Expedited Renewal Process - Manual for Ontario Colleges
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Introduction

At its best, external quality assurance supports and enhances continuous improvement in program delivery and is proportionate to an institution’s ability to maintain and continuously improve the quality of its programs. Recognising this, the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB) seeks to acknowledge and encourage institutional capacity for internal quality assurance.

PEQAB’s regular process for quality assurance in the context of renewal of consent for College degree programs has involved, for all such programs, a double examination of the programs and two site visits: the first conducted by the College itself through a Program Evaluation Committee (PEC) according to PEQAB’s Internal Quality Assurance and Development standard--typically more than a year prior to the end of the current consent; and a second review and a site visit, conducted by PEQAB after referral of the degree program. For many College degree programs, this dual process can be reduced to a single, simplified and expedited process without risk to program quality.

An environmental scan of the Canadian quality assurance (QA) landscape has shown that QA agencies employ myriad processes for program renewal/program audit, most of which contain a recurring monitoring or auditing element that reflect internal QA processes. In addition, many Canadian and international QA agencies offer some form of expedited or partial reviews in certain circumstances. Based on these examples and best practices, PEQAB has devised an Expedited Renewal Process that focusses on colleges’ internal QA practices, principally through PEQAB staff attending the site visit of a College’s own PEC.

This simpler process for renewals eliminates approximately half of the current consent process for renewals, while preserving all the elements necessary for mature Colleges’ assurance of quality.

This Manual is for Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology seeking to renew consent pursuant to the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000 (the Act) via the Expedited Renewal Process. It addresses:

1. Eligibility Requirements
2. The Expedited Renewal Process
3. Submission Requirements
4. PEQAB’s Audit and Recommendations
5. Additional Support from PEQAB Secretariat
6. Appendices

Colleges should note that the Board may revise any/all of its Manuals including this one usually in August of each year, and the onus is on the College to ensure that it is using one of the current Board Manual(s).

This Manual addresses only the Board’s requirements for applications under the Expedited Renewal Process for consent. For an overview of the Board, and its assessment criteria and procedures, applicants should refer to the Manual for Ontario Colleges. Inquiries about the Board’s criteria or procedures should be directed to
Inquiries about the application and consent process, the Act and its regulations, the activities subject to the Act, and the Minister’s requirements should be directed to the Universities Unit of the Postsecondary Education Division, Postsecondary Accountability Branch, Ministry of Colleges and Universities.

1. Eligibility Requirements

**Expedited Renewals** will be available to all Colleges with degree programs that have received initial consent. Any College program wishing to undergo the Expedited Renewal Process can do so, simply by notifying the PEQAB Secretariat prior to the appointment of a PEC and the initiation of the site visit according to the Internal Quality Assurance and Development Standard. No College is required to do so, and every program is welcome to undergo the full PEQAB renewal process.

Should a College feel it may benefit from a comprehensive renewal against the full set of PEQAB criteria by a PEQAB appointed external panel, the requirements for full renewals are outlined in the *Submission Guidelines for Consent Renewal*. While the decision about whether to conduct expedited or full renewals lies with each College, PEQAB may, in some circumstances, suggest a full PEQAB renewal.

All applications for new programs would undergo standard PEQAB review processes and the requirements for new program submissions are addressed in the *Manual for Ontario Colleges*.

2. Expedited Renewal Process

Any program for which a College chooses the Expedited Renewal Process need only conduct its self-study and evaluation as per the Internal Quality Assurance and Development standard and NOT also go through the subsequent PEQAB review. The main addition is that a PEQAB Senior Policy Advisor will attend the site visit with the College’s own Program Evaluation Committee.
The expedited renewal process will follow these steps (for more detail see narrative sections below)

1. **College**
   - Decides to undergo the Expedited Renewal Process
   - Selects, appoints and orients Program Evaluation Committee (PEC) members
   - Plans a PEC site visit
   - Invites PEQAB to attend the PEC site visit and shares with PEQAB staff all relevant information and documentation

2. **The PEC**
   - Conducts a site visit and writes a report which is shared with the college

3. **The college**
   - Completes the internal program evaluation process
   - Submits to the Ministry an application for expedited program renewal

4. **Minister**
   - Will (normally) refer the program to PEQAB for quality assurance

5. **PEQAB Secretariat**
   - Posts the application on the PEQAB website

6. **Board (PEQAB)**
   - Reviews the expedited program renewal application at its next meeting and makes a recommendation to the Minister
   - Shares the PEQAB Final Report with the applicant
   - Posts the recommendation date on its website

7. **Minister**
   - Considers PEQAB’s recommendation and any public policy or financial issues that may flow from the granting of a consent
   - Communicates the decision about consent to the applicant

8. **PEQAB Secretariat**
   - Following the Minister’s communication of the decision to the applicant, the Board’s recommendation and the Minister’s decision are posted on the PEQAB website.

