



## **PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT PROCEDURE**

Approved by: Academic Coordinating Committee

Authorizer: Vice President, Academic Administration

Reference Code: PSQA2 V4

Effective Date: 11/1/2008

### **PROCEDURE STATEMENT:**

Program development at Conestoga is central to the function of meeting community, employer, government and student needs. The development process takes into account Conestoga's Strategic Mandate Agreement and Strategic Plan, workforce needs, confirmation of program viability and sustainability, and external regulatory/accrediting body requirements as appropriate.

This procedure defines how programs are developed at Conestoga, describing the path from initial discussion to final implementation. Adhering to these prescribed methods for program development helps to ensure approval by both internal and external bodies.

### **SCOPE:**

This procedure specifies the requirements for program development from concept through to implementation at Conestoga for programs encompassed by the *Ministry's Binding Policy Directive: Framework for Programs of Instruction*, including Conestoga certificate programs. This procedure also specifies the requirements within the *Handbook for Ontario Colleges* that must be followed to align with the mandate of the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB).

The procedure encompasses internal administrative areas and operational functions that influence and contribute to program approval, development and delivery.

### **DEFINITIONS:**

#### **Academic Coordinating Committee (ACC):**

This senior academic committee provides a forum for academic planning and operations within the framework of the Strategic Plan, as well as other goals and initiatives identified by the senior management team and the College's Board of Governors. The committee is responsible for considering academic planning and operations in the context of overall college and academic quality. The committee also provides necessary interface with other college committees, departments and offices.

**Academic Forum:**

This body is responsible for discussing all proposed program revisions.

**Academic Level:**

Refers to the level within the program for a specific cohort.

**Academic Management Calendar:**

Conestoga's calendar of critical dates used to manage the implementation of decisions related to new programs, development, delivery and change in programs. The Academic Management Calendar drives the communication of academic dates and activities for student enrolment (admission, billing, registration) and progression.

**Academic Year:**

The period from September 1 to August 31.

- Current Academic Year – refers to the start date of the academic year.
- Upcoming Academic Year – refers to the academic year subsequent to the current academic year.
- Following Academic Year – refers to the start date of the academic year occurring two years from the current academic year.

**Academic Semester/Session:**

Semester/session refers to the time periods for the fall semester (Sept. to Dec.), winter semester (Jan. to Apr.) and spring/summer semester (May to Aug.).

**Advisory Committee on Academic and Student Affairs (ACASA):**

This sub-committee of the Board of Governors has responsibility for examining and discussing all program proposals approved by ACC, making recommendations to the Board of Governors, and receiving information and updates on key initiatives within Conestoga that affect the quality of academic operations.

**Board of Governors (BOG):**

The Board of Governors has responsibility for establishing the overall goals, objectives and strategic directions of Conestoga. The BOG ensures that the college operates efficiently and effectively and is developing in ways that are consistent with the stated goals, objectives and strategic direction.

**Core and Non-core Courses:**

Core courses provide developed knowledge and critical understanding of the key concepts, methodologies, current advances, theoretical approaches and assumptions within a discipline. Non-core courses provide developed knowledge and critical understanding from outside of the discipline, an interdisciplinary perspective.

**Credential:**

Recognition awarded upon completion of a program of study as set out by the Ministry. Approved credentials include: Certificate, Ontario College Certificate, Ontario College Diploma, Ontario College

Advanced Diploma, Ontario College Graduate Certificate, and Bacculaureate Degree.

**Credential Validation Service (CVS):**

The Credential Validation Service (CVS) provides timely validation of programs of instruction to the colleges. The CVS service is consistent with the Minister’s Binding Policy Directive, Framework for Programs of Instruction.

**Datapack:**

The data pack outlines the various aspects of a proposed program, including course descriptions and learning outcomes. After initial approval by PDAC, this document is presented at ACC for recommendation to ACASA and the Board of Governors.

**Degree Program:**

A degree program is a planned and coordinated selection of degree-level courses delivered to an identified student body, at the successful conclusion of which an appropriate degree credential will be awarded.

