

<b>Policy Title:</b>	<b>ACADEMIC PROGRAM QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEWS</b>	<b>Area of Responsibility:</b> <b>PRESIDENT</b>
<b>Policy Section:</b>	<b>ACADEMIC</b>	<b>Policy No: 9.3 (Former 1.6.2)</b>
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<b>Mandatory Review Date:</b>	<b>2030 11 27</b>	<b>Page: 1 of 12</b>
		<b>Last Review Date: 2025 11 27</b>

## 9.3 ACADEMIC PROGRAM QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEWS

### Preamble

1. The Minister's Binding Policy Directive issued under the Ministry of Colleges and Universities Research Excellence and Security (MCURES) clearly establishes that quality assurance is a responsibility of every college. Under that Directive, **"Colleges are to establish mechanisms for the review of their programs of instruction to ensure ongoing quality, relevancy and currency."** (Section F. 1 of the Framework for Programs of Instruction).
2. The essential function of the program review process is to provide a method for ongoing quality improvement in the design, development and delivery of curriculum to our learners. By ensuring quality assurance reviews, the College participates in evidence- based decision- making and promotes accountability for the quality of academic programming.
3. The quality assurance review process is designed to articulate with and support the College Quality Assurance Audit Process (CQAAP) of the Ontario College Quality Assurance Service (OCQAS) and the criteria and procedures for Ontario Colleges of the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB).
4. Quality assurance reviews ensure the health and vibrancy of academic programsby:
  - assessing curriculum in a program of study for compliance with ministry requirements and outcome-based education principles
  - comparing curriculum in a program of study with professional, business, industrial, or community standards and needs
  - examining the financial viability and efficiency of the programs
  - evaluating feedback from the various stakeholders of the programs, especially of students, graduates and employers
  - assessing a variety of performance indicators and other data relating to the program and its historical operation.

**Extent of Application**

5. This policy and its accompanying procedures and templates apply to all members of the College community who are responsible for, or involved in, the delivery of academic programs that must conform to the Framework for Programs of Instruction contained in the Minister's Binding Policy Directive issued by the Minister of Colleges and Universities Research Excellence and Security (MCURES). This policy, therefore, includes the traditional academic programs offered through the College's post-secondary academic schools as well as those programs offered through any St. Clair College department that are credentialed and approved through the Ministry and approved through the College's Board of Governors such as the Continuing Education department.

**Variations from this Policy**

6. This policy is intended to establish the broad basis for Quality Assurance reviews of academic programs. Specific components of the policy implementation and application may vary or develop additional components or requirements as the processes mature over time. These components include the Centre for Academic Excellence and Quality Assurance (CAE) protocols or processes to be followed as well as templates and directives of the Academic Sector. Additions, modifications or deletions to the actual processes or practices must be approved by the Senior Vice President, Academic and the Executive Director, Academic Excellence, Quality Assurance, and Accountability, with final approval by Senior Operations Group following the regular policy review and revision process. St. Clair College's Quality Assurance Framework is illustrated in Appendix A.

**Academic Quality Assurance Program Review Processes**

7. All academic programs at the College will complete the review of the program curriculum and their review of program-related data on an annual basis.
8. In addition, all academic programs at the college will complete the comprehensive, Cyclical Quality Assurance Review of the currency and relevancy of its curriculum within a time period no greater than five years. This comprehensive cyclical and/or ongoing review will focus on the currency and relevance of the program curriculum and its compliance with outcome-based education and ministry requirements.
9. All academic programs at the College will complete regular reviews (annually) of program curriculum and its delivery based on their own professional assessment; on the feedback obtained from student focus groups; on the advice of the Program Advisory Committee; or on feedback obtained from some other appropriate community agency or accrediting body.
10. Program Impact Review will be conducted for every program on annual basis and the results will be analyzed within the Annual Review process. This review ensures that program decisions are made taking into consideration a broad set of criteria while having insight into program sustainability and/or potential concerns that may need to be addressed.

