

AC410: Program Quality

Policy Title:	Program Quality
Policy Number:	AC410
Owner:	Sr. Vice President, Academic and Student Success
Approved by:	Senior Leadership Team
Effective Date:	September 2026
Reference:	Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities (MCU) requirements; Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB); Ontario Credentials Framework
See also:	New Program Development Program Curriculum Program Review Suspension and Cancellation

St. Lawrence College is committed to making our resources fully accessible to all persons. This document will be made available in alternative format upon request.

BACKGROUND

Definitions:

Term	Definition
Annual Program Review	An annual part of the Program Review process that is used as a self-assessment tool to report on institutional quality assurance priorities.
Board of Governors (BOG)	The governing body responsible for overseeing the institution's strategic direction, financial health, and policy decisions, ensuring accountability to the public and alignment with requirements set by the Ontario Ministry of Colleges, University, Research Excellence, and Security.

Term	Definition
Comprehensive Program Review and Renewal	A formal, cyclical evaluation process to assess a program's quality, relevance, and performance, leading to recommendations for program modification to ensure alignment with institutional goals and standards set by the Ontario Ministry of Colleges, University, Research Excellence, and Security.
College Quality Assurance Process (QCAAP)	The external audit process for reviewing Ontario colleges' quality assurance systems to ensure their program development, review, and delivery practices meet provincial standards and expectations.
Ministry of Colleges, University, Research Excellence, and Security (MCURES)	The Ontario government ministry that is responsible for overseeing postsecondary education, including colleges and universities, as well as policies related to research, innovation, and system quality and accountability.
Minister's Binding Policy Directive	A formal policy issued by MCURES that sets mandatory requirements for how Ontario colleges develop, deliver, review, and maintain their programs, ensuring consistency, quality, and accountability across the system.
Ontario Qualifications Framework (OQF)	A provincial framework that classifies and describes all levels of postsecondary credentials in Ontario based on expected learning outcomes, helping ensure consistency, quality, and comparability across programs and institutions.

Term	Definition
Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB)	An arm's-length advisory body that reviews and evaluates applications for new degree programs and institutions in Ontario, providing recommendations to the Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities to ensure they meet established quality standards.
Program	A group of related courses leading to one of the following credentials: Ontario College Certificates, Ontario Certificate of Apprenticeship, Diplomas, Advanced Diplomas, Graduate Certificates, and Degrees.
Program Advisory Committee (PAC)	A group of industry professionals, employers, and alumni who provide guidance on a college program or cluster of college programs to ensure relevancy and alignment with workforce needs.
Program Enhancement	The process of improving an existing program which is based on findings from program reviews and changes to provincial standards set by the Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities. It ensures programs remain current, effective, and aligned with quality assurance expectations.
Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) Process	Strategic Enrollment Management is a data-driven process to align institutional goals with student success, focusing on recruitment, retention, and program relevance.

Term	Definition
Program Quality	The extent to which a program meets established internal and external standards, remains current and relevant, and supports positive student, graduate, and partner outcomes throughout the lifecycle of the program.
Quality Assurance Mechanisms	Formal processes that are executed consistently to monitor, evaluate, and improve program quality. This may include an annual program review, cyclical comprehensive program review and renewal, program enhancement, external accreditation, and PAC consultation to maximize student success and employment preparation.

Purpose:

St. Lawrence College is committed to maintaining the quality of its academic programs through an integrated system of governance, quality assurance, and continuous improvement activities spanning the full program lifecycle — from development and approval to ongoing monitoring, review, renewal, and, where necessary, suspension or cancellation.

This policy consolidates the College’s program quality framework into a single governance document that defines expectations for program oversight, accountability, and continuous improvement while ensuring compliance with Ministry requirements and quality assurance standards.

Scope:

This policy applies to all Ontario College Certificate, Diploma, Advanced Diploma, Graduate Certificate, and Degree programs developed, delivered, or credentialed by St. Lawrence College, including programs offered across multiple campuses, delivery modes, and Indigenous or international partnership agreements.

