

Breadth Capacity Review Manual

Context

In accordance with the requirements for all undergraduate degrees, the Board requires that College degrees include an appropriate balance of curriculum in the core/main field(s) of study and non-core/breadth studies to ensure graduates meet expectations articulated under the Board's Degree Level Standard.

To streamline the review process and to recognize the ability of Colleges to successfully deliver breadth as part of quality degree level programming, the Board began to undertake breadth capacity reviews in 2010. Where the Board has found that a College has the capacity to deliver breadth as part of its degree programming, it has recommended that the College be permitted to make some changes to its breadth courses without needing to undergo review by the Board.

To minimize duplication for Colleges which have undergone successful reviews of their breadth, the Board has exempted from review breadth in the context of those College's recent renewal reviews. However, the Board had not established principles for determining whether, and if so, when to allow such exemptions, nor a process for reassessing or monitoring breadth once an institution has been "relieved" of the breadth assessment.

Current Process

To provide greater certainty to Colleges on the duration and scope of successful breadth capacity reviews, in the Fall of 2016 the Secretariat began a process whereby a positive breadth capacity review followed by a successful review of the implementation of breadth in the context of at least one existing degree program would lead to an exemption of breadth from review for programs accessing the same or substantially the same breadth curriculum at that College for a period of seven years.

The re-review of breadth offerings is triggered by the first renewal review following the seven-year period or by accumulated modifications resulting in significant/major change(s) to breadth. Major modifications would include

- the addition or elimination of non-core courses required for graduation from a program
- changes to courses amounting to 30% of the breadth offerings
- changes to the delivery methods (online, face-to-face, hybrid) of courses amounting to 30% of the breadth offerings
- changes to the essential resources (including human resources), where these changes may impair the delivery of the program as approved.

The Ministry remains the authority on determining what changes are permitted during the period of consent and, as such, determines when to refer requests for amendments, including amendment to breadth, to the Board for review.

In cases where the Board receives a referral for a proposed breadth amendment and that proposed amendment is

- from a College that has had a successful review of the breadth curriculum within the

previous seven years and

- not considered a “major modification” (as defined above),
- the Secretariat will propose to the Board that, without external review, it make a positive recommendation on the proposed change. This process will appropriately offer those Colleges that have demonstrated capacity in delivering breadth a certain degree of flexibility.

Standards and Benchmarks for Breadth Reviews

The Board has four standards relevant to breadth reviews

1. Degree Level Standard
2. Program Content Standard
3. Program Delivery Standard
4. Capacity to Deliver Standard

The relevant benchmarks read as follows

Degree Level Standard

1. The program meets or exceeds the degree level standard and the College demonstrates how the program meets the elements of the standard.
2. Assessment of individual student work in the terminal stage of the program that reflects exemplary, average, and minimally acceptable performance demonstrates that the degree-level Standard has been achieved.

Program Content Standard

3. The curriculum (core¹ and non-core²) contributes to the achievement of
 - a) critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, written and oral communication skills
 - b) knowledge of society and culture, and skills relevant to civic engagement.
 - c) All courses provide exposure to increasingly complex theory at the degree level and, in applied or professional courses and where otherwise appropriate, the application of that theory to practice to the demands of practice in the field(s).
4. Where applicable, the curriculum reflects appropriate levels of Ontario and Canadian content.
5. The curriculum (core and non-core) reflects current knowledge in its field(s).
6. Non-core courses provide
 - a) knowledge in at least two of the following outside the core: i) humanities, ii) sciences, iii) social sciences, iv) global cultures (including Indigenous cultures), v) mathematics
 - b) more than introductory knowledge of the distinctive assumptions and modes of analysis of a discipline outside the core fields of study.
7. In undergraduate programs, the balance of core and non-core/breadth courses is normally achieved as follows:
 - a) 20% of the program hours are in non-core courses, which can be any degree level courses outside of the core³

¹ Core courses are those that contribute to the development of knowledge in the main field/s of study, as identified by the degree nomenclature, or in a related field. For example, psychology, statistics and history are different fields. Because the field of psychology uses scientific method as one of its methodological approaches, statistics would be a related field and would be a **core** course in a psychology degree program; statistics would be a non-core course in a history program.

² Non-core courses are those that contribute to the knowledge in fields outside of the main field/s of study. For Ontario Colleges the Liberal Arts curriculum may provide non-core courses, but so may courses offered as part of other degree programs.

³ An applicant may demonstrate through alternative approaches that the degree program meets the breadth/non-core requirements typical of such programs as offered at other postsecondary institutions. For example, undergraduate programs

- b) at least one non-core course is an elective, freely chosen by the student.

Program Delivery Standard

8. Student assignments and their assessments
- a) demonstrate the achievement of the stated program and degree level learning outcomes and
 - b) provide appropriate information to students about their achievement levels.