**Regular Annual Review of Program-Related Data**

11. The Annual Review of Program-Related Data (referred as Annual Review in the rest of this policy) shall consist of such items as historical numbers of applications and registrations in the program, attrition/retention rates for the program, grade ranges by course, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), Ontario College Student Experience Surveys (OCSES) for the program, course feedback by students (IFSs), program costing, a number of other qualitative and quantitative data as outlined in the Annual Review Final Report and Action Plan template. In special circumstances, the Senior Operations Group (SOG) may request additional data to be included as part of the Annual Review.

12. Program related data for Annual Reviews will be generated and collated by the IDEA office and the Centre for Academic Excellence and Quality Assurance (CAE). The CAE will assist with making the program-related data available to the program teams by uploading the templates to the Action Plan Database and providing relevant training.
13. The Lead for the Annual Review will typically be the current Program Coordinator, but the School Chair may designate a different faculty member as the review Lead for the purpose of conducting the Annual Review Process.
14. In addition to program-related data, the Annual Review Lead and program faculty (the program team), will review the program curriculum and its delivery, when necessary, based on triggers from program-related data.
15. After reviewing and analyzing the program-related data, the Annual Review Lead and program faculty (the program team) will develop any appropriate action plans including proposed modifications to the curriculum or its delivery and detail the action plans on the Annual Review Final Report and Action Plan template.
16. If data analysis indicates a decreasing trend three years in a row in any of the data categories that are part of the Annual Review, the Impact Review section of the report must be completed, and an action item must be created to forward the Annual Review to the College Program Assessment Committee (CPAC) for an Impact Review. CPAC's review and/or recommendations are to be forwarded to the Senior Operations Group (SOG) for review and final decision. The results of the Impact Review process could lead to a temporary intake suspension, full suspension, or cancelation. Details of these processes are outlined later in this policy and protocol.
17. The resulting review and action plan must be reviewed and endorsed by the School Chair who will provide feedback to the Annual Internal Review Lead and program faculty (the program team) on the feasibility of any proposed action plan.
18. The responsibility for ensuring the completion of the Annual Internal Review process resides with the School Chair who shall ensure that the review is completed according to communicated deadlines and that the action plan is realistic and feasible.
19. The School Chair is responsible to ensure that the action plan is implemented before the next annual internal review of program-related data.
20. The Annual Internal Review of program data is part of the professional responsibility of the faculty members teaching in the program and is required to be completed each year the last week of June of the same academic year as the review.
21. The Annual Review Final Report and Action plan must be completed by the program chair by the end of August of the same academic year as the review.
22. The due date for all action items resulting from the annual review will be in the Spring semester one year from the completion of the Annual Review.
23. Action items noted on the Annual Internal Review will be audited on completion on the Annual Review Final Report and Action Plan template.

**Cyclical Quality Assurance Review of Program Curriculum**

24. The Cyclical Quality Assurance Review of Program Curriculum (referred to as the Cyclical Review in the rest of this policy) and its compliance with outcome-based education requirements and ministry compliance shall take place for each program at least once every five years according to a rotation developed by the Executive Director, Academic Excellence, Quality Assurance, and Accountability and the Senior Vice President, Academic and Career Supports with input by the School Chairs.
25. School Chairs, in consultation with the Senior Vice President, Academic and Career Supports and the Executive Director, Academic Excellence, Quality Assurance, and Accountability may determine that a particular academic program should undergo a Cyclical Review based on special circumstances, for example based on concerning data from the Annual Review, Impact Review, PAC, or other triggers, in which case, the five year cycle of reviews shall be adjusted to reflect this out-of-sequence review.
26. The Cyclical Review shall consist of the following components that must be facilitated by the Centre for Academic Excellence and Quality Assurance (CAE):
  - i. A review of the occupational relevancy of the program curriculum conducted by industry or community experts to determine whether graduates from the program have the appropriate knowledge and skills for employment in the program's profession or trade. This review also includes the program title, admission requirements, pre/corequisites, Essential Employability Skills (EESs), in addition to the course outlines.
  - ii. Input by means of surveys and/or focus groups from current students, graduates, employers, and other stakeholders as determined by the program team.
  - iii. A review by the Cyclical Review Lead and faculty (the program team) of the program title and the currency and relevance of the vocational learning outcomes (VLOs) for the program and the consequent updating and revision of those vocational learning outcomes.
  - iv. A review by the Cyclical Review Lead and program faculty (the program team) of the currency of the course outlines for the courses that are delivered in the program, pre/co-requisites, and the compliance of the program course outlines with outcome-based education and college policy and practices.
  - v. The mapping of the course learning outcomes to the program vocational learning outcomes, mapping of assessment to course learning outcomes (CLOs) and Essential Employability Skills (EESs), as well as the compliance of the program to requirements relating to general education, Essential Employability Skills (EESs) outcomes, capstone assessment, Experiential Learning (EL) requirements, and teaching and learning activities.
27. The responsibility for ensuring the completion of the Cyclical Reviews resides with the School Chair with assistance and advice provided by the Centre for Academic Excellence and Quality Assurance.
28. The Cyclical Review process is facilitated by the Centre for Academic Excellence and Quality Assurance (CAE) which provides, training, resources and templates required for successful completion of the review as well as conducts detailed mapping analysis, pre/corequisite validation, moderates meetings, and generates the final report and action plan. The CAE guides, monitors and tracks progress on each phase of the review and provides regular updates to the President and the Academic Sector.

