

Quality Assessment of Offshore Programs – Procedure Overview

Overview

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), or equivalent document, is associated with each program¹ offered by Algonquin College and an offshore program partner. The MOU outlines the terms of the agreement including details regarding program delivery. Quality Assurance of these programs is an integral part of any Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), and generally falls into two components:

- Periodic **Quality Assessment** of the program, often once or twice annually, with scope as outlined in the MOU. The scope may be further extended in consultation between Algonquin College and the host institution.
- Comprehensive **Program Quality Review**, conducted as per a defined schedule for each unique Ontario College Credential prepared by Algonquin College.

The intent of both the Quality Assessments and the Program Quality Review is to ensure that quality standards expected of the programs delivered by host institutions are, and continue to be, met. Both strengths and challenges for each program may be identified during the reviews. Excellence in quality should be recognized, and recommendations put forward which support the ongoing continuous quality improvement of the program, with timelines for implementation.

This document outlines the steps in the process for Quality Assessments.

¹ In some instances, a service or other entity may be under review. The term 'program' may be replaced as appropriate in this document. Note this only applies to periodic quality assessment, not to the comprehensive program quality review.

Periodic Quality Assessment – Phases

The quality assessment follows four main phases:

- The **planning** phase, where those involved in conducting the quality assessment are determined.
- The **Pre-Site Visit** phase, where the quality assessors prepare for the site visit by requesting and reviewing information, and setting up an agenda with the host institution. The report starts to be drafted during this phase.
- The **Site Visit**, where the on-the-ground quality assessment is conducted.
- The **Post-Site Visit** (wrap-up) phase, where the report is finalized and the host institution requested to provide a plan to implement the recommendations.

| Phase | Main Tasks | Those Involved (Key Players in Boldface) |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| Planning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set timing of quality assessment site visit • Assign Algonquin College liaison • Identify Host Institution liaison • Assign quality assessor(s) • Provide awareness training (if applicable) for local customs and expectations. • Make note of areas of concern or excellence that must further explore during quality assessment. • Draft Quality Assessment goals/criteria • Draft site visit agenda • Assign timelines for site visit preparations² | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Education Centre • Applicable Dean/Program Chair |
| Pre-Site Visit Preparation | <p><u>Stage 1</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare and request list of materials to review pre-site visit, and during site visit. • Provide Host Institution with draft³ agenda; work with host institution to update. Note: the host institution may be invited to add specific items to the agenda that they may wish to be assessed. <p><u>Stage 2 – after receipt of requested materials</u></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality Assessor(s) as appointed by Algonquin College • Algonquin College Liaison • Host Institution Liaison |

² The PQAA and IEC liaison can advise on timelines. While it is prudent to give sufficient lead-time to the Site Visit (say six weeks) and to close the report in a timely fashion, approx one month after the visit, flexibility on timing should be maintained.

³ That the agenda is in draft must be noted. The agenda may change once pre-site visit materials are reviewed, or to make accommodations.

| | | |
|------------------------|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge receipt. • Set up time for revision of draft materials (i.e. after pre-site visit materials have been reviewed) <p><u>Stage 3 - after review of requested materials (generally just prior to departure for site visit)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality Assessors start to draft report. Quality Assessment Goals/Criteria are revisited. Agenda is revisited. Additional materials required at site visit identified. • Review agenda and additional requirements with Host Institution. | |
| Site Visit | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occurs as per planned agenda • Suggest that daily entry and exit meetings are met to firm up proceedings for day and day ahead • Quality Assessors document their findings each day, updating draft quality assessment report. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality Assessor(s) • Host Institution Liaison • Senior Administration • Faculty • Students • Recent Graduates • Employers and other external stakeholders |
| Post-Site-Visit | <p><u>Drafting the report (timeline as per agreed in planning stage)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality Assessors provide the draft report to Algonquin and Host Institution for comment before finalizing. <p><u>Finalizing the report.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality assessment report is finalized. Host institution is requested to respond to the recommendations with a response and an implementation plan within timeline provided. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicable Dean/Program Chair • Algonquin College Liaison • Host Institution Liaison • Quality Assessor(s) |

The Site Visit

The Site Visit should include:

- Commencement and Debrief meetings with Senior Administration.
- Interviews / Focus Groups or equivalent⁴ with the following:
 - Recruiters (HR)
 - Faculty
 - Advisory Committees/Potential Employers
 - Students
 - Graduates
 - Those responsible for Faculty/Staff evaluations
 - Those responsible for Student Support/Orientation
 - Those responsible for Faculty Support/Orientation
- Observations and reviews
 - In-class observations
 - In-lab observations
 - Review of student work
 - Review of grades and testing
 - Review of course outlines and course section information
- Tours
 - Tours of facilities

A draft agenda should be issued prior to the site visit to the host institution, in order to allow sufficient time for their preparations.

⁴ Where focus groups and interviews are either impractical or contrary to local customs, modify as appropriate to effectively gather the required information/insight.

Materials Required for Review

The following table captures the type of materials that may be reviewed as part of the quality assessment, and requested ahead of time. Where materials are not available in English, a mechanism for their review must be determined. Additionally, the host institution may choose to conduct a self-study to be submitted prior to the Site Visit. The structure and scope of the self-study should be planned in advance by the host institution and communicated to the Quality Assessment team.

| What | Why? | When? |
|--|--|---|
| Academic Policies and Procedures, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions • Student Feedback Mechanisms • Faculty Feedback Information • Faculty Orientation • Evaluation of Student Learning • Grading System • Credit Transfer, Prior Learning • Academic Advising | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To determine their existence, scope. The extent to which they are in operation may be assessed during the site visit. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-site visit. A weblink to the information is acceptable. |
| Program Promotional or Informational material or equivalent, for example, the program monograph | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure for consistency, clarity and accuracy of the information presented. • Review that Program of Study and Duration of program is in alignment with the credential granted. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ahead of site visit |
| Program Curriculum ⁵ or part thereof – may request program of study, selected course outlines and course section information. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the extent to which the Course Outlines convey the curriculum taught, assessed and culminated. • Review the extent to which the instructors operate within structured work plans (course section information). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ahead of site visit, with the proviso that additional course outlines and section information may be requested during the site visit. |
| Student Timetables (selection only) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review for time balancing, access to labs etc. | |
| Student Feedback | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure a feedback | |

⁵ Note that Program Quality Review re-maps the entire Curriculum, and hence a full mapping may be requested but is not mandatory for Quality Assessments.

| | | |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| | mechanism is in place and is happening | |
| Examples of student work. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that assessment of student work is happening, and is consistent across the program. | |