**PEC Review**

The program would conduct its normal self-study and evaluation according to its own institutionally approved policy and procedure and within the benchmarks in the PEQAB Internal Quality Assurance and Development Standard. The self-study should thereby reflect all relevant PEQAB standards and benchmarks. The College would then:

- **Select, appoint and orient PEC members.** It is suggested that the PEC be comprised of at least
  - two external subject-matter experts — one of which should be the PEC Chair
  - one senior academic peer either internal to the College but outside the program or a member of the College Degree Operating Group (CDOG) external to the College and
- one student or recent graduate, either from within the College or from another institution, and who is or was enrolled in a related degree program.¹

- **Plan a PEC site visit**² approximately 18 months prior to the expiry of a current consent and include the PEQAB Secretariat in the planning to ensure staff are available to attend the site visit.
- **Invite PEQAB to attend the PEC site visit.**
- **Share with PEQAB staff all relevant information and documentation** as provided to the PEC.

If an accreditation review applied to the program, the role of the PEC may be played by a panel from a professional accreditation agency (such as the Canadian Engineering Accreditation Board or the Council for Interior Design Accreditation) if

- the accreditation review is sufficiently similar to that of PEQAB and
- it covers most areas typically addressed in a PEC review.

In such cases a College would supplement the self-study, tailored toward the professional accreditation, with a self-study against any relevant PEQAB criteria not sufficiently addressed through the relevant accreditation review.

**Criteria for PEC Members**

PEC members should possess qualifications and personal qualities that engender the confidence of the Board, the Minister, the public, accrediting bodies, relevant regulatory bodies and other degree granting institutions. Specifically, PEC members should demonstrate the following:

- be free of any conflict of interest.
- hold an advanced academic credential related to the subject area under review (normally at the terminal level in the field).
- possess required or desired professional credentials and/or related work experience of substantial depth and range.
- have relevant academic experience such as administration, teaching, curriculum design, and/or quality assessment experience (e.g., as appraisers for accrediting bodies or as reviewers of degree programs).
- have a record of active scholarship.

In addition, it is suggested that PEC chairs be experienced in the administration of higher education and have practice as committee members who can function objectively and effectively as chairs.

It is also suggested that the institution ensure that

- at least one PEC member be new to the institution (i.e. someone who has not reviewed the program in the past 5 years).
- PEC members not be from the same institution.

strive to

- include on each PEC a member with experience with the type of institution at which the program is (proposed to be) offered.
- achieve diversity in the selection of PEC members.

**PEC Member Internal to the College or from CDOG**

¹ The PEQAB Secretariat may assist with any of the tasks (see 5. Additional Support from PEQAB Secretariat below)
² See Appendix 6. a) for a draft PEC site visit agenda.
As per the requirements for the Internal Program Review (see Appendix 8 of the Manual for Ontario Colleges), it is suggested the one PEC member either be a senior academic internal to the College or a member of the College Degree Operating Group (CDOG). This individual should be someone external to the program or College whom the College/program thinks could reasonably fill the role.

**Student PEC Members**

As per international best practice\(^3\) it is suggested that one PEC member be either a student or recent graduate

- from a related degree program at the same institution or
- from a related degree program at different institution.\(^4\)

The student or recent graduate PEC member would require an orientation similar to the one provided to the other PEC members, with additional information on quality assurance in Ontario and the role of students in QA. It is suggested their compensation is comparable to those of other members of the PEC. The PEQAB Secretariat can — at the College’s request — be involved in the orientation of the student PEC member and the PEQAB Secretariat can make its student Orientation materials as well as its PEC Student Guidelines available to any College wishing to adapt or use them.