29. The Lead for the Cyclical Review will typically be the current Program Coordinator, but the School Chair may designate a different faculty member as the Review Lead for the purpose of conducting the Cyclical Review processes.
30. The Cyclical Review Final Report and Action Plan template will include any action items generated from the Cyclical Review will be uploaded on the Action Plan database from the Centre for Academic Excellence and Quality Assurance. The responsibility for monitoring and completing action items resides with the School Chair and program faculty.
31. The due date for all action items resulting from the cyclical review will be in the Spring semester one year from the completion of the Cyclical Review.
32. Action items noted on the Cyclical Review will be audited on completion on the Cyclical Review Final Report and Action Plan template.

### **Exceptions to Requirement for a Cyclical Review**

33. Where an existing, mandated process for external certification already exists, the program Coordinator may request and School Chair/Dean may recommend to the Executive Director, Academic Excellence, Quality Assurance, and Accountability, that the results of the certification process would meet some or all of the requirements for a Cyclical Quality Assurance review of the program curriculum.
34. On the recommendation of the Executive Director, Academic Excellence, Quality Assurance, and Accountability and with the approval of the Senior Vice President, Academic and Career Supports, an academic program with a mandated accreditation process will not need to engage in a full Cyclical Review. However, the accredited program must still complete all the other phases of the Cyclical Review.

### **Regular Annual Review of Program Curriculum**

35. Each academic year (or, in some cases, with the approval of the Senior Vice President, Academic and Career Supports, at some other more appropriate time) faculty review the program curriculum and its delivery as part of their teaching assignment and determine necessary changes for the purpose of enhancing the quality of the program curriculum and to prepare the curriculum for its delivery in the next academic year.
36. These changes in the curriculum can range from minor changes to course outlines that only require the approval of the Centre for Academic Excellence and Quality Assurance to more significant changes that may result in changes to the Program Curriculum Chart which requires the approval of the School Chair, CAE Curriculum Coordinator, the Executive Director, Academic Excellence, Quality Assurance and Accountability, the Senior Vice President, Academic and Career Supports and the Registrar.
37. Minor changes when approved will modify the curriculum for the upcoming or current academic year; while more significant changes involving many Program Curriculum Chart changes will not come into effect until the following academic year. What is considered to be minor or major modifications to the curriculum is the responsibility of the Centre for Academic Excellence and Quality Assurance (CAE). Any exceptions to the time frame for implementation of the modifications must be recommended by the Centre for Academic Excellence and Quality Assurance and approved by the Senior Vice President, Academic and Career Supports.

38. The impetus, motivation or basis for modifications to the curriculum may arise from any or all of the following sources:
- The professional opinion and experience of the faculty member or faculty team.
  - Feedback from students obtained through the Instructional Feedback Survey or Student Focus Group or in some other appropriate manner.
  - Recommendations of the Program Advisory Committee.
  - Feedback from industry or professional agencies related to the program area.
  - Information from similar programs being offered at other educational institutions.
  - Feedback from a program's accrediting agency, if any.
  - Feedback from the ministry.

