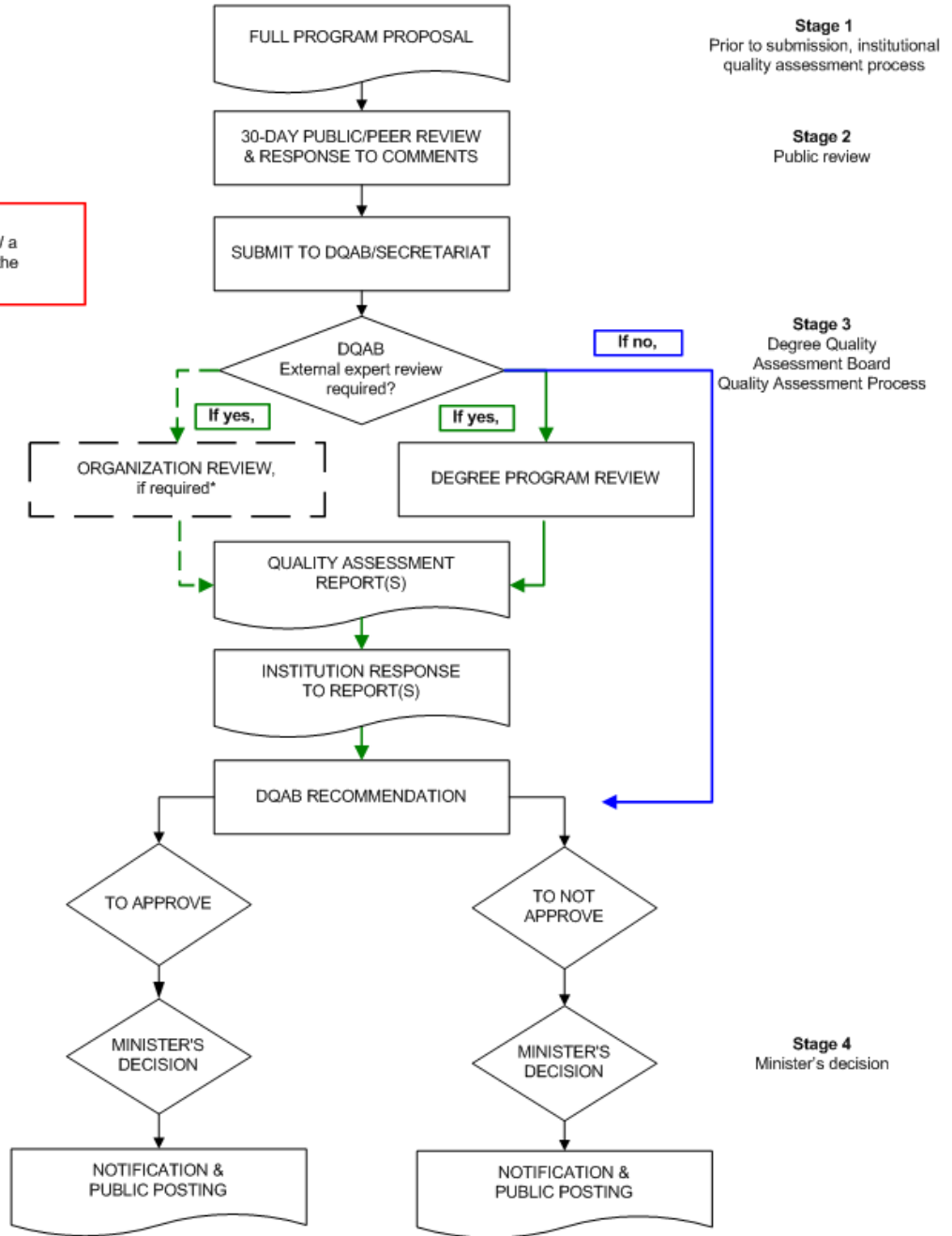
While acting as a member of an agency, board or commission, appointees are expected to abide by the following:

- *Integrity*  
Appointees are expected to act at all times in good faith and with honesty and due diligence, for the public interest.
- *Participation and Preparation*  
Appointees are expected to regularly attend meetings and to adequately prepare for the duties expected of them.
- *Behaviour*  
The conduct and language of appointees must be free from any discrimination or harassment prohibited by the *Human Rights Code*.  
Appointees' conduct should reflect social standards of courtesy, respect and dignity.
- *Confidentiality*  
Appointees must not reveal or divulge confidential information (defined as that which cannot be obtained from other sources) received in the course of their duties.  
Confidential information must not be used for any purpose outside that of undertaking the work of the agency, board or commission to which they have been appointed.
- *Public Commentary*  
Appointees must comply with the public comment protocols established by their particular agency, board or commission.  
If none exist, appointees must refer to the chair for guidance before making public comment on agency, board or commission matters.
- *Private Gain*  
Agency, board or commission work should not result in any personal or private financial or other substantive gain for public appointees. (Private gain does not include honouraria for service on an agency, board or commission.)
- *Duty to Inform*  
Appointees must inform the chair of their agency, board or commission of any circumstance that may have a negative or harmful effect on their respective abilities to perform the duties required of their appointments.