**Degree Proposal Procedure Map:**

This document maps the procedures from initial program concept to delivery of a degree program at Conestoga.

**Environmental Scan:**

An academic and labour market scan done to research and prove viability within the region. See Environmental Scan template for requirements.

**eConestoga:**

eConestoga is Conestoga’s learning management system (LMS), an online course and teaching environment powered by Brightspace (Desire2Learn). eConestoga delivers online content and activities, and allows for online discussions, assessments and grading. Faculty and students can interact through the system, supporting classroom enhanced, hybrid and fully online courses.

**Gap Analyses:**

Program learning outcomes are mapped against accreditation standards (i.e., CEAB or ECE standards) or against other similar programs to discern if there are any gaps in knowledge. Gap analyses are used in the creation of pathways between diploma and degree programs, pathways between college and university programs, and for accreditation.

**Learning Outcomes:**

Learning outcomes represent culminating demonstrations of learning and achievement. They are interrelated and, as a result, should be viewed as a comprehensive whole rather than in isolation. Learning outcomes describe performances that demonstrate that significant integrated learning by graduates of the program has been achieved and verified. – Ministry, “Published College Program Standards.” Learning outcomes can also be referred to as graduate attributes, i.e., the knowledge, values and skills possessed and demonstrated by graduates.

**The Ministry:**

The Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (formerly the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities) has the function of assessing all program proposals for determination of appropriate code classification, funding weights and parameters, and program titling.

**Minister's Binding Policy Directive: Framework for Programs of Instruction:**

This binding policy directive applies to all colleges of applied arts and technology and defines expectations for all programs of instruction offered by colleges regardless of the funding source, except for ministry-funded apprenticeship training.

**Program of Study:**

A planned and coordinated selection of courses delivered to an identified student body leading to a certificate, diploma, degree or other document awarded by the Board of Governors.

**Program Quality Assurance Process Audit (PQAPA):**

The PQAPA is a process that involves the regular and cyclical review of each college's program quality assurance processes. Its purpose is developmental and its intent is to ensure continuous improvement.

**Program Advisory Committee (PAC):**

The Program Advisory Committee provides advice on academic program development, review and relevance, changes/trends in business and industry affecting programs, students and graduates, technological implications of changes/trends, employment prospects, etc. Refer to PAC Guidelines for membership and terms of reference.

**Program Planning and Review Committee:**

The program planning and review committee is a standing committee comprised of representatives from each department and school. The committee ensures that curriculum development and review are consistent with approved processes.

**Program Code:**

A unique identifier that identifies each program offered at Conestoga. This unique program code is associated with the program name, program outcomes, credential and program length.

**Program Development Advisory Committee (PDAC):**

The Program Development Advisory Committee (PDAC) provides advice and support for all new degree program development, in accordance with Ministry policy. See PDAC Guidelines for membership and terms of reference.

**Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB):**

The Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB) is an arms-length advisory agency that makes recommendations to the Ministry on applications for ministerial consent under the terms of the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000.

**PEQAB Program Proposal Submission:**

The PEQAB Program Proposal Submission includes detailed documents that commit to the delivery of a new degree program that meets PEQAB's degree-level standards. See PEQAB Submission template.

**PEQAB Quality Assessment Panel (QAP):**

The QAP panel, as established by PEQAB, reviews the PEQAB Program Proposal Submission or Program Renewal Submission documents, conducts a site visit or desk review, and writes a report on the viability of the proposed degree program or degree renewal. QAP members are senior academics with appropriate terminal credentials in the degree program's field of study. Schools may put forward nominations to PEQAB. Refer to PEQAB Assessor Nominations for criteria.

**PEQAB Quality Assessment Panel (QAP) Report:**

The QAP Report documents the strengths and weaknesses of a degree program submission and includes panel recommendations.

**Program Approval Signature Form:**

A form that includes signatures from Academic Operations, the Registrar and Admissions, Finance, Co-op, and Curriculum Planning, signifying program approval prior to development of the PEQAB Program Proposal Submission.

