

Principles of institutional quality assurance in Canadian higher education



The following principles have been endorsed by the executive head of each member of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada.

Each AUCC member institution has a mission statement and objectives which underpin the development and assessment of its academic programs. Each university is committed to ensuring that appropriate standards are achieved and maintained in its programs and that it is offering a high quality education. To these ends:

Quality assurance and improvement

The institution has in place a formal, approved, transparent policy committing it to ensuring the quality and continuous improvement of its academic programs.

Where applicable, the institution is also in compliance with the requirements of a provincial or regional authority having responsibility for quality assurance either through that agency's verification that the institution's quality review policy and processes meet an agreed standard, or through the agency's own assessment of the programs offered.

The authority responsible for implementation of the institutional policy and for action in response to recommendations resulting from the quality assurance process is clearly identified.

There is a procedure for the regular review of the institution's quality assurance policy and related processes.

Scope and frequency of reviews

The policy applies to current and planned programs.

The policy is comprehensive in its coverage of all undergraduate and graduate programs.

The policy applies to all programs whether campus-based or delivered at a distance, in Canada or across borders.

The full range of the institution's academic programs is subject to review on a regular cycle.

The policy defines the elements of the program reviews.

The policy includes an appropriate mechanism to review interdisciplinary programs.

Key characteristics of the quality review

The quality assessment process is based on self-evaluation and peer review.

The process includes, as a fundamental dimension, the involvement of external disciplinary experts.

The process involves internal and external stakeholders including students, faculty, and the administration of the institution, and may also involve alumni and representatives of the community.

Where accreditation or certification processes exist for certain professional and other programs, the institution typically participates in them, and these standards are integrated into the institution's own quality review processes for these programs.

Information to the public

There is documentation to guide the quality assurance process, and this documentation is public.

In the interests of transparency and accountability, the results of the quality assessment are made public.

The policy, related processes and the calendar for assessments are known within the institution and among external stakeholders including government and the public-at-large.