**Orientation of PEC Members**

It is expected that Colleges orient their PEC members and each College could have its own orientation materials as suitable to the program(s). However, the PEQAB Secretariat can — at the College’s request — be involved in the orientation of the PEC, and the PEQAB Secretariat can make its Panel Orientation materials as well as its PEC Guidelines available to any College wishing to adapt or use them.

**Payment for PEC Members**

PEQAB’s per diem for External Expert Reviewers is $800, and these are typically compensated for 3-4 days. It is recommended that colleges pay their PEC members at the same, or a similar rate.

**Review of Expedited Renewal Application**

1. Once the internal program evaluation process is completed, the College would submit to the Ministry for quality assurance review
   - The program self-study\(^5\)
   - The Program Evaluation Committee (PEC) report\(^6\)
   - The College’s response to the program self-study and the PEC report\(^7\)
   - Course Outlines

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\(^3\) The recognition that student voices are critical in shaping higher education is gaining momentum, and students on review teams (and QA Boards) have been a central feature of QA in Europe for years—their use there is now entirely non-controversial. Students bring a unique perspective which should, ideally, inform the program and any reviews on an ongoing basis (as opposed to a consultation occasionally and/or only as part of the cyclical review).

\(^4\) At this point including a student is a suggestion as we understand this may take some time to deliberate over and to pilot.

\(^5\) Or the self-study, tailored toward the professional accreditation, supplemented with a self-study against any PEQAB criteria not sufficiently addressed through the relevant accreditation review.

\(^6\) Or a report of the appropriate accreditation agency

\(^7\) Or a response to the recommendation from the accreditation report
• Faculty CVs
• Plus anything additional required by the Ministry for its policy review
• For posting on the PEQAB website the Program Abstract and Course Schedule (see details below).

2. The Ministry would then (normally) refer the program to PEQAB for quality assurance.

3. The PEQAB Board would review these materials at its next meeting and may
   a) Recommend to the Minister re-review after 7 years and continuation/’renewal’ of consent.
   b) Recommend another duration of consent and/or conditions of consent.
   c) Request further materials or further review processes of the College program.

   For more detail, see Section 3. and 4. below.

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3. Submission Requirements

Submission and Mailing Instructions
As with new programs and full PEQAB renewals, College can bundle closely related study programs in a cluster. For example, Bachelor of Commerce programs with different concentrations (such as Human Resources, Supply Chain Management or Accounting) could be submitted as one application. All programs within the cluster can be reviewed by the same PEC members as long as, collectively, the PEC has expertise in each of the programs or program areas.

All applications for Expedited Renewals are to be addressed and submitted to the Minister of Colleges and Universities.

In addition to a cheque or money order for $5,000 CDN (or $10,000/$15,000 in the case of bundled applications)\(^8\) to the Ontario Ministry of Finance as an application fee, colleges applying for Expedited Renewals are required to submit the following materials electronically on a USB stick (or equivalent):
- A copy of a letter of application to the Minister of Colleges and Universities stating the program/programs that Expedited Renewal is sought for
- A copy of the signed Applicant Acknowledgement and Agreement form as provided in the Directives and Guidelines for Applying for Ministerial Consent under the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000
- A completed Ministry Summary of Application Form (Appendix C)
- The program self-study\(^9\)

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\(^8\) For bundled applications the fee is $10,000 for an application containing up to five degree programs and $15,000 for an application of five or more programs.

\(^9\) Or the self-study, tailored toward the professional accreditation, supplemented with a self-study against any PEQAB criteria not sufficiently addressed through the relevant accreditation review.
□ The Program Evaluation Committee (PEC) report\textsuperscript{10} 
□ The College’s response to the program self-study and the PEC report\textsuperscript{11} 
□ Any update on the institution’s action plan that resulted from the self-study or PEC report 
□ Information on future plans or developments of the institution or program 
□ Information on special challenges or developments over the period of consent 
□ A brief report on how any condition(s) or commitment(s) from the last Board review and report were addressed. 
□ Any additional (proposed) program changes (e.g., a new pathway or nomenclature) that have not been addressed in the report on commitments, the self-study, or the program action plan and the rationale for these changes (e.g., changes prompted by modifications to the regulatory framework for a profession). 
□ Course Outlines 
□ Faculty CVs 
□ For posting on the PEQAB website: The Program Abstract and a Course Schedule that shows for each academic year, and by semester 
  - the title of each course/other requirement 
  - the type of course/other requirement (core or non-core) 
  - hours per course 
  - course prerequisites, co-requisites, and restrictions 
  - the highest earned qualifications of proposed instructors and required credentials for faculty to be hired.\textsuperscript{12} 

Course outlines and faculty CVs can be submitted as separate, searchable files. All other submission documents for PEQAB should be provided as a single, searchable electronic file saved in PDF format including any supporting documentation (e.g., CVs of the PEC).