Capacity to Deliver Standard

9. The College provides and maintains sufficient
- a) numbers of academic and other staff to develop and deliver the program ⁴
 - b) student and faculty access to learning and information resources⁵
 - c) facilities to support and deliver the program, to support independent student learning and academic gathering, and to meet the demands of the projected student enrolment. The interdependence with other study programs is considered.
10. All faculty^{6,7}
- teaching in the professional or main field of study (core)
 - acting as thesis supervisors and/or members of examining committees, where appropriate,
 - teaching non-core courses
 - a) have, where relevant, professional credentials and related work experience
 - b) hold an academic credential at least one degree higher than that offered by the program in the field or in a closely related field/discipline
 - c) engage in a level of scholarship, research, or creative activity sufficient to ensure their currency in the field⁸
 - d) are adequately trained for the delivery mode.

associated with accrediting bodies or other industry/professional regulatory bodies may depart from this norm, especially if meeting the 20% non-core benchmark would drive the total program to an extraordinary number of credit hours.

⁴ The required minimum faculty and staff members will depend upon the method of delivery, enrolments, and the complexity and variety of specializations.

⁵ For example, there are adequate resources and processes to acquaint faculty, students, and course designers with new software or systems as they are adopted for the delivery mode of the program.

⁶ To satisfy the following benchmarks, and in compliance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, the applicant has obtained the written consent of individual faculty members to submit their CVs to the Board.

⁷ Exceptions to any benchmarks pertaining to faculty must be

- a) based on the absence of a related program credential in a university or other extraordinary circumstances
- b) justified in writing with specific reference to the Board's Capacity to Deliver Standard and approved by the President or, on explicit delegation, the applicant's senior academic officer. The signed document must be kept for review at the time of any request for renewed consent.

⁸ In reviewing faculty members' currency and engagement with scholarship, research, or creative activity, the following may be considered, provided that these contributions are in a form (in a phrase adapted from Boyer) "subject to critical review and allowing use/exchange by other members of the scholarly community." In all cases, such contributions may take digital form. In general, the Board seeks evidence that faculty are intellectually engaged with developments in their fields, including but not limited to

- publishing and/or reviewing professional publications in their fields
- participation and/or presentations at provincial, national, and international conferences, competitions, or exhibitions in their fields
- engagement with the scholarship of teaching and learning
- participation in regulatory and accrediting association workshops, degree audits, or related work in their fields
- engagement in basic and/or applied research, labour market research, and/or related industry needs assessments
- application of conceptual knowledge to current practice in their fields, such as reports to industry or consulting work
- creative contributions to their fields through exhibitions or related forms
- development of case studies in their fields.

11. At least 50% of the students' experience in the professional or main field of study and in the non-core areas is in courses taught by a faculty member holding the terminal academic credential in the field or in a closely related field/discipline.^{9,10}

Documentation Commonly Submitted for Breadth Capacity Reviews

- A schedule listing all courses which you wish to be considered as your breadth/non-core courses for degree programs. See *Appendix 1.1 Sample Breadth Schedule* (below) as a sample format.
- Course descriptions for the above courses: (brief outline of the subject to be investigated)
- Samples of student work from the third and fourth year courses above demonstrating that the breadth curriculum contributes to the achievement of the degree level learning outcomes. (Approximately 30 samples should be collected, divided equally into the categories "Exemplary", "Average" and "Minimally Acceptable")
- CVs of all faculty teaching breadth courses
- Information on any policies, procedures or directives that relate to breadth offerings that may answer questions such as
 - *What, if any, are the restrictions for students around using breadth course?*
 - *What policies/procedures are in place to ensure that the non-core curriculum contributes to the achievement of more than introductory knowledge in the humanities, sciences, social sciences, global cultures and/or mathematics?*
 - *How do you ensure that no more than 80% of the program hours are in courses in the core or main field(s) of study?*

⁹ Generally and in the context of a practicable schedule of teaching assignments, the percentage can be achieved if 50% of all faculty teaching core courses in the program hold the terminal academic credential in the field or in a closely related field/discipline or if 50% of all core courses or all hours in core courses in the program are taught by faculty with a terminal academic credential in the field or in a closely related field/discipline.

¹⁰ The doctorate is normally the terminal academic credential in all fields or disciplines with the exception of certain fields where a master's degree in the field/discipline is more typical. The Board expects that the faculty will hold the terminal academic credential

- a) in the same field/discipline area as the proposed program area
- b) in a field/discipline that can be shown to be closely related in content
- c) with a graduate level specialty in the same field/discipline.

Appendix 1.1

Sample Listing/Schedule of Breadth Courses

This is not a required format but an indication of the range of information that the Reviewer will require.

In determining the following breadth schedule, you will of course draw on instructors who have taught the various courses in the past, but the focus should be on instructors whom you anticipate will teach each section of the course going forward.

Course Title	Year Level	Total Course Semester Hours	Course Prerequisites and Co-requisites	Instructor(s)	Instructor's Highest Qualification Earned and Discipline of Study
Communications: Critical Thinking & Writing	1	42	NA	Prof. Lee Prof. Chan	PhD Rhetoric PhD English
Contemporary Canadian Literature	2	42	NA	Prof. Cooper	PhD English
Global Perspectives	2	42	NA	Faculty to be appointed	MA minimum, PhD preferred
Ethical Practices in Research	3	42	Philosophy 101	Prof. Berger	PhD Philosophy
Indigenous Perspectives	2	42	NA	Prof. Nez	MA Sociology
Extinction: Biodiversity and Human Action	3	48	Biology 101	Prof. Adamovic	MSc Biology