**RESPONSIBILITIES:****Academic schools**

- Align new program development with Conestoga's strategic vision, mission and values, the Strategic Mandate Agreement and the strategic enrolment management plan for the school.
- Confirm expectations and requirements of external regulatory/accrediting bodies and consult with PACs and related industry experts.
- Conduct environmental analysis to confirm viability and sustainability over the anticipated delivery timeframe.
- Work collaboratively with the Office of Academic Administration and institutional subject matter experts including, but not limited to: the Curriculum Office, related programs and administrators related to degree programs and academic pathways, the Online Learning Centre, Finance, Information Technology, Institutional Research and Marketing.
- Submit program development documentation per Conestoga's publication schedules and the Academic Management Calendar.
- Adhere to Conestoga delivery and implementation schedules for program release and intake.
- Develop marketing materials in collaboration with Marketing and ensure that an accessible Program Handbook is available to students prior to the start of a program.
- Initiate program implementation upon CVS approval (non-funded), and CVS and Ministry (funded programs).

**Office of Academic Administration**

- Works collaboratively with the academic school to confirm program development is in compliance with the *Minister's Binding Policy Directive: Framework for Programs of Instruction*, CVS, program

accreditations (as applicable), CQAAP/Accreditation and PEQAB standards (as applicable), and that it is aligned with the Strategic Mandate Agreement and Conestoga's strategic vision, mission and values.

- Reviews and revises related policies and procedures in consultation with academic schools to ensure compliance with the Review of Policies and Procedures Policy.
- Advises on pathway opportunities during the program design phase.

#### **Admissions Office**

- Ensures all approvals are in place before admission information is made active in internal and external systems.
- Enters admission and program information into appropriate internal and external systems for admission processing on notification of program approval.
- Triggers the release of marketing materials.
- Advises the school on program launch times according to admission requirements and intake of program of study cohorts.

#### **Credit Transfer Office**

- Reviews credit transfer opportunities or challenges with proposed program design.

#### **Academic Scheduling & Administration Office**

- Loads and maintains new and existing programs into the Student Information System.

#### **Curriculum Office**

- Works collaboratively with the academic school to provide guidance in ensuring program development is in compliance with the *Minister's Binding Policy Directive: Framework for Programs of Instruction*.
- Provides advice and relevant training to the academic school related to the alignment and building of curriculum from concept through implementation phases, in accordance with best practices.
- Manages CVS and Ministry approval process for programs.
- Manages internal and external program development documentation requirements, coordinates all approval procedures, and notifies academic schools of applicable approvals and related Ministry decisions.

#### **Online Learning Centre**

- Works collaboratively with academic schools in the design of online courses.

#### **Institutional Research Office**

- Assists with the collection of environmental analysis information such as labour market data.

#### **Registrar's Office**

- Outlines the impact of program design on cohorts as they complete each academic level of the program of study.

#### **Finance Office**

- Advises on the financial viability of the new program and funding allocation through the Ministry,

as applicable.

### **Marketing Office**

- Ensures all approvals are in place before program information is placed on the Conestoga website and into future academic calendar documents and publicity materials.

