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| **Procedure Title:** | Applied Degree Quality Assurance |
| **Procedure ID:** | #OP 2-213I |
| **Manual Classification:** | Section 2 – Academic Affairs |
| **Linked to Policy:** | #2-213 |
| **Approved by Senior Management Team (SMT):** | October 22, 2024 |
| **Effective Date:** | November 1, 2024 |
| **Next Review Date:** | October 1, 2027 |
| **Contact for Procedure Interpretation:** | Executive Vice President, Academic Experience |

**1.0 – Purpose**

The purpose of this procedure is to establish a structured and transparent framework for the systematic development, renewal, and modification of applied degree programs, ensuring adherence to the standards determined by the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB).

Terms not defined in this Procedure have the same meaning found in the Program Quality Assurance Policy.

**2.0 – Definitions and Acronyms**

**Academic Planning Cycle:** an itemized list of key steps toward the implementation and delivery of program curriculum, faculty workloads, scheduling and timetabling including initiation and completion dates for each process. Dates for each semester within the Academic Year are provided.

**Annual Applied Degree Review (AADR)**: is a process where under the guidance of the program coordinator (or designate), the program team completes curriculum mapping, a reflective report, and a program improvement plan.

**Applied Degree Review**: ensures that the established PEQAB (Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board) standards have been achieved and/or exceeded. Applied Degree review occurs either annually or through renewal every 6 years. The process and instructions for program review are articulated and described in the *Program Review Framework* document.

**Board of Governors (BoG)**: The authority to govern Sir Sandford Fleming College is given to the Board of Governors through the Ontario College of Applied Arts and Technology Act, 2002, Ontario Regulation 34/03, Ministry Binding Policy Directives, and further outlined in the Board of Governors Bylaw 1.

**Business Case:** Proposal detailing the program to serve the needs of the Board of Governors, Ministry of Colleges and Universities, and internal departments.

**Breadth Capacity Review:** PEQAB offers institutions the option of a full Breadth Capacity Review of the courses that comprise the non-core/Breadth curriculum of the institution. As a result, the institution is exempted from evaluation of non-core/breadth curriculum for new applied degree applications for a period of 7 years.

**College Community:** Any person who studies, teaches, conducts research at or works at, or under, the auspices of the College and includes without limitation, employees or contractors; appointees (including volunteer board members); students; visitors; and any other person while they are acting on behalf of, or at the request of the College.

**Concept Proposal:** Initial description of the idea for a new program.

**Applied Degree Renewal (ADR)**: is a comprehensive review process whereby every 6 years program information is analyzed and a reflective self-study report and an improvement plan is generated in alignment with PEQAB standards and requirements.

**Course Catalogue:** a master table within the college enterprise system that stores data for all courses offered at Fleming College. Information includes Course ID (unique number assigned to each course), course code, course name and description, hours, owner, requisites, equivalencies, components and delivery.

**Environmental scan:** is a comprehensive data collection and analysis that determines community and industry need for the program, differentiation in the market, competitors, future employment opportunities, market trends and student need/demand.

**Launch:** is the end point of new program development and is the time at which the program has registered students attending classes.

**PEQAB:** Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB): an Ontario agency that makes recommendations to the Minister of Colleges and Universities of Ontario on applications for ministerial consent under the terms of the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000 (the Act). The Board assesses degree programs against standards in the Ontario Qualifications Framework and the Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework.

**PEQAB Standards:** Degree Level Standards are determined by PEQAB and are based on the Ontario Qualifications Framework to be used as a mechanism for quality assurance. All organizations seeking Ministerial consent to offer a degree program must undergo an external assessment to determine whether the proposed program meets the PEQAB Standards and benchmarks.

**Program of Study (POS):** is the internal database which contains information related to a program by semester level, version, and delivery term with associated courses and delivery components. POS includes courses that are required for a student to achieve the relevant credential they are enrolled in.

**Program Team:** includes individuals and faculty with knowledge and expertise in the specific field, the school Academic Leadership and may include the technician/technologist.