Source: <http://www.fin.gov.bc.ca/abc/infopages/guidecond.htm>

**Degree Program Approval Process  
Workflow for Non-exempt Institutions**

**NOTE:**  
Institutions may **WITHDRAW** a proposal at any time during the quality assessment process

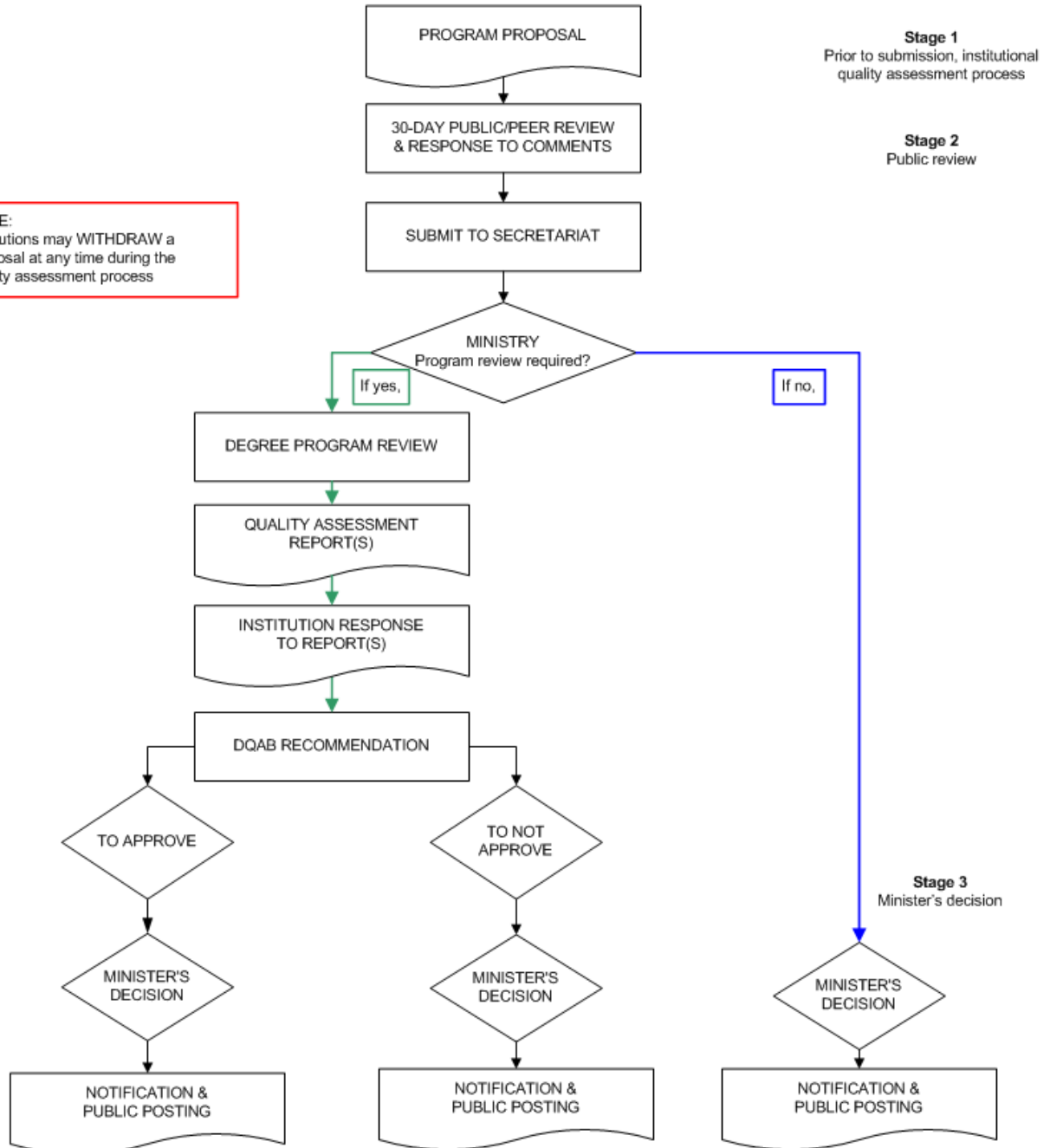


\*BC public institutions are not required to undergo organization review

**Effective: November 2006**

**Degree Program Approval Process  
Workflow for Institutions with Exempt Status**

**NOTE:**  
Institutions may **WITHDRAW** a proposal at any time during the quality assessment process



Effective: November 2006

# **GUIDELINES ON NAMING OF DEGREES**

**April 2004**

## **I. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE**

The following guidelines have been adopted by the Degree Quality Assessment Board (the “Board”) to assist institutions in determining the name of the credential they will offer when they are proposing new degree programs. Institutions proposing new degree names should provide an indication on what basis a degree name has been selected. This should be determined within the institution’s overall approach to degree nomenclature and reflect historical practice in British Columbia and, where necessary, within the broader Canadian and international context. It should be noted that the guidelines apply only to new degrees; existing degree names are not affected.

