Ontario College Quality Assurance Service
Service de l'assurance de la qualité des
collèges de l'Ontario

CREDENTIAL VALIDATION SERVICE (CVS)

TITLING PROTOCOLS
2025-2026

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Table of Contents

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INTRODUCTION

According to the Minister's Binding Policy Directive **Framework for Programs of Instruction** (April 1, 2003) the public colleges were to:

> "…establish a system-wide credentials validation service that will provide reasonable assurance that all postsecondary programs of instruction…offered by the colleges, regardless of funding source, conform to the Credentials Framework and <u>are consistent with accepted college system nomenclature/program titling principles</u>." [Paragraph D. (iv), page 4]

Accordingly, the Credentials Validation Service (CVS) was created and began operations on February 1, 2005.

TITLING PROTOCOLS

Since its inception, the CVS has worked to refine and articulate the protocols used in determining, and validating, program titles.

Protocol 1: Consistency across the college system
The requirement for CVS as articulated in the Minister's Binding Policy Directive is to provide *"reasonable assurance" that the "credentials awarded in the college system must be credible and meaningful for, and understood by, students, employers, and the general public."* [Page 2, Binding Policy Directive]. To this end we need to ensure that program titles, which are associated with the credentials being awarded, are also consistent, meaningful, and understood.

a. Provincial Program Standards:
   Where a program is proposed that is in an area that falls under an existing Provincial Program Standard (PPS) it requires a full alignment with the binding elements articulated in the standard, including the program title.

b. Provincial Program Descriptions (existing code/categories):
   Where a program is proposed that clearly 'fits' within an existing MTCU category/code, consideration is given to both the *MTCU code titles* as well as the existing *APS program titles*.

c. Similar program outcomes should be reflected in similar program titles:
This principle also is applied in reverse, where similar program titles should be reflected in similar program outcomes.

d. System-wide Nomenclature Reports and Titling Protocols:
There are currently several program areas in the college system that have developed and implemented titling protocols or nomenclature reports. For example, in the areas of **Technology, Business**, and **Hospitality and Tourism** titling protocols exist and have been in operation for many years. Other program areas have undertaken some early steps in considering titling protocols for programs in their areas. Where pre-existing approaches to program titling exist, CVS is committed to following the approaches adopted by the system. The specific areas identified have differing approaches and protocols (one from the other).

Protocol 2: Titles should describe the field of study and not include delivery mode
Program titling should not be based on a job or role that a graduate may acquire upon graduation (for examples, see In Focus – Program Titling Tips). This protocol is one that will assist with the understanding and meaning of the credentials being awarded.

Any references to how the program will be delivered (part-time, flex, with or without a co-op, language, etc.) will not be validated if included as part of the proposed title.

e. Program specialization denoted by modifiers must be reflected in the program-level outcomes:
Where a college is proposing to offer a program in an area covered by either an existing Provincial Program Standards or MTCU code, the existing title is seen as the root title, and then any specialization may be noted by adding a modifier (" –modifier"). Where a college requests or suggests a program title that is meant to convey a particular specialization within an existing program area using a modifier added to the root title, there must be adequate articulation of this specialization or focus found in the program-level outcomes. The CVS will only consider this type of titling when there is evidence that the program, through its stated outcomes and curriculum, has the focus on this specialization and that students can learn and demonstrate mastery in the area so designated.

f. New/Niche Programs: Where programs are developed and submitted for validation for which there are no comparator programs in the system (no similar program titles exist within the MTCU program area or the APS Titles) CVS will consider and validate program

titles according to the focus found in the program-level outcomes and the Titling Protocols.

Protocol 3: Truth in advertising

As a part of this protocol, it is mandatory that the validated / approved program title is the one that appears on the credential conferred by the college, so again it is important that students know at the beginning of their program of study, what the credential will say about the program from which they graduate.

Also, a college may advertise a program using language and descriptors that are different than the validated program title. In these cases, it is mandatory that somewhere in the description of the program, the validated/approved title appears to ensure that the potential student, program applicant, graduate employer, or others have complete knowledge of the program under consideration or being taken.