### **Program Probation, Intake Suspension, Suspension, Cancellation, and Reactivation**

39. The goal of review mechanisms outlined in previous sections is to analyze and assess the current "health" of a program through the different lenses of performance, impact on identified metrics and quality curriculum.
40. Where an academic program is encountering indications that its viability or sustainability is in question, it is appropriate to analyze and assess the causes of such a situation and whether or not there are measures that could be taken to revive or resuscitate the health and vigor of the program. St. Clair College is committed to ensuring that all of its programs are supported in every possible way to ensure that the economic, social and employment needs of the community are met while at the same time ensuring that a program that no longer meets those needs is brought to a compassionate and considered end without significant disruption in the human and other resources of the College.
41. All post-secondary academic programs at St. Clair College shall be subject to review by the College Program Assessment Committee (CPAC) on the basis of the sustainability, viability or practicality of continuation as an active academic program.
42. Programs for which quality assurance reviews speak to concerning data and need rectifying actions are referred to CPAC annually based on the criteria outlined in the Impact Review section of the Annual Review process.
43. The Senior Vice President, Academic and Career Supports and the appropriate Chair will arrange for completion of the Impact Review template and any other relevant documentation to be prepared and forwarded to CPAC for review.
44. The Senior Operations Group (SOG) may forward programs to CPAC outside of the regular Annual Review cycle, noting the program concerns for independent review by CPAC. These concerns may trigger probation, intake suspension, suspension, or cancellation of the program.
45. Annual intakes will be formalized as part of the College's Enrolment Plan. Intake suspensions, for a particular semester, may be made based on applicant interest, or lack thereof, as part of the ongoing "Admissions/Registration Process" for the specific academic year. All intake suspensions will be approved by SOG and forwarded to CPAC.
46. The College Program Assessment Committee (CPAC) will be tasked with reviewing the program(s) and recommending appropriate remedial steps to the Senior Operations Group (SOG) (see Appendix B).