## **II. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE NAMING OF DEGREES**

1) Credentials for new academic programs should ordinarily be selected from degree names that are widely used and generally understood. The list of degrees currently offered by British Columbia post-secondary institutions is already very comprehensive and normally should be able to accommodate most proposals for new academic programs.

2) A generic degree name that already incorporates a broad range of academic disciplines or subject areas is preferable to a multitude of specific degree names. Obvious examples include the Bachelor of Arts at the undergraduate level and the Master of Science at the graduate level. In the case of some of the newer and more specialized institutions, such as the technical institutes, the standard credential awarded should be reflective of the overall mission of the institution (e.g., technology, thus leading to a Bachelor of Technology).

3) The name should be descriptive of the general area of study which usually corresponds to a particular faculty or school. While degrees are conferred by a particular post-secondary institution, the degree designation is normally identified with a particular academic unit, ordinarily a faculty or school. The emergence of interdisciplinary studies has led to a number of departures from this practice.

4) The name should be appropriate for adoption by other British Columbia post-secondary institutions that develop similar programs. Comparable, but not necessarily identical, programs should lead to equivalent credentials. To a certain extent the system has already demonstrated its flexibility. The two clearest examples are the degrees of Bachelor of Applied Science and the Bachelor of Engineering as engineering credentials and the Bachelor of Commerce and the Bachelor of Business Administration as business credentials. Occasionally different degree names are simply a reflection of an institutional preference and do not represent a divergence of academic programs. While the degree designations differ, the credentials are seen to be equivalent.

5) In British Columbia, the use of associate degrees is restricted to the Associate of Arts and the Associate of Science degree. Institutions proposing to offer the associate degree must ensure that the degree is consistent with the British Columbia system-wide definition. (The British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer provides a definition of associate degree on its website: <http://www.bccat.bc.ca/pubs/assoc05-00.htm>.)

6) The above principles apply to both undergraduate and graduate programs.

### **III. HOW TO INDICATE SPECIALIZATION IN THE DEGREE NAME**

The Board assumes that the principal reason for proposing a distinct degree is to indicate an academic area of specialization. The question then becomes how to achieve this objective, while adhering to the five general principles outlined above. Where appropriate the subject of specialization could be included as part of the degree name leading to a new genus of degrees. Institutions, as a matter of routine, already identify majors and areas of concentration on the transcript. In some instances, honours are shown as part of the degree. In addition, the subject area, or major, is sometimes shown on the parchment as a matter of institutional preference, but that does not mean that that information is incorporated into the name of the degree.

Increasing specialization is the main reason for the existing diversity and continuing expansion of degree names. While there does not appear to be any uniform practice, over time certain models have evolved. One is to include the specialization in the degree name itself (e.g., Bachelor of Science in Agriculture). Another is to indicate the specialization in parentheses after the degree name (e.g., Bachelor of Education (Elementary)). A third is the creation of new generic forms (e.g., Bachelor of Administrative Studies). New degrees, which identify an area of specialization, should fit into one of the following categories:

a) Bachelor of Science in \_\_\_\_\_. This has become a widely accepted method of indicating specialization. There is a clearly identified and specialized field of study which finds its roots in science, but which derives its distinctiveness from being located in a separate academic unit. Examples include: agriculture, dietetics, forestry, kinesiology, nursing and pharmacy. From the examples given, it is clear that there is a strong link to a particular profession. What should be noted is that, while the degree names follow a standard pattern, the degree initials do not. Examples are: B.Sc.(Agr.) and B.S.N. Either format is appropriate and does not appear to lead to confusion.

b) Bachelor of \_\_\_\_\_ Science. This approach is similar to the previous method for naming degrees with a significant scientific component. In this instance a descriptive adjective is used to distinguish the branch of science. Examples include: Bachelor of Applied Science and Bachelor of Health Science. Again, recognized academic units offer the degree and there is a connection with a particular profession.