SYSTEM-WIDE TITLING CONSIDERATIONS

1. **Heads of Technology (in place since March 1993)**:

Level of Study
Certificate- level programs: defined by use of the term *Techniques*
Diploma- level programs: defined by use of the term *Technician*
Advanced Diploma- level programs: defined by the term *Technology*
Graduate Certificate- level programs: no direction or protocol

Pre-programs (**Pre-Technology (44702)**):
- Technology Foundations (44704)
- Technology Fundamentals
- Trade Fundamentals

2. **Heads of Business (in place since May 27, 1988):**

Level of Study
Certificate-level programs: see below
Diploma-level programs: *Business*- plus some with *modifiers*
Advanced Diploma-level programs: *Business Administration*- plus some with *modifiers*
Graduate Certificate-level programs: *Business Management*- plus some with *modifiers*

Pre-programs:
- Pre-Business (40205)
- Business Fundamentals (40208)
- Business Foundations (40214)

3. **Heads of Hospitality and Tourism (in place since June 21, 2005):**

Core Area of Study	Level of Study	(hyphen)	Specialization
Tourism Hospitality Culinary Baking	1st level (certificate) = Skills/Operations/Techniques *2nd level (diploma) = Management *3rd level (advanced diploma) = Administration	(-)	Specific field of study undertaken within the core area

Does not apply to Tourism and Hospitality.

Examples:
- Culinary Skills
- Baking Techniques

TITLING PROCESS- ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

	Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (CAAT)	Credential Validation Service (CVS)	MCURES - Program Standards Unit (PSU)	MCURES – College Unit (CU)
Legislative and Governance Framework	Minister's Binding Policy Directive – Framework for Programs of Instruction The Board of Governors is responsible for approving programs of instruction, consistent with requirements outlined in the Framework for Programs of Instruction, including: • Ensuring that all new and modified postsecondary programs of instruction conform to the Credentials Framework and are consistent with accepted college system nomenclature / program titling protocols. • Ensuring that programs of instruction are developed and implemented consistent	Minister's Binding Policy Directive – Framework for Programs of Instruction Colleges are to establish a system-wide credentials validation service that will provide reasonable assurance that all postsecondary programs of instruction offered by colleges, regardless of funding source, conform to the Credentials Framework and are consistent with accepted college system nomenclature/program titling protocols.	Minister's Binding Policy Directive – Framework for Programs of Instruction The Ministry is responsible for developing, reviewing, and approving program standards in consultation with the colleges and external stakeholders.	Minister's Binding Policy Directive – Funding Approval of Programs of Instruction The Ministry is responsible for: • Developing operating procedures to facilitate colleges of applied arts and technology to request funding for postsecondary programs of instruction. • Approving for funding those programs of instruction that meet or exceed the criteria established by the Minister.

	with provincial standards where they exist. • All advertising and marketing of college programs must reflect transparency and accuracy. The Framework for Programs of Instruction applies to all programs, regardless of funding source.			
New programs and modifications	Board of Governors approves program titles for new and modified programs of instruction after the College has received validation from CVS.	CVS validates postsecondary program titles for new and modified programs of instruction before Board of Governors approval of college programs.	N/A	The Ministry reviews program titling as an element of the program funding approval criteria. Program title approval is formalized through the program funding approval letter.
Standards	Board of Governors is responsible for ensuring that programs of instruction are developed and implemented consistent with provincial standards where they exist.	CVS validates program vocational learning outcomes and comments on postsecondary program titles as part of the program standard development and review process once	The Ministry is responsible for the development, review, and approval of provincial program standards including vocational learning outcomes, essential employability skills and	The Ministry releases published program standards to colleges. The Ministry monitors confirmation of implementation of provincial

| | | recommendation is prepared by MCURES – (PSU).

Where a program standard exists, this becomes a major factor in the validating of program titles for proposed programs of instruction. | general education requirements and program standard titles.

Works to ensure that appropriate titles are developed during the program standard development and review process (includes industry/ professional/occupational input and consideration of titling principles and protocols for CVS). | program standards from colleges.

The Ministry coordinates the review and decisions of college appeals of program standards, including title appeals. |