\textbf{Send all materials to} 
The Minister of Colleges and Universities 
c/o The Universities Unit 
315 Front Street West 
16th Floor 
Toronto, ON  M7A 0B8

The information submitted according to this \textit{Manual} is collected pursuant to the \textit{Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act} and the \textit{Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000}.

\textsuperscript{10} Or a report of the appropriate accreditation agency 
\textsuperscript{11} Or a response to the recommendation from the accreditation report 
\textsuperscript{12} Please ensure that these two electronic files are compliant with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).
4. PEQAB’s Audit and Recommendations

While all programs are still expected to meet or exceed all relevant PEQAB standards, the Expedited Renewal alters the way in which alignment with PEQAB standards is demonstrated and reviewed and the nature of PEQAB’s involvement in the program review processes. PEQAB follows the principle that the review of the PEC should focus on the sufficiency of mechanisms that a College has chosen to secure the quality of its degree programs. Of course, individual targets set by the College in the self-evaluation report should also be taken into consideration.

After referral, the PEQAB Board will normally review at its next Board meeting
- the program self-study\(^\text{13}\)
- the Program Evaluation Committee (PEC) report\(^\text{14}\)
- the College’s response to the program self-study and the PEC report.\(^\text{15}\)

The Board may then
a) Recommend to the Minister re-review after 7 years and continuation/’renewal’ of consent.
b) Recommend another duration of consent and/or conditions of consent.
c) Request further materials or further review processes of the College program, which may include commitments, conditions, report backs on modifications, and others up to and including a second site visit with an External Expert Panel selected in conjunction with the College according to the full PEQAB processes.
   - If c), the College’s additional submissions would be considered at a subsequent Board meeting, at which the full current options available to the Board, in terms of duration of consent, conditions of consent and others would be recommended to the Minister.
   - If c) were to include a second site visit with an External Expert Panel or any materials or information provided by a third party, the current PEQAB process of seeking the College’s response in advance of Board consideration would also apply.

PEQAB’s new Reconsideration process is also available to the College as regards any of the Board’s conditions or duration of consent recommendations.

In rare circumstances, PEQAB may resort to a full PEQAB renewal review instead of or in addition to considering the Expedited Renewal application, e.g., if
- requested by the Minister during the referral and/or through specific instructions and/or
- major weakness in process or content were discovered during the PEC site visit.

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\(^{13}\) Or the self-study, tailored toward the professional accreditation, supplemented with a self-study against any PEQAB criteria not sufficiently addressed through the relevant accreditation review

\(^{14}\) Or a report of the appropriate accreditation agency

\(^{15}\) Or a response to the recommendation from an accreditation report
5. Additional Support from PEQAB Secretariat

In addition to later attending the site visit and at the request of the College, the PEQAB Secretariat may provide
• support in identifying potential external expert reviewers as a part of the Program Evaluation Committee,
• support in orienting the Panel, interpreting the standards and benchmarks,
• a template for the Review in the form of ‘Review Panel Guidelines’,
• a list of all Benchmarks and Standards that can be excluded from review as PEQAB determined through and previous review that the College satisfies these,\textsuperscript{16}
• any other similar supports which the program requests,
• support to the College in choosing assessment tools or reviews/evaluations of student work that demonstrate student achievement.