### **PROCEDURE:**

1. Program development is a component of annual and multi-year planning related to the academic plan of the school based on fit with the academic school's strategic enrolment plan and alignment with Conestoga's expectations and Strategic Mandate Agreement. It is the responsibility of the executive dean/dean/designate to assign a subject matter expert (for example: chair, coordinator or faculty) and begin the process.
2. The subject matter expert consults with all schools to reduce duplication and optimize shared expertise. Results of the consultation are documented to complete the Request for Approval to Proceed (RFAP) information.
3. The subject matter expert follows Conestoga's New Program Development Process Map.
4. The curriculum consultant works with the subject matter expert and other stakeholders to meet Conestoga, CVS and Ministry expectations regarding program design, EES, General Education and design parameters (for example: hours, online content, enrolment planning and pathways).
5. The subject matter expert completes a map of program outcomes to course outcomes in consultation with a curriculum consultant as required for program approval and inclusion in the submission package sent to CVS and the Ministry.
6. The chair:
  - a. Ensures discussion has taken place with all relevant stakeholders in preparing the RFAP documentation, including consultation with accrediting or regulatory bodies to ensure requirements are addressed in the development of the program.
  - b. Presents the RFAP to the Program Planning and Review Committee (PPRC). The RFAP is reviewed by the PPRC and feedback is provided prior to further program development.
7. Upon approval by PPRC, the RFAP is presented to Academic Forum by the executive dean/dean/designate to discuss fit with overall Conestoga plans, identify synergies, validate workforce need and anticipated viability, and ensure sustainability.
8. The chair brings forward the proposed design, enrolment projections and delivery implications for review and endorsement (motion of support) to the PAC (or PDAC) for new programs.
9. The chair ensures completion of the program Data Pack, incorporating PPRC, Academic Forum and PAC (or PDAC) feedback, as appropriate.
10. ACC approves the program Data Pack, which includes the program description, program learning outcomes, admission requirements, program design, program hours and courses. Programs may be sent back to the academic school for additional information or clarification and subsequently reviewed again by ACC, once the questions are addressed.
11. ACC makes a recommendation for approval to ACASA, a sub-committee of the Board of Governors..
12. Curriculum consultants manage the document submission process of the proposed program documentation to CVS and Ministry (if funded) through to the approval of the program and final funding approval.
13. The Request for Approval for Funding includes the following attestations signed off by the president:

- a. CVS has confirmed the program conforms to the Credentials Framework.
  - b. There is demonstrated labour market and student demand.
  - c. A relevant PAC is in place and has recommended the program.
  - d. The program content and delivery is and will continue to be compliant with all requirements of regulatory bodies related to and/or responsible for the field of study.
  - e. The program meets relevant provincial program standards where they exist as well as essential employability skills and general education requirements.
  - f. ACASA, as a subcommittee of the Board of Governors, has approved the program of study.
14. Upon required internal approval, the Academic Scheduling & Administration Office will input program information into the Student Information System.
15. Upon required external approval:
- a. The Office of Academic Administration will communicate program approval to academic support offices and the academic school.
  - b. The Academic Scheduling & Administration Office will make any changes to the program design that may have resulted from CVS and/or Ministry review into the Student Information System and set the program status as active.
  - c. The Registrar's Office will enter the appropriate admission and program information in the Student Information System for admissions processing.
  - d. The Marketing Office will publish program information on marketing materials, including but not limited to: Conestoga's corporate website, the academic calendar and publicity materials.
  - e. Academic schools will continue liaising with accrediting/regulatory bodies upon notification of final approval to complete the program design details in accordance with requirements.
16. As a quality assurance measure, the Office of Academic Administration will:
- a. Maintain a database to monitor the status of program development, review, approval and communications with Ministry, CVS and external approval bodies. The database also maintains the status of program implementation.
  - b. Enter the start date of the new program into the master program review schedule which monitors status in relation to future plans for comprehensive program reviews.
  - c. Maintain records of program approvals for seven years.

Degree Program Development:

1. The academic school will schedule a meeting/consultation with Academic Administration to discuss degree development plans, and designate a Degree Program Coordinator or subject matter expert.
2. The academic school will complete an Environmental Scan, researching academic and labour markets. Refer to Environmental Scan template.
3. The academic school will consult with all schools to reduce duplication and optimize shared expertise. Results of the consultation are documented to complete the Request for Approval to Proceed (RFAP) information.
  - a. Academic Administration coordinates the internal RFAP approval process
  - b. The RFAP is approved by PPRC and Academic Forum prior to further program development.
4. The academic school establishes a PDAC that includes external individuals with appropriate credentials and/or experience appropriate to the degree who will review the degree program