**Program Efficacy Review (PER):** is an evidence-based tool that includes the use of both quantitative and qualitative data to inform decision making and ensure appropriate resources are allocated for programs to be created, enhanced, redesigned, maintained, or suspended.

**Program of Instruction**: A group of related courses leading to a degree, diploma or certificate awarded by the College.

**Program Review Leader (PRL):** is assigned to lead the program team to complete the applied degree review.

**Program Quality Assurance (PQA):** is the process for the ongoing formative and summative evaluation of College programs to ensure compliance with standards of provincial governing bodies. PQA promotes institutional learning and renewal, guides decision-making, engages stakeholders and supports constructive governance by the Board of Governors.

**Ministry of Colleges and Universities (MCU):** is the governing body for the Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology and oversees the development and the review of standards for programs of instruction. Each college is required to ensure that academic programming is consistent with these standards and must assist students to achieve essential outcomes.

**Applied Degree Development:** is a multi-stage development process in which a new degree program progresses from concept to launch.

**Pre-PAC:** is a group of external industry-related professionals that are invited to share their expertise, advice and guidance in new program development. If the new program proceeds to launch, the reference group members will be invited to become members of the new Program Advisory Committee.

**Pre-PAC members:** are external industry-related professionals who advise the College on new program development.

**Subject Matter Expert (SME):** is usually a faculty member that provides expertise and assists in the development of the program curriculum overview in a specific subject area or industry field. The subject matter expert may also develop courses for the new program.

**School Academic Leadership**: refers to the Dean and/or Academic Chair responsible for school curriculum.

**3.0 – Guiding Principles**

Fleming College follows a comprehensive and iterative process in developing, reviewing, and modifying applied degree programs, ensuring a dynamic lifecycle that integrates stakeholder input, aligns with industry needs, and maintains the institution's commitment to academic excellence.

**4.0 – Scope**

This procedure applies to the development, maintenance and overview of all applied degrees.

**5.0 – Operating Procedure**

**5.1 – Applied Degree Development Process**

The Academic Quality Office will maintain a Program Development handbook that includes a specific step-by-step process which all proposals for new applied degrees will follow to ensure that they are fully compliant with PEQAB guidelines and Ministry requirements.

To initiate the Applied Degree Development process, a Concept Proposal outlining the idea and rationale for the new degree is created by a Dean, Chair or faculty member. This Concept Proposal is then presented to the Program Dean, Executive Vice-President Academic Experience, Senior Management Team (SMT), and the Board of Governors for initial approval to proceed.

A Program Development Lead is assigned to the project. At this time, an environmental scan is conducted in conjunction with an internal review of additional PEQAB institutional requirements. On the basis of the business intelligence received, the Executive Vice-President Academic Experience will determine, in conjunction with the Program Dean, whether to proceed with the program proposal.

Upon approval, a Program Development Team, including the program Dean/Chair or their delegates, the Program Development Lead, Subject Matter Expert(s) and member(s) of the Learning Design and Support Team is created. This team consults with a Pre-PAC group of industry professionals and creates program specific curriculum, learning outcomes and mapping documents to include in the PEQAB application submission. If an institutional Breadth Capacity Review has been conducted, the curriculum evaluation does not need to include non-core components.

The program Dean, in consultation with the Program Development Lead, writes a Business Case, including projected costing. The program Dean presents this Business Case to the Curriculum Committee, Program Implementation Committee, the Executive Vice-President Academic Experience, SMT, and Board of Governors for approval.

Upon approval of the Business Case by the Board of Governors, applications are submitted to PEQAB for Ministerial consent to deliver the applied degree and to the Ministry of Colleges and Universities (MCU) for funding approval.

Upon receiving funding approval from MCU, all relevant information is presented to the Program Implementation Committee by the School Dean for dissemination to the relevant areas of the college.

* 1. **– Applied Degree Review**

Each academic year, every applied degree will complete the Applied Degree Review process in compliance with PEQAB standards and College requirements. Applied Degree Review takes two forms, a shorter annual process, and a comprehensive renewal which occurs every 6 years.