6. Appendices

a) Suggested PEC Member Qualifications and COI

Suggested Criteria and Principles for PEC Members
The Board suggests that Colleges recruit PEC members who possess qualifications and personal qualities that engender the confidence of the PEQAB Board, the Minister, the public, accrediting bodies, relevant regulatory bodies and other degree granting institutions. Specifically, it is suggested that PEC members demonstrate the following:
• be free of any conflict of interest, in accordance with the institution’s policy on conflict of interest guidelines.
• hold an advanced academic credential related to the subject area under review (normally at the terminal level in the field).
• possess required or desired professional credentials and/or related work experience of substantial depth and range.
• have relevant academic experience such as administration, teaching, curriculum design, and/or quality assessment experience (e.g., as appraisers for accrediting bodies or as reviewers of degree programs).
• have a record of active scholarship.

In addition to the qualities of Panel members, it is recommended that Panel chairs normally be experienced in the administration of higher education and have practice as committee members who can function objectively and effectively as chairs.

\textsuperscript{16} These often include institutional policies and procedures as well as the review of Breadth/Non-core courses.
It is also recommended that the College ensure that
• at least one Panel member be new to the institution (i.e. someone who has not reviewed the program in the past 5 years).
• Panel members not be from the same institution.
• no more than one Panel member be an applicant nominee.
strive to
• include on each Panel a member with experience with the type of institution at which the program is (proposed to be) offered.
• achieve diversity in the selection of PEC members.

Suggested Policy on Conflict of Interest for PEC Members
This guideline is intended as a suggestion or reference point for Colleges wanting to draft a Conflict of Interest (COI) policy for PEC members and it is similar to the COI that PEQAB employs for the recruitment of its External Expert Review Panels.

PEC members must not reveal or divulge confidential information received in the course of their duties and confidential information must not be used for any purpose outside the duties. PEC members must not make public comments concerning any evaluation.

PEC members are expected to avoid conflicts of interest or the appearance of conflict of interest between their duties as PEC members and their personal or business interests. An actual or potential conflict of interest arises when an individual is placed in a situation in which his or her interests and experience appear to conflict with his or her responsibilities to the College, PEQAB, the Ministry and the public interest.

Definition of Conflict of Interest
Excluding the members of the PEC that are recruited from inside the College or that are current or former students of the College, PEC members appointed by the College should not have any connection to the College or program partner(s) under review within the previous five years, or for a period of up to six months following the completion of their duties in connection with the evaluation/review process. Some examples of an unacceptable connection include:
• Preparing or providing expert advice used in developing the program self-study or other expects of the program,
• Making public comment for or against a program or College that might result in the apprehension of bias
• Being currently or having previously been employed by the institution
• Being a student or graduate of the College (with the exception of the student PEC member)
• Working as a consultant for the College
• Serving in an advisory capacity or on a board or committee at the College
• Having financial or other business interests with the institution;
• Supervising students or employees of the institution;
• Collaborating regularly with the College and/or,
• Teaching at the College.
Employment or previous employment by a competitive or potentially competitive institution does not, in and of itself, constitute a conflict of interest.

PEC members who have any interest by virtue of a past or current connection, or who make public statements about the College/program under consideration must decline acceptance of PEC membership or withdraw from the PEC panel. Individuals who make public statements or who participate in the preparation of public statements concerning the College and/or any aspect of a program, before or during an external evaluation, are considered to be in a conflict of interest by reason of a potential apprehension of bias.

**Disclosing a Conflict of Interest**
To assist in determining whether a conflict exists, all PEC members shall make full disclosure to the College of any potential conflict of interest, within the terms of this policy, as soon as they become aware of the potential conflict of interest. Similarly, if a College discovers a real or perceived conflict of interest between itself and a PEC member, the conflict shall be disclosed to the PEC member or PEC candidate. In accordance with these guidelines, the College should then exercise its discretion in determining whether a exists and notify the parties accordingly.

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### b) Draft PEC Site Visit Agenda

**NAME OF COLLEGE, SCHOOL and PROGRAM**

**PEC Site Visit Agenda**

**Site Visit: DATE & LOCATION**

**PEC Members:**
**PEQAB Observer:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Topics/Areas of Focus/Session</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00 – 8:30am</td>
<td>Welcome and Coffee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 8:30 – 9:00  | **Overview of the Agenda, College, Centre, School and Program Review (Self-Study) Process** | • Senior college administration  
• Program coordinator and/or chair  
• Dean of the relevant faculty  
• Program Development and Quality Assurance |
| 9:00 – 10:30 | **Academic Program Overview/ Overview of Program Development, Content, Outcomes, and Delivery**  
including e.g., detailed discussion of curriculum, course outlines, work integrated learning experiences and bridge pathways (if applicable), college’s research | • Program coordinator and/or chair, i.e. person(s) responsible for the oversight of the program  
• Dean(s)  
Maybe:  
• Research Services |