- proposal, make recommendations, and give program approval. See PDAC Guidelines for membership and terms of reference.
5. The academic school completes the Degree Approval Package in consultation with the PAC.
    - a. Academic Administration coordinates the internal Degree Approval Package approval process.
    - b. The Degree Approval Package is approved by ACC and ACASA, a subcommittee of the Board of Governors, prior to further program development.
  6. The academic school composes the submission documents required by PEQAB/Ministry for program approval, in consultation with Academic Administration, including comprehensive learning outcomes, core and non-core PEQAB course outlines, gap analyses, and funding rationale. Documents are submitted to the Ministry by Academic Administration.
    - a. Academic Administration coordinates consultation with relevant internal resource areas.
  7. Academic Administration coordinates a site visit for PEQAB's Quality Assessment Panel (QAP) providing opportunities for discussion with faculty, staff, student, graduates and PDAC as well as any further requested documentation.
  8. The academic school, in consultation with Academic Administration, writes a response to the QAP report and sends to Academic Administration for submission to PEQAB.
  9. Academic Administration manages the submission process of proposed program documentation to the Ministry through to the approval of the program and final funding approval.
  10. Upon required internal approval, the Curriculum Planning and Operations Office will input program information into the Student Information System.
  11. Upon required external approval:
    - a. The Office of Academic Administration will communicate program approval to academic support offices and the academic school.
    - b. The Curriculum Planning and Operations Office will make any changes to the program design that may have resulted from PEQAB/ Ministry review into the Student Information System and set the program status as active.
    - c. The Registrar's Office will enter the appropriate admission and program information in the Student Information System for admissions processing.
    - d. The Marketing Office will publish program information on marketing materials, including but not limited to: Conestoga's corporate website, the academic calendar and publicity materials.
    - e. Academic schools will continue liaising with accrediting/regulatory bodies upon notification of final approval to complete the program design details in accordance with requirements.
  12. As a quality assurance measure, the Office of Academic Administration will:
    - a. Maintain a database to monitor the status of program development, review, approval and communications with Ministry, CVS and external approval bodies. The database also maintains the status of program implementation.
    - b. Enter the start date of the new program into the master program review schedule which monitors status in relation to future plans for comprehensive program reviews.
    - c. Maintain records of program approvals for seven years.
  13. The academic school will advise service areas of program delivery requirements.
  14. The Academic School will create a PAC. The PAC may include former PDAC members.

**RESOURCE DOCUMENTS:**

- Request for Approval to Proceed (RFAP) Template
- Program Data Pack Template
- CVS Submission Template
- Course Outline Development Process
- Course Development Process
- New Course Request Form
- Assignment of Course Code Work Instructions
- Existing Course Change Approval Form
- New Program Approval Process
- Program Design Information for New Programs Form
- Proposed Program Curriculum Changes Form
- APR/MPR Documents
- Approval to Proceed Summary Form
- College Organizational Chart
- College Strategic Plan
- Degree Proposal Procedure Map Environmental Scan template
- External Program Review template
- Financial Plan template
- PDAC Guidelines
- PEQAB Documentation
- Program Approval Signature Form
- Online Learning Technology Policy

## REFERENCES

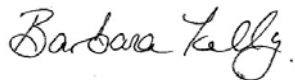
- *Minister's Binding Policy Directive: Framework for Programs of Instruction*
- Curriculum Policy
- Course Development and Revision Procedure
- Program Delivery Procedure
- Program Review Procedure
- Program Suspension and Cancellation Procedure
- New and Revised Provincial Program Standards Implementation Procedure
- PAC Policy and Procedure
- General Education Policy and Procedure
- Essential Employability Skills Policy and Procedure

## REVISION LOG:

11/12/2008	Academic Coordinating Committee - Approved
3/10/2015	Academic Forum - Approved
3/17/2015	Policy and Procedure Committee – Approved
3/18/2015	Academic Coordinating Committee – Approved
8/30/2016	Policies and Procedures Committee – Approved
9/21/2016	Academic Coordinating Committee – Approved
11/9/2016	Academic Forum - Approved

## REVIEW LOG:

As Policy Owners, we certify that the **Program Development Procedure** is appropriate and provides an up-to- date framework in which decisions can be made and implemented.



---

September 20, 2012  
Barbara Kelly, Executive Dean  
Academic Administration

Appendix A

**New Program Approval Process – Internal and External Approval Documents and Bodies**