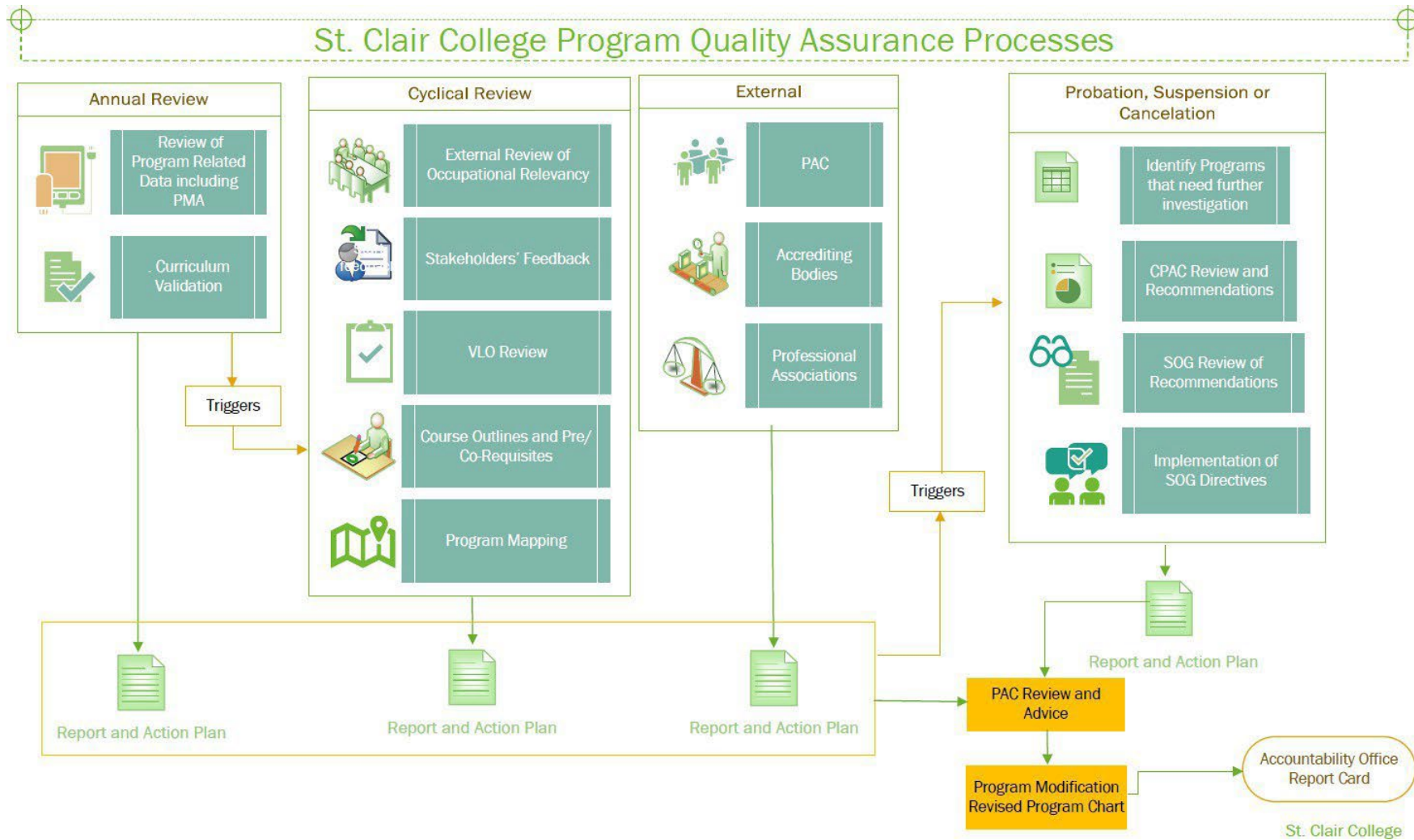
47. CPAC will review the relevant data relating to the identified program and make a decision in the form of a recommendation to the Senior Operations Group for one of the following conclusions:
- a. The program should be placed on a probationary status for one to three years to develop and implement a plan to address the identified issues. The Chair should be involved in the development of such a plan and responsible for its implementation and monitoring of its progress.
  - b. The program intake should be suspended for one to three years to develop and implement a plan to address the identified issues. The Chair should be involved in the development of such a plan and responsible for its implementation and monitoring of its progress.
  - c. The program should be suspended or cancelled either immediately or within a designated time frame of less than one year. The Chair should lead the development of a plan for the suspension or cancellation of the program which will encompass looking after the interests of students who are enrolled in the program as well as dealing with the disposition of any assets exclusively devoted to the program and the re-training and/or reassignment of faculty teaching in the program to other programs.
  - d. Where other benefits acceptable to the College will outweigh the impact risk(s), the determination would be to maintain the status quo.
48. All plans developed for the probation, intake suspension, suspension, cancellation, or reactivation of a program must be approved by the Senior Operations Group before implementation.
49. After SOG decision on CPAC's recommendations, the program Chair in collaboration with the program team will create action plans for addressing the program concerns. Any action plans will be inputted in the Action Plan Database by the CAE under a separate category noted as Impact Review. The School Chair is responsible for ensuring that the action plan is implemented as per determined deadlines.
50. In every case, a program that has been reviewed on the basis of its impact by CPAC and has had a plan approved by the Senior Operations Group regarding its impact, the program's status must be reviewed by CPAC at the end of the relevant designated time period to develop a final report and/or recommendation to the Senior Operations Group on the continued operation or intake suspension, suspension, cancellation, or reactivation of the program.
51. CPAC will provide an annual report to SOG about the progress status of Impact Review action plans.
52. The process of reactivation of a program that has gone through intake suspension, suspension, or cancellation follows the same process identified in sections above. The process starts with the School Chair and program faculty analyzing program related data through the Annual Review process. An Action Item must be created to forward the reactivation request to CPAC, and CPAC will make the recommendations to SOG.
53. If major modifications are required before program reactivation, the process for program modification outlined in Policy 9.8 – Academic Program Modification, must be followed.
54. The final decision to reactivate and when to reactive a program rests with SOG.

55. Program suspensions, cancelations, and reactivations that involve the Ministry, must receive Board of Governors (BOG) approval before submitting to the Ministry.

