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## Academic Quality Assurance

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Key Process Area:	Academic Planning & Evaluation
Owner:	VP ARI
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### **POLICY STATEMENT**

NBCC recognizes the importance of establishing academic quality standards for continual evaluation and monitoring, consistency, and improvement of its programs. An Academic Quality Framework with standards and activities that support NBCC's principles is essential in maintaining the reputation of quality program offerings.

### **PURPOSE**

To assess programs based on defined academic quality standards, objectives and performance indicators and act accordingly based on evidence available from internal and external stakeholder data. Standardized quality management activities for the quality assessment of programs will promote and sustain continued quality educational programming for every NBCC learner and meet the needs of employers, the community and other stakeholders.

### **SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS**

This policy applies to all academic programs offered by NBCC. Exceptions may be made where external accreditation processes mandate alternative or more frequent practices. At minimum, the program must meet policy standards.

### **1.0 DEFINITIONS**

#### **Academic Quality Assurance Framework**

-a document that identifies quality standards and associated criteria that academic programs are required to meet.

#### **Quality Improvement**

-recurring standardized activities that are implemented with the objective of enhancing performance.

#### **Standard**

-a rule or model that is established by authority, custom or general consent; also, a criterion that aids with measurement.

#### **Key Performance Indicator**

-a quantifiable measure used to evaluate the success of an organization in meeting objectives for performance. i.e., Graduation rate

#### **Quality Objective**

-a key performance indicator with an associated target value that indicates the results to be achieved.

#### **Non-Conformance**

-the actual or potential non-fulfillment of a specified requirement pertaining to academic program development and delivery that requires Dean/Director approval and/or requires equivalent reworking to meet quality standards.

**Change Management**

-a process that is used to seek approval for and track requests for program changes.

**Work Verification Audit (Quality Audit)**

- a systematic and independent examination to determine whether quality activities and related results comply with planned arrangements and whether these arrangements are implemented effectively and are suitable to achieve objectives.

## 2.0 IMPLEMENTATION

The Academic Quality Assurance Policy and related processes will be managed by the Head of Program Evaluation and Quality Assurance and approved by the Director of Academic Planning and Evaluation. Deans and Academic Chairs are accountable for implementing the policy standards to programs in their School. The Academic Quality Assurance Framework is based on the principles in this policy and governs the quality management activities.

### 2.1 Academic Quality Assurance Principles

The following principles must be considered in the Academic Quality Assurance Framework and its quality management activities:

**2.1.1 Industry consultation**

Program design, development, and evolution are guided by consultation with industry and local businesses.

**2.1.2 Student requirements**

Program design and implementation and student services are guided by student requirements.

**2.1.3 Qualified instructional staff**

Recruitment processes and ongoing training and development ensures qualified staff.

**2.1.4 Monitoring and review of quality assurance standards**

Active monitoring and review take place to maintain and improve the standards.

**2.1.5 Processes to identify and address risks and opportunities**

Process design and implementation allows risks and opportunities to be identified and addressed.

**2.1.6 Improvement initiatives**

The college environment encourages and welcomes improvement initiatives.

**2.1.7 Academic quality objectives**

Measurable and realistic academic quality objectives are established annually, communicated, evaluated, reviewed, and revised on an on-going basis.

### 2.2 Quality Management Activities

Quality management activities revolve around the development and design of new programming, review and revision of existing programming and delivery of programming and information provided to students.

### **2.2.1 Quality Objectives**

NBCC reports on quality objectives established by the Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour (PETL). Key performance indicators are established, measured, and used to evaluate program performance. Additional objectives and enhanced target values may be instituted at NBCC's discretion to meet program or strategic goals. Objectives are assessed annually at minimum.

### **2.2.2 Quality Policies**

Institutional and Academic Policies are used in development of the Academic Quality Framework and are revised on a cyclical basis to ensure continued alignment and applicability. Programs must comply with the College's policies, standards, and processes and adhere to applicable provincial, national, and/or professional regulatory bodies. Programs are subject to random work verification audits.

### **2.2.3 Data Collection**

Data collected from internal and external stakeholders is stored and collated on an annual basis according to an established schedule, used to identify program performance, programming risks and/or opportunities and determine necessary actions.

### **2.2.4 Non-Conformance**

Non-conformance must be documented, addressed and/or approved by the Dean or Academic Chair responsible for the program. Change management processes are used to seek approval for program changes. Non-conformance and change management documentation is used to guide policy revision and improvements. (Refer to Policy 1313-Student Issues and Complaints for student issues concerning non-conformance).

### **2.2.5 Quality Improvement Tracking**

Programs must maintain a record of data and feedback with any associated actions to continuously assess the effectiveness of actions and track program performance.

### **2.2.6 Quality Assurance Reviews**

The College performs internal review of programs on an annual and cyclical basis to assess their academic performance, identify opportunities for improvement, and detect trends that may impact the program's ability to meet quality standards. Compliance to the Academic Quality Assurance Framework standards is assessed. External review of programs may be used where indicated.

### **2.2.7 Roles and Responsibilities**

Creating and participating in a culture of continuous quality improvement is the responsibility of everyone in the academic division. Key accountabilities are outlined in the Academic Quality Assurance Framework and each program's mission and vision must be aligned with those of the College.

### **3.0 OTHER RELATED DOCUMENTS**

Academic [Quality Assurance Framework \(QAF\)](#)  
Change Management Process (in development)  
Non-Conforming Issue Report (1312.4633)  
Program Advisory Committee (1201)  
Qualifications Framework