

QUALITY ASSESSMENT STANDARDS - ORGANIZATIONAL

In making its recommendation to the Minister, the *Post-secondary Learning Act* requires the Campus Alberta Quality Council to consider the ability of institutions to deliver and sustain high quality degree programs. To meet this goal, all degree programs recommended by the council must offer an education of sufficient breadth and rigour to meet national and international standards of programs at recognized post-secondary institutions.

Organizational Assessment Standards

1. **Mandate and mission** – The organization has a clearly articulated and published mandate (public institutions) or mission (private institutions) and academic goals statement, approved by the governing board and appropriate for a degree-granting institution, and has academic policies and standards that support the organization's mission and educational objectives to ensure degree quality and relevance. The mission includes a commitment to the dissemination of knowledge through teaching and, where applicable, the creation of knowledge and service to the community or related professions.
2. **Governance and administrative capacity** – The organization has the legal characteristics and the leadership, through a governance structure and administrative capacity, necessary to organize and manage a reputable, effective and high quality degree-granting institution.
3. **Academic freedom and integrity** – The organization maintains an atmosphere in which academic freedom exists. Where adherence to a statement of faith and/or code of conduct might constitute a constraint upon academic freedom, the conditions of membership in that institution's community must be clear prior to admission or employment. Students and academic staff display a high degree of intellectual independence. Academic activity is supported by policies, procedures and practices that encourage academic honesty and integrity.
4. **Academic policies** – The organization has published admission, continuation and graduation policies consistent with the objectives of its programs and has the capacity to ensure that academic records of students are secure.
5. **Organizational policies, strategic planning and periodic review** – The organization has appropriate policies and processes in place to assess the effectiveness, continuous growth and improvement of its educational programs and services, including a strategic planning process (both for short and long range plans) that enables the organization to respond in a focused, effective and innovative way to the challenges of its environment and constituents. Policies and procedures are in place which address internal curriculum development and periodic program review to ensure the ongoing quality of its programs and learning outcomes. Such assessments normally include the advice of external experts.

6. **Financial planning and resources** – The organization has the financial management procedures, resources and appropriate planning to provide a stable learning environment and to ensure that students can complete the degree program.
7. **Ethical conduct** – The organization values and upholds integrity and ethical conduct as demonstrated by the relevant policies and practices by which it conducts its business. It has fair and ethical policies in place governing admissions and recruitment of students, and a systematic method for evaluating and awarding academic credit.
8. **Faculty and staff** – The organization has the human resources, including appropriately qualified faculty and instructional staff, necessary to achieve its mission and academic goals. The organization has policies and procedures with respect to appointment, evaluation, employment conditions including employment equity, promotion, termination and professional development for faculty and staff.
Revised to add “including employment equity”, March 2008
9. **Information services and systems** – The organization has the information services and learning resources to support the academic programs for students and faculty, as well as an established method of setting priorities with respect to their acquisition. The institution is committed to maintaining and supplementing them as needed. As well, the organization has the systems in place to gather and analyze data, which are used for planning and decision-making purposes. It establishes specific performance indicators and benchmarks by which programs and academic units are assessed.
10. **Student services and student protection** – The organization values and upholds integrity and ethical conduct in its relations with students through the availability of full, accurate and truthful material regarding its mission and goals; history; governance and academic structure; program and subject descriptions; faculty and administrator credentials; entrance requirements including credit transfer and prior learning assessment policies; clear and informative student enrollment agreements verifying student awareness of relevant policies; support services; payment requirements and refund policies; financial assistance; and transcript protection.
11. **Dispute resolution** – The organization has policies for dealing with disputes between the organization and its students, the organization and its faculty, and between faculty and students where complaints, grievances, and/or disputes of students, faculty, staff and administration are dealt with in accordance with the principles of natural justice.
12. **Scholarly and research support** – The organization has policies and procedures in place to support and facilitate engagement by academic staff in scholarship and, where appropriate, research or creative activity.
13. **Physical plant** – The organization has the facilities, including laboratories, classrooms, technology and specialized equipment, as well as the existence of plans and methods for managing health and safety issues, appropriate to support degree programming in the program(s) it offers or proposes to offer.
14. **Graduate program policies** – Organizations proposing graduate programs have policies, structures and mechanisms in place appropriate to graduate studies and research.