Applied Degrees that are not scheduled for Applied Degree Renewal with PEQAB will complete the Annual Applied Degree Review process.

* 1. – **Annual Applied Degree Review (AADR) Process**

Each spring, the Academic Quality Office will provide information regarding the Annual Applied Degree Review process to program coordinators, who serve as the program review leader as determined by the Coordinator Baseline Duties.

The Annual Applied Degree Review and associated deliverables as described in the *Program Review Framework* document, will be completed by the Program Review Leader with input from the program team and the school, as needed.

The Annual Applied Degree Review and associated deliverables will be approved by the school Dean and submitted to the Academic Quality Office by the established deadline.

The Academic Quality Office will prepare an annual ‘Applied Degree Review Report’ to be submitted to the Executive Vice President Academic Experience.

The Annual Applied Degree Review template will be reviewed annually by the Academic Quality Office and updated accordingly to ensure alignment with College priorities and PEQAB requirements.

All Annual Applied Degree Reviews will be stored centrally with the Academic Quality Office and form part of the program record.

Annual Applied Degree Review is not required during years that the program is undergoing Applied Degree Renewal.

* 1. **– Applied Degree Renewal (ADR) Process**

Applied degree programs undergo a formal renewal every 6 years as part of quality assurance processes to demonstrate continued alignment to established PEQAB standards.

The Academic Quality Office will provide orientation and training on Applied Degree Renewal to all assigned Program Review Leads at the beginning of the winter semester.

Applied Degree Renewal requires the Program Review Leader, with assistance from the Dean, Academic Chair, and program team to analyze a variety of program information and complete a self-study, providing comprehensive documentation that addresses various aspects of the program. This documentation includes information including but not limited to:

* PEQAB standards and renewal requirements;
* Program outcomes;
* Curriculum mapping;
* Student support services;
* Program Efficacy Review (PER);
* Labour market information;
* Completed AADR reports (mapping, reflections, improvement plans) from previous years;
* Program enrolment, retention and other program data
* Feedback from stakeholders: students, graduates, and employers;
* Program faculty credentials, experience, professional development

One student focus group will be facilitated to collect feedback on the student experience in the program. The student focus group will be facilitated by the Academic Chair or designate.

The Applied Degree Renewal and associated deliverables will be approved by the school Dean and submitted to the Academic Quality Office by the established deadline prior to submission of the required application to PEQAB.

PEQAB will appoint an external review team, consisting of experts in the field, to conduct an independent assessment of the applied degree program. This team evaluates the self-study documentation including program curriculum, conducts a site visit of the institution, and engages with faculty, students, and other stakeholders.

The external review team submits a report and PEQAB provides a decision regarding the renewal of the applied degree program. This decision takes into account the program's adherence to quality standards and its ongoing relevance and effectiveness.

If deficiencies and/or areas for improvement are identified, the program will be required to develop and implement a plan for program modification or improvement. This plan outlines specific actions to address the identified issues and forms part of the formal Program Improvement Plan.

The School Dean will prepare a report summarizing recommendations from the applied degree renewal process with program improvement planning, to be submitted to the Executive Vice President Academic Experience.

The Executive Vice President Academic Experience and school Dean will approve a budget and action plan to address recommendations within the program improvement plan within the upcoming Academic Planning Cycle.

The Applied Degree Renewal template will be reviewed annually by the Academic Quality Office and updated accordingly to ensure alignment with College priorities and PEQAB requirements.

All Applied Degree Renewals will be stored centrally with the Academic Quality Office and form part of the program record.

* 1. **– Criteria for Degree Modification**

Consistent with PEQAB requirements, total program change cannot exceed 30% from initial approval. Program-level changes are cumulative and may include any of the following:

* program title modification
* any changes to instructional settings
* change to # of semesters of program delivery
* change to total # of hours of program delivery
* change to program admission requirements
* change to delivery method of the program (conversion to fully online, increasing/decreasing # intakes)
* change to program learning outcomes
* change/deletion/addition of work integrated learning experience (e.g. placement/practicum, research project, co-op) within the program

The Dean of Academic Quality provides the College with the final decision regarding the determination of the level and nature of degree change.

