| | **COLLEGE OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC**<br><br>**OPERATIONAL PROCEDURE** |
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| **TOPIC: ACADEMIC PROGRAM ASSESSMENT** | | | |
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| **Procedure No.** | AC-122-PR | **Division** | Academic |
| **Supersedes** | n/a | **Board Policy Ref.** | GP-RR-904 |
| **Related Policies** | AC-109 | **Effective Date** | November 3, 2020 |

## PROCEDURE

### 1.0    Definitions

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| Academic quality assurance and enhancement | The ongoing process of establishing confidence that standards for teaching and learning, and other related activities, have been satisfied and steps to improve the effectiveness of students' learning experiences have been taken. It includes accountability and improvement. |
| Accountability | All education stakeholders accept responsibility and hold themselves and each other responsible for every learner having full access to quality education, qualified teachers, challenging curriculum, full opportunity to learn as well as appropriate and sufficient support for learning so they can achieve program outcomes. |
| Accreditation | Verification, typically resulting in a certification, by a third party that a particular standard is being met in a college program. |
| Affirmation | Recognition of an area which the program has identified in the self-report or during the site visit requiring attention, and some action has been taken, but has not yet yielded outputs that can be evaluated. |
| Assessment | The process of ensuring College standards are being met in academic programs and that procedures are in place to assure quality and enhancement in the educational |

process. The results are documented in a report.

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| Commendation | Recognition of best or innovative practices supporting academic program quality which should improve teaching and learning, and students' educational experience. |
| Desk auditor | An individual providing a limited-scope examination of documents related to the assessment, without participating in the site visit. |
| External assessor | An individual who is not employed by CNA. |
| Internal assessor | An individual who is employed by CNA. |
| Improvement | The process of enhancing, upgrading, and/or supporting the quality of education experienced by students. It involves charting our progress towards identified goals or standards. |
| Recommendation | Recognition of an area identified by the assessment team that the program, or related department, would benefit from making some improvements or changes. |
| Standard | A statement indicating campus/program expectations agreed upon by the College and supported by research. |

## 2.0   Goals of Academic Program Assessment

- Provide continuous quality improvement of academic programs
- Instill accountability for the provision of quality educational experiences in those who teach and those who support teaching and learning
- Ensure academic programs are being delivered consistently, and as originally intended, across multiple campuses
- Facilitate successful external accreditations
- Assist in effective and efficient planning, budgeting and decision making

## 3.0   Process

Under the direction of the Senior Director of Academic Development, Academic program assessments will be led by the Director of Academic Program Assessments in conjunction with School Deans and campus leadership teams. The evidenced-based assessments will provide due process for input by internal and external stakeholders and will be completed at least every eight (8) years, in conjunction with other activities in the Academic Development Office.

The Academic Program Assessment (APA) Office will provide oversight of the assessment process, scheduling, and follow-up activities.

The assessment process will provide relevant data concerning the program's delivery. The process includes the following steps: site preparation, selection and training of assessors, self-reports, site visit, and post site visit activities.

3.1　Site Preparation

    a. The APA office, in collaboration with the Dean or designate, identifies the program(s) to be assessed and campus(es) on which the assessment will be conducted, and makes recommendation to the Senior Director, Academic Development.

    b. Upon approval by the Senior Director, Academic Development, the APA office informs site representatives of the upcoming assessment at least six months prior to the beginning of the assessment.

    c. The APA representative and Dean meet with the site representative, either in person or electronically, to discuss the expectations and process.

    d. The APA office, in collaboration with the Dean and site representative, identifies potential stakeholders to be included in the assessment.

    e. The APA office, in collaboration with the Dean and site representative, establishes a schedule for the assessment.

3.2　Selection and Training of Assessors

    a. The Director, Academic Program Assessments proposes assessment team membership to the Senior Director, Academic Development for approval.

    b. The assessment team will normally include three (3) to five (5) assessors, with one designated as Lead Assessor.

    c. CNA trains the assessment team. Topics include expectations, conduct, processes, site visit, report, etc.

3.3　Self-Report

    a. The APA office will provide the self-report templates to the campus at least three months prior to the site visit.

    b.  The self-report will include data that is common to all programs delivered on a particular campus as well as data related only to the program being assessed on that campus.  When two or more programs are being assessed on a particular campus during one academic year, the common, campus-level information can be used in both reports unless significant changes, which impact the campus-level data, occur on that campus during the academic year in question.

    c.  The self-reports are prepared and returned to the APA office at least one month prior to the site visit. The assessment team reads and meets to discuss the self-report prior to the site visit.