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17 All times and durations are suggestions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10:30 – 10:45</td>
<td>Break</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45 – 11:45</td>
<td>Meeting with current and past Students&lt;sup&gt;18&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Opportunity to meet with current students and graduates (for program renewals) current students and graduates from related programs (for new programs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45 – 12:30</td>
<td>Working Lunch (panel only)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30 – 1:15</td>
<td>Tour of Campus Facilities</td>
<td>This tour may include a visit to the library, computing facilities, student support services and some classrooms and labs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:15 – 2:15</td>
<td>Program Content and Delivery and Capacity to Deliver</td>
<td>Meeting with Faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:15 – 3:15</td>
<td>Program Currency and Relevance to the Field(s) of Practice</td>
<td>Representatives of the Program Advisory Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:15 – 3:30</td>
<td>Break</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30 – 4:15</td>
<td>Institutional Support for Program and Program Policies</td>
<td>Participants may include representatives from ‘enabling areas’/ ‘support areas’ such as</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Student Services &amp; College Resources/Student Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Co-op Education and Career Services</td>
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<td>• Enrolment Services</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>• Financial Aid and Student Awards</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:15 – 4:45</td>
<td>Panel Caucus (panel only)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4:45 – 5:00</td>
<td>Concluding Meeting/ Exit Interview</td>
<td>The same participants as in the first session</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### c) Review of Samples of Student Work

**Collecting and Providing Samples of Student Work**

To facilitate the PEC’s review of samples of student work for evidence that the expected learning outcomes related to the Degree Level Standard have been achieved, the following is suggested:

- the College select and sort student work into what it considers **exemplary**, **average**, and **minimally acceptable** performance categories allowing PEC members to select samples from among these three categories,
- samples be from the **terminal stage** (3rd and/or 4th year) of the program,
- samples are from a **range of courses** and a **variety of instructors** and ideally include the capstone project and that they be representative of the program being reviewed,

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<sup>18</sup> Some panels have had good experiences with moving either the meeting with student are the meeting with representatives of the Program Advisory Committee to the working lunch.
• all personal identifiers be removed from the samples of student work,\textsuperscript{19}
• Colleges provide the details of the assignments (i.e., a copy of what the student receives) and, where available, the rubrics against which the assignments were graded,
• if possible, samples be unmarked (i.e. void of grading and instructor comments),
• the sample size be large enough to randomly select from (i.e. that the samples size from the core courses in the program be at least 20\% (or a minimum of 15 samples, whichever is greater) of the total number of students in the program (e.g., 20 samples if 100 students are enrolled in the program under review)
• the College distribute samples to the PEC (and the PEQAB Secretariat) prior to the site visit to allow for a desk review in advance of the visit. Where that is not possible, a minimum of 60-90 minutes will have to been found somewhere in the agenda for the PEC to conduct this task.

Reviewing Samples of Student Work
The PEC is responsible for randomly selecting samples of student work from the collection that the College provides. The objectives of this requirement are to assess
• whether the Degree Level Standard has been met (i.e., whether the samples of student work reflect the anticipated outcomes of the program)
• whether the applicant has appropriately assessed the level of student performance.
PEC members are asked to confirm in the Panel Report that a review of samples of student work was undertaken, indicate how many samples were reviewed, and provide details around their findings. PEC members may use the following chart to document this process.

Please complete the following table regarding samples of student work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Exemplary</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Minimally Acceptable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of samples available (if too many to count, indicate ample)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of samples reviewed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number without personal identifiers removed (if all or majority, indicate such)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Examples of assessment methods used</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of students enrolled in program (if available):</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional comments:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{19} Anonymising the samples of student work is a suggestion. PEQAB would have no objections to personal identifiers being included if a college has an internal policy or appropriate disclosures making students aware and ensuring their consent to share samples of student work, with their personal identifiers included, with an external QA panel.
d) Other assessments of the learning outcome achievements of students/graduates

As a supplement to the PEC marking random samples of student work that reflect exemplary, average, and minimally acceptable performance from the terminal years of the degree program (as per PEQAB’s current Guidelines for Samples of Student Work, Appendix c), student achievement can also be demonstrated through:

a) Recognised, comparable, or scalable evaluations of critical thinking, problem-solving, communication skills of students graduating from the program, and/or

b) Other learning outcomes assessment models/management systems, as proposed by the institution.