* 1. **– Facilitating Program Modification (internal and external approval)**

After completion of the Applied Degree Review process (either annual or renewal) and approval of the program improvement plan, the program team consults with the Dean about proposed program change(s) to be made for the upcoming academic planning cycle.

The Dean consults the Academic Quality Office for direction on whether the proposed program-level changes are within the acceptable threshold determined by PEQAB, and levels of approval required.

The Dean records the proposed changes on the appropriate curriculum change form.

For program changes **not requiring** external approval by PEQAB/Ministry:

* Once the program changes have been approved by the School Dean on the curriculum change form, the form is sent to the Curriculum Committee for approval.
* After review by the Curriculum Committee, Academic Operations completes the necessary changes within the college information system, course catalogue, program of study, and curriculum verification grids as needed to conform to the Academic Planning Cycle.
* Relevant information is presented to the Program Implementation Committee by the School Dean for dissemination to the relevant areas of the college.

For program changes **requiring** external approval by PEQAB/Ministry:

* The College must notify and receive approval from PEQAB and/or the Ministry before implementing changes that exceed 30% from the initial approval documents.
* The Dean will include the appropriate curriculum change form outlining the proposed changes to the Curriculum Committee for approval.
* After approval by the Curriculum Committee, the change recommendation is submitted to receive the following approvals:
* Executive Vice-President Academic Experience
* Senior Management Team
* Board of Governors
* After the internal approvals have been received, Academic Quality Office will submit the application for a modification to PEQAB and/or the Ministry as appropriate.
* Upon notification of approved changes from the external organizations, the School Dean notifies the Program Implementation Committee for dissemination to the relevant areas of the college.
  1. **– Facilitating Course Level Change**

After completion of the applied degree review (annual or renewal) and approval of the program improvement plan, the program team consults with the school Academic Leadership about proposed program change(s) to be made for the upcoming Academic Planning Cycle.

The school Dean consults the Academic Quality Office for guidance as needed regarding the proposed program changes.

The program team records any minor changes on the ‘Curriculum Change Form’

Once the program changes have been approved by the school Dean on the “Curriculum Change Form’, the forms are sent to the Curriculum Committee for approval.

Following approval, Academic Operations completes the necessary course changes within the college information system, course catalogue, curriculum verification grids, as needed to conform to the Academic Planning Cycle.

The school Dean will notify additional stakeholders about minor changes, as appropriate:

* + - School Office
    - Office of the Registrar
    - Academic Operations
    - Student Recruitment
    - Communications and Marketing
    - Financial Aid
    - Finance
    - IT Services
    - International Student Office
    - Academic Quality Office

**5.8 – Roles and Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of the **Board of Governors** to approve or deny development and/or modification of applied degrees.

It is the responsibility of the **Senior Management Team** to approve or deny development and/or modification of applied degrees and ensure that the Program Quality Assurance Policy and the Applied Degree Quality Assurance Procedure are fully implemented.

It is the responsibility of the **Executive Vice-President Academic Experience** to oversee the implementation of the Program Quality Assurance Policy and the Applied Degree Quality Assurance Procedure, and to report to the Senior Management Team on this implementation as necessary.

It is the responsibility of the **school Dean** in conjunction with the **Academic Quality Office** to ensure that each program is in compliance with the appropriate PEQAB requirements regarding development, renewal and modification of applied degrees.

It is the responsibility of each **program team** to complete Applied Degree Review, identify and record changes in the program and/or course(s).

**6.0 – Related Documents**

* Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act
* PEQAB Manual
* College Policy #2-220: Quality Assurance Policy
* College Policy #2-213: Program Quality Assurance
* Program Implementation Committee Terms of Reference
* Curriculum Committee Terms of Reference

**7.0 – History of Amendments & Reviews**

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| **Date Approved** | **Approved By** | **List of Approved Amendments / Review** |
| October 22, 2024 | SMT | NEW |