c) Bachelor of Arts in \_\_\_\_\_. While not as common as the comparable degree in science, there are a few instances where this approach has been adopted, e.g. Bachelor of Arts in Child and Youth Care. To warrant a separate degree name, the number of courses

required in the field of specialization should exceed that required for a major. There should also be some demonstrated link with a particular profession or occupation.

d) Bachelor of Education (Elementary). This approach to indicating specialization is achieved by showing the specialty in parentheses after the generic degree. In British Columbia it has been used primarily to distinguish various kinds of education degrees. Unlike the previous examples, these degrees are offered by a single faculty. The Education degree is also a professional degree and the designated distinction has obvious implications for employment. Other faculties wishing to develop specialized professional programs should consider this option. An example is the Bachelor of Arts (Criminal Justice).

e) Bachelor of \_\_\_\_\_ Studies. There are an increasing number of degrees with an interdisciplinary focus. As a result there is greater usage of degree names which incorporate the word "studies." This trend is found at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. The word "studies" appears to be used in instances where there is a well-defined academic program but where the course offerings are provided by a number of academic units, often including units from more than one faculty. There is often a tension between choosing a more generic degree (e.g., B.A. (Canadian Studies)) versus Bachelor of Canadian Studies (B.C.S.). The former is more widely recognized and is the recommended approach.

f) Bachelor of Technology (\_\_\_\_\_). With the expansion of the post-secondary system to include a greater variety of academic institutions, generic degrees which reflect the academic orientation of these newer institutions are rapidly emerging. In the case of technological institutes, the academic programs are grounded in the study of the practical application of science in a variety of subject areas. It is recommended that Institutes of Technology adopt the generic form of degree, Bachelor of Technology. The field of specialization, if necessary, can be shown in parentheses following the general degree, similar to the practice in the field of education. Normally this degree designation will be confined to Institutes of Technology.

g) Bachelor of Applied \_\_\_\_\_. Given that the province has encouraged the development of more applied degrees, there has been a gradual increase in requests to use the word "applied" in the title of the credential offered. The dictionary definition of applied is "used in actual practice or to work out practical problems."

With respect to new degree programs which are "applied" in nature, sponsoring institutions should give serious consideration to using a generic degree name such as Bachelor of Applied Arts (name of specialization) or Bachelor of Applied Design (name of specialization) (e.g., Bachelor of Applied Design (Interior Design)). Each designation is sufficiently broad to allow a number of specific programs under a single umbrella. Because the degree, Bachelor of Applied Science, is already identified with engineering, its use should be limited to such programs to avoid confusion. Since engineering programs are accredited by the profession, this additional requirement should be a condition of approval for degrees using the phrase Applied Science.

## Guidelines for the Renewal of Consent

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Under the Standard Terms and Conditions of Consent, a consent period for a degree program or for use of the word “university” is normally five years. However, the Minister can grant consent for any length of time up to and including five years. These Guidelines will apply to all applications for renewal of consent, regardless of the length of the original consent period.

The Degree Quality Assessment Board (the Board) will review applications for renewal of consent and ensure that the application undergoes a process that determines if the institution or program has maintained and will continue to maintain quality.

The quality assessment process for renewal of consent will primarily focus on evidence-based outcomes.

### The Types of Degree Quality Assessment Board Reviews

There are two types of renewal application that the board considers:

#### Degree Programs

In the context of a private or out of province public institution’s degree proposal renewal application, a review will be conducted to determine whether the program is maintaining the standards under the established criteria for degree programs in British Columbia. The quality assessment process for renewal of consent will primarily focus on evidence-based outcomes. It is highly recommended that institutions conduct an external program review prior to application for renewal of consent and submit the outcomes report along with the Degree Program Proposal to the Board.

#### Use of the Word “University”

Where an application is made for renewal of consent to use the word “university”, criteria require that the applicant provide adequate information to the board to determine that the organizational capacity of the institution has been maintained and continues to merit university status. The quality assessment process for renewal of consent will primarily focus on evidence-based outcomes particularly in relation to the institution’s commitment to research and scholarly activities and range of programming expected of a university in British Columbia.

### The Scope of Degree Quality Assessment Board Reviews

The Board reserves the right to:

- determine whether an institution is required to submit an Organizational Self-Study and whether an Organization Review will be conducted in conjunction with an application for renewal of consent;
- choose to recognize prior Organization Reviews conducted on previous applications to the Board or accreditation assessments in whole or in part; and,
- determine the scope and type of review each application for renewal will undergo to ascertain if it meets the established criteria.

In making this determination, the Board will take under consideration:

- any provisions or Special Terms and Conditions of Consent attached to the original consent;
- the annual performance reporting and monitoring information; and,
- any concerns or complaints raised with the Ministry regarding the institution and/or program during the consent period.

The Board will then provide a recommendation to the Minister if consent should be renewed and/or addition or removal of any Special Terms and Conditions of Consent.