Where programs are subject to external accreditation or regulatory requirements, including Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board consent renewal, the quality assurance requirements outlined in this policy apply in conjunction with applicable external standards.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Roles	Responsibilities
President & CEO	Accountable to the Board of Governors for the overall effectiveness of the academic quality assurance system Promotes a culture of continuous improvement, evidence-based decision-making, and academic integrity
Sr. VP Academic and Student Success	Ensures that institutional policies, processes, and resources support effective program quality assurance Oversees institutional compliance with quality assurance bodies and coordinate external reviews, audits, and validations
Dean and Associate Deans	Supports faculty engagement in curriculum development and delivery, assessment practices, and continuous improvement activities Monitors program performance indicators, student outcomes, and feedback to identify strengths, risks, and areas for improvement Ensures that action plans arising from program reviews, audits, or quality assessments are implemented and evaluated

Roles	Responsibilities
QA Department	Leads quality assurance processes and initiatives to maintain currency and relevancy of programs throughout their lifecycle Reviews and revises mechanisms for managing and regulating program quality to ensure compliance with relevant provincial, college and accreditation requirements, and maximize student success and employment preparation Supports college community to ensure quality assurance processes are executed consistently
Faculty	Designs and delivers curriculum that aligns with approved program learning outcomes and credential standards Develops and applies valid, fair, and transparent assessment practices that support student learning Participates actively in program development, review, renewal, and improvement processes Engages in ongoing reflection, professional development, and scholarly or industry-informed practice to maintain curriculum relevance and quality

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. The College will maintain an integrated program lifecycle framework to govern program quality, including new program development and approval, annual quality monitoring, cyclical program review, and program sustainability decision-making.

2. All new programs must undergo a formal viability assessment, development, and approval process to ensure alignment with institutional priorities, labour market needs, the Minister's Binding Policy Directive, the Ontario Qualifications Framework, and, where applicable, PEQAB standards for degree programs.
3. All programs must participate in annual quality monitoring activities – including the completion of an annual program review and the hosting of an annual PAC meeting – to assess program performance, identify opportunities for improvement, and monitor progress on continuous improvement actions.
4. All programs must undergo a comprehensive cyclical program review in accordance with Ministry and quality assurance requirements. Programs subject to external accreditation will complete a modified review process to address institutional requirements not covered through accreditation. Program reviews must result in recommendations and action plans to ensure programs remain current, relevant, responsive, and aligned with quality standards. Action plans must be monitored annually until completed or formally discontinued.
5. Programs may be required to undertake program enhancements or alignment activities on an ad hoc basis to maintain program currency, comply with regulatory or Ministry requirements, align with published standards and titling principles established by MCURES, and support continuous improvement objectives.
6. Programs may be subject to a sustainability review as part of the College's SEM process. Decisions related to program suspension or cancellation will be made in accordance with established SEM criteria and with consideration for students and relevant partners.
7. Evidence generated through quality assurance activities across the program lifecycle must be documented and maintained within the College's program quality assurance repository. Relevant information will be made available to appropriate partners and used to support decision-making, resource allocation, and continuous improvement planning.

MONITORING

The Senior Vice President, Academic and Student Success is responsible for ensuring compliance with the program quality policy, for overseeing the implementation of program quality assurance mechanisms, and for interpreting the policy. Deans, Associate Deans, and other academic leadership are responsible for operationalizing the policy within their areas of responsibility.

NEXT POLICY REVISION DATE

September 2031

SPECIFIC LINKS

Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities – [Framework for Programs of Instruction](#)

Ontario Qualifications Framework ([OQF](#))

Ontario College Quality Assurance Service ([OCQAS](#))

College Quality Assurance Audit Process ([CQAAP](#))

[Minister's Binding Policy Directive](#)

APPENDIX A AND ATTACHMENTS