**Protocols, Guidelines and Templates**

56. For further information relating to the details of the Annual Review of Program-Related data including Impact Reviews, the various components of the Cyclical Quality Assurance Review of Curriculum, course outline and curriculum modifications, and program suspension and cancelations please see the appropriate CAE protocols, guidelines and templates approved for current use by the Quality Assurance Panel and the Senior Operations Group. The current, approved protocols, guidelines and templates are available from the Centre for Academic Excellence and Quality Assurance.



**Appendix A - OA Review Processes and Relationships**

## Appendix B

### Protocol for Program Suspension and Cancellation



**ST. CLAIR**  
COLLEGE

**Centre for Academic Excellence &  
Quality Assurance**

## Protocol for Program Suspension and Cancellation

EFFECTIVE DATE:	May 2023	REVIEW DATE:	March 2025
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RESPONSIBLE DEPT	CAEQA, ACADEMIC
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### PREAMBLE

As per our *Quality Assurance of Academic Programs Policy 9.3 (former 1.6.2)* and Ministry's *Program Suspension and Cancellation: Operating Procedure*, academic programs need to regularly assess to determine their relevancy, viability and sustainability. If the review results in recommendations to alter the status of a program, the College is required to follow a process to inform the Ministry of changes to their program offerings. The following protocol outlines the process and necessary requirements involved when a program has been suspended or cancelled.

### ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITY

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITY
Program Chair/Team	Participate in annual program reviews. Develop, implement and monitor plans for program probation, suspension and termination based on recommendation of CPAC and approval of the SOG
College Program Assessment Committee (CPAC)	Conduct review of all academic programs on the basis of sustainability, viability or practicality of continuation. Review data related to identified program and develop recommendation to SOG regarding status of program (probation, suspension or cancellation).
Senior Vice President, Academic	Along with Chairs and the Executive Director, Academic Excellence, Quality Assurance, and Accountability – Establish a system of benchmarks that will be used to identify academic programs whose sustainability or viability are of concern.
Senior Operations Group (SOG)	Approves plans for suspension or cancellation of a program.
Board of Governors	Approve all programs of instruction that a college will suspend or cancel Inform Ministry of decision to suspend or cancel any Ministry funded program offered by college Ensure students enrolled in the suspended or cancelled programs have opportunity to complete within normal time period at the college or, under special circumstances, assist students to become enrolled in same program offered by another college
Centre for Academic Excellence and Quality Assurance (CAE)	Acts as a liaison with the ministry, submits status of program via PFAAM. Provides support with quality assurance process that could trigger an Impact Review.
Registrar's Office (RO)	Handles student notifications and other relevant processes related to program suspension and cancellation.

### KEYWORDS AND DEFINITIONS

KEYWORD	DEFINITION
APS Number	Approved program sequence number – Unique five-digit number assigned to an approved program by Credentials Validation service and used for enrollment reporting to the Ministry
Cancelled Program	A program the college is no longer offering, and no students are enrolled
Dormant Program	A program approved for funding that has never been delivered or; not been delivered for more than five years and has not been reported to the Ministry as cancelled

<b>Suspended Program</b>	A program that the college has decided not to admit first year or beginning level students into
<b>Ministry Code</b>	A five-digit number assigned by the Ministry to postsecondary programs and used to identify the provincial program category to which the program is assigned