3.4    Site Visit

    a.  Normally 2–4 days, depending on the nature and length of the program.

    b.  Focus on validation of self-reports.

    c.  Meetings, as deemed appropriate (planned by the APA office in collaboration with the Dean and site representatives; at least 1-hour in length).

    d.  Each day the assessment team meets to review data and information that has been gathered, deliberate on what, if any, additional information is needed and make necessary schedule adjustments.

    e.  Toward the end of the last day, the assessment team meets with the campus leadership and site representatives to review and discuss the experience and preliminary findings.

3.5    Post Site Visit Activities

    a.  The assessment team prepares the preliminary Quality Assessment Report within 30 days of the site visit and forwards it to the APA office. The APA office forwards the report to the campus leadership and Dean. The report will include text to justify commendations, affirmations and recommendations.

    b.  The Quality Assessment Report will include the following elements:

- Executive Summary
- Introduction (sets the context)

- Findings (with text)
- Conclusions
- Summary List of affirmations, commendations and recommendations
- Appendix 1 – Site Visit Agenda
- Appendix 2 – Composition of the Assessment Team

c. The campus will provide comment and feedback to the APA office on the preliminary Quality Assessment Report within 30 days of its receipt.

d. Within 30 days of receipt of the campus comments, the assessment team will prepare the final report and submit it to the APA office.

e. The Director, Academic Program Assessments will submit the final report to the Senior Director, Academic Development for approval and official records. Once approved by the Senior Director, Academic Development, the final report will be forwarded to the site representative and Dean or designate.

f. The entire assessment will normally be completed within 120 days, upon receipt of the self-assessment and accompanying documentation.

g. An executive summary of the Quality Assessment Reports, for internal and international assessments, will be provided to Vice-President, Academic, by the Senior Director, Academic Development, each semester. A summary of core findings and recommendations as well as the status of action items will be included.

## 4.0   Assessment Team

4.1   The Lead Assessor will normally be external to the College. Two members will normally be internal to the College, at least one of whom is a subject matter expert in the program (or similar program) from a different campus. Other members may include an international representative, a student, a recent graduate (within five (5) years), a desk auditor and or a representative from an external stakeholder. For international assessments, the composition of the assessment team will be governed by the terms of the particular service agreement.

4.2   Campus leadership and, as appropriate, other responsible bodies, are provided an opportunity to comment on the composition of the assessment team.

4.3 Assessors will have:

- Extensive experience in teaching, learning, and/or support activities, or other relevant experience as deemed appropriate;
- An understanding of academic quality assurance, or other quality assurance contexts;
- An ability to commit time required for material review, meetings, site visit and report, audit/assessment report feedback, and audit/assessment process feedback;
- Commitment to participate in training;
- Demonstrated ability to appreciate multiple perspectives, engage with a variety of stakeholders, form evidence-based judgments, meet deadlines, and maintain confidentiality; and
- Familiarity with post-secondary contexts of education and best practice in teaching and learning, and student success.

In addition to the qualifications listed above, lead assessors should have experience in project management, team management, and working within prescribed timelines.

## 5.0 Self-Report

The self-report is data-driven, contains analysis and reflection based on the data, and is based on the self-report template provided by the APA office. The self-report will focus on information and data related to the following themes:

1. Campus Leadership, Administration and Quality Management

   Focus: leadership positions promoting quality; policies and procedures related to quality program delivery, including practices to ensure their effective implementation; data driven planning; quality and use of physical and technological infrastructure, including safety standards; use of student voice to improve teaching and learning

2. Learner Transitions

   Focus: measures to facilitate successful transition of students to the campus (including to their program) and campus to labour market; academic supports, guidance services and student well-being; supports for students requiring accommodations; student appeals and complaints

3.     Teaching Quality

Focus: qualifications and experience of staff who teach or support teaching; orientation and professional development staff who teach or support teaching; availability and use of appropriate resources; feedback on teaching; supervision of students in practicums; recognition of high-quality teaching or related activities

4.     Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

Focus: program review process; processes and practices to ensure quality course and program delivery, and appropriate and effective student assessment practices; opportunities for experiential learning; academic integrity.

## 6.0    Quality Assessment Report

The Quality Assessment Report will include the following elements:

- Executive Summary
- Introduction (sets the context)
- Findings (with text)
- Conclusions
- Summary List of affirmations, commendations and recommendations
- Appendix 1 – Site Visit Agenda
- Appendix 2 – Composition of the Assessment Team

The report will include text to justify commendations, affirmations and recommendations.

## 7.0    Follow-up

For campuses located in Newfoundland and Labrador, APA office will collaborate with campus leadership and the Dean to develop an action plan to address recommendations in the final Quality Assessment Report. Actions will be followed up on a regular basis through the APA office until all actionable items have been addressed.

For international assessments, follow-up activities will be governed by terms of the particular service agreement. On a schedule to be determined, normally within one year of the final Quality Assessment Report, the campus will forward to the APA office a status report on all action items.

| Approval History | |
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| Approved by President | November 3, 2020 |