If assessments in addition to reviewing samples of student work are chosen to demonstrate student achievement, PEC members should be instructed to review/comment on the learning outcome achievements of students/graduates based also on the option chosen.

Below are brief overviews of three promising generic skills assessment tools that can provide detail at the program level should a College decide to choose option a)\(^{20}\) to demonstrate student achievement. In addition, PEQAB would consider other options (such as PIAAC, SAT, and discipline-specific assessments), and is open to discussing other assessment options that Colleges may be interested in exploring.

**The Critical Thinking Assessment Test (CAT)\(^{21}\)**

The Critical Thinking Assessment Test (CAT) was developed at Tennessee Technological University to measure students' critical thinking skills. More specifically, the CAT examines students' ability to evaluate information, students' creative thinking skills, students' learning and problem-solving skills, and students' communication skills through a short essay test.

The CAT is a paper-based test that takes 45 minutes. It is scored by local program faculty members first and then cross checked for consistency. This is unique to the other LO assessments, as it provides an opportunity for faculty to become involved in the informed improvement feedback loop as well as providing summative comparable information.

It was originally developed for Health Sciences (but has been very successful in other programs). Because of its origins it is a rather practical tool, which is particularly programs quality assured by PEQAB. The test is currently in place in approximately 400 institutions worldwide, including the United States, Australia, Japan, and Qatar. The CAT has a growing base and is currently being explored by several Ontario universities for internal quality assurance purposes.

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\(^{20}\) i.e., recognised, comparable, or scalable evaluations of critical thinking, problem-solving, communication skills

\(^{21}\) https://www.tntech.edu/cat/
**The Collegiate Learning Assessment Plus (CLA+)**\(^{22}\)

The CLA+ is the most widely used test. Based at the US’s Council for Aid to Education (CAE), the CLA+ is recognized worldwide and is supported by the OECD. The CLA+ is also increasingly used to indicate performance levels on student transcripts in the US. The CLA+ focuses on quantitative reasoning, critical reasoning and evaluation, and critiquing an argument through multiple choice and constructed response questions.

The computer-based assessment takes 90 minutes. It can be used as a longitudinal or cross-sectional assessment. Each program receives a CLA+ institutional report, student data file and a copy of students score reports. Each student receives their own score. The results are generated by CAE, and results are comparable to programs, other institutions, other countries, etc.

One of the most significant benefits of CLA+ is in the ‘value-add’ score which (based on the first-year test results and background information on the students) produces a score of how much ‘learning’ is directly attributable to the institution (as opposed to earlier learning or maturation). This is valuable for many institutions, and likely to be beneficial to programs quality assured by PEQAB, as the entering students may not be as academically strong as those in other institutions, but the learning gains are likely to exceed the others, which will demonstrate the power of the programming.

**ETS HEighten**\(^{23}\)

The Heighten suite of assessments is specifically designed to capture generic skills through three tests: critical thinking, quantitative reasoning and written communication.

The HEighten tests are relatively new, just being rolled out in 2016. However, ETS is a reputable testing organisation, responsible for many of the better-known tests, such as the SAT, MCAT, LSAT, and PIAAC. Hence, the psychometrics of the tests are (arguably) more robust than the others, and they are probably the most reliable and valid of the tests.

Each of the three tests is computer based with multiple choice and constructed response questions. Each test takes students approximately 45 minutes to complete, so to test critical thinking, quantitative reasoning and written communication would take over 2 hours. Students get immediate feedback on their scores and program reports are generated and sent to the institution.

As the HEighten tests are new, they are not yet fully implemented nor widely used. However, given the reputation of the organisation and the design of the tests, ETS Heighten will likely be a major player in the coming years and should produce comparable data soon.

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\(^{22}\) [http://cae.org/](http://cae.org/)

\(^{23}\) [https://www.ets.org/heighten/about](https://www.ets.org/heighten/about)