### PROCESS FOR IDENTIFYING PROGRAMS FOR SUSPENSION AND CANCELLATION

1. Impact Review is conducted as part of the Annual Review process each year in May/June to determine academic program sustainability, viability or practicality of continuation as an active academic program using measurement of established benchmarks.
2. This process identifies programs that will be subject to review by CPAC.
3. SOG may identify program concerns that may trigger probation, intake suspension, suspension, or cancellation and need a review by CPAC outside of the Annual Review schedule.
4. The Senior Vice President, Academic and the appropriate Chair will arrange all relevant data as outlined in Policy 9.3 to be forwarded to CPAC for review.
5. Based on review, CPAC will form a recommendation to the Senior Operations Group for one of the following:
  - a. Program placed on probation for one to three years to develop and implement a plan to address the identified issues.
  - b. Program Intake suspension for one to three years.
  - c. Program should be suspended or cancelled immediately or with a time frame of less than one year.
  - d. Program maintains status quo if the benefits outweigh the risk(s).
6. Based on the decision of the SOG, appropriate Chair will be involved in developing a plan for program probation, intake suspension, suspension or cancellation. These plans need to be approved by SOG and monitored by Chair during implementation.
7. The CAE uploads the Action Plans on the Action Plan Database.
8. CPAC reviews the status of the program at the end of the relevant designated time period (5a, 5b, 5c, 5d) and develops a final report with recommendations to SOG on the future of the program (termination or cancellation).
9. CPAC provides an annual report to SOG on the progress status of Impact Review action plans.
10. The School Chair will inform the faculty and the Marketing department of intake suspension, suspension or cancellation.
11. Full program suspensions and cancellations are presented at BOG for approval before submitting to the Ministry.

### MINISTRY REQUIREMENTS

#### Notifying Ministry

12. Upon decision to suspend or cancel a program, the College will inform the Ministry via PFAAM or email signed by the College President. The CAE will facilitate this process. The following information is relevant:
  - Program title, Ministry code and APS number of the program
  - Effective date of suspension (date after which first year applicants will no longer be accepted) or:
  - Effective date of cancellation (date after which students will no longer be enrolled at any level)
  - Name, title, and contact information of the college employee who may be contacted about suspension and/or suspension

#### Acknowledgement from the Ministry

13. Ministry will respond to College President with a letter acknowledging the suspension or cancellation and indicating the amendments that will be made in the approved programs list.
14. The Ministry will also inform colleges of their decision to suspend or cancel programs in the quarterly program memorandum.

#### Re-activate a Suspended Program

15. Upon approval by the Board of Governors to resume student intake to a program that has been suspended for less than five years, the College will notify the Ministry via PFAAM or email signed by the college President.
16. The Ministry will respond to notification by sending letter to College President acknowledging change in program status and amend the program list.

### **Cancellation of Dormant Programs**

17. The Ministry will review program lists at regular intervals to identify programs that have been dormant or suspended for five years or more.
18. A list of programs identified for automatic cancellation will be sent to College President.
19. The College has thirty days to notify the Ministry of changes to the status of a program on the list. The CAE will facilitate this process via PFAAM or email.
20. The programs that have not been identified as still active be cancelled and changes will be included in the quarterly program memorandum.
21. Any program that has been cancelled will require a new funding approval application submitted to the Ministry if the college wishes to offer the program in the future.

**Note:** *Program suspensions and cancellations are used by Ministry to prepare the program lists used in the audit of enrolment. Students enrolled in programs identified as cancelled will not be counted for funding calculations.*

### **REQUIRED TIMELINES**

1. College Program Assessment Committee – all submissions for consideration by CPAC must be submitted by September 30<sup>th</sup> of the same calendar year as the Annual Review. Submissions outside the Annual Review must be sent to CPAC Chair a minimum of one (1) week prior to the next scheduled CPAC meeting. Ad-Hoc CPAC meetings may be scheduled to accommodate the review of impacted programs.
2. SOG - CPAC recommendations are due to SOG by the first week of December of the same calendar year as the Annual Review.
3. Action Plan Creation – Impact Review action plan creation is due by February 1<sup>st</sup> of the next calendar year from the Annual Review.
4. Board of Governor Approval – all procedural steps in this protocol are required to be completed prior to receiving BOG final approval.

### **PROTOCOL REVIEW PROCEDURE AND TIMELINE**

Unless extenuating circumstances require, this protocol in junction with the corresponding policy will be reviewed in accordance with Policy 2.17 – Quality Assurance Review of College Policies and the CAE Protocol for Protocol Review timeline.

### **FORMS & REFERENCES**

List any referable source material, policy, manuals, forms etc.

College Program Assessment Committee 9.6 (Former 1.6.23)  
Quality Assurance Reviews of Academic Programs 9.3 (Former 1.6.2)  
Minister's Binding Policy Operating Procedure: Program Suspension and Cancellation Operating Procedure, 2007  
Annual Review Template  
Impact Review Template