

# Saskatchewan Higher Education Quality Assurance Board

## Quality Assurance Review Process Program Review Standards and Criteria

December 2023

The standards and criteria presented in this document are used by the Saskatchewan Higher Education Quality Assurance Board (SHEQAB) to conduct quality assurance reviews of institutions seeking authorization to provide degrees pursuant to *The Degree Authorization Act*.

These standards and criteria were approved by the Minister of Advanced Education on October 16, 2023 and supersede the standards and criteria approved May 14, 2014.

For further information, please contact:

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## The Saskatchewan Degree Authorization Process

On October 29, 2012, *The Degree Authorization Act* was proclaimed, *The Degree Authorization Regulations* were approved, and the Saskatchewan Higher Education Quality Assurance Board (SHEQAB) was established.

The Act and Regulations establish the process by which new degrees become authorized in Saskatchewan. The process comprises the following three phases of activity.

### Phase I – System Coordination Review

The System Coordination Review is conducted by the Ministry of Advanced Education. Its purpose is to ensure that a proposed new degree program is aligned with provincial needs and priorities and does not unnecessarily duplicate programming that is already available from other institutions in Saskatchewan.

Phase I begins with the submission of an *Application for Authorization*, in which the applicant institution must articulate the benefits of the proposed program to Saskatchewan, the anticipated demand for the program in the labour market, the institutional fit of the program, and program details such as the period of study, program capacity, tuition, courses and methods of delivery.

Each *Application for Authorization* is posted on the ministry's website for 30 days to enable other post-secondary institutions, professional and regulatory bodies, and the general public to view and comment on the proposed new program. The applicant institution is given the opportunity to respond to any feedback received during the posting process. The ministry then reviews the program relative to the criteria prescribed in section 8 of the Regulations, and provides its findings, along with the public input and the applicant's response to public input, to the provincial Cabinet. Cabinet determines whether to refer the *Application for Authorization* to the SHEQAB for quality assurance review purposes.

The Phase I review process is conducted on an annual basis beginning May 1st. All *Applications for Authorization* submitted by April 30<sup>th</sup> are forwarded to Cabinet as a group so that Cabinet can consider all new degree proposals at one time, rather than sporadically throughout the year.

### Phase II – Quality Assurance Review

When an *Application for Authorization* is referred to the SHEQAB, the Board first determines the type of quality assurance review required. The Board may decide that a **full review**, involving both an Organizational Review and a Program Review, is required. An **Organizational Review** assesses the capacity of the applicant institution to deliver the proposed program and determines if the institution's policies and practices meet approved quality assurance standards. A **Program Review** involves a more detailed look at the program itself.

Alternatively, the SHEQAB may decide on a **partial review**, which may consist of a Program Review only; a Program Review and certain elements of an Organizational Review; or certain elements of both a Program Review and an Organizational Review.

Based on the findings of the quality assurance review(s), the SHEQAB will recommend to the Minister of Advanced Education whether the program should or should not be authorized. The time required for the SHEQAB to conduct its reviews is not prescribed and will depend on many factors, including the nature of the proposed program, the preparedness of the applicant institution, and the availability of expert reviewers to conduct Organizational and Program Reviews on behalf of the Board.

### Phase III – Authorization and Monitoring

If the SHEQAB recommends that a program be authorized, the minister can either issue or refuse the authorization. The minister may refuse the authorization with Cabinet approval. In such an instance, the applicant will be given an opportunity to appeal the decision. If the SHEQAB recommends that the program not be authorized, the minister must refuse the authorization.

When a program is authorized, there will typically be terms and conditions attached to the authorization. The ministry and the SHEQAB monitor authorized programs to ensure that institutions adhere to the terms and conditions of authorization and continue to meet quality standards. Cyclical reporting is part of the monitoring process.

### The Program Review Process

A Program Self-Evaluation is the first step of the Program Review process. Through the self-evaluation process, an institution will assess its policies and practices against the standards and criteria presented in this document. The institution will then present its findings to the SHEQAB in the form of a *Program Self-Evaluation Report*.

The *Program Self-Evaluation Report* will be reviewed and evaluated by the SHEQAB, at which point the institution may be asked to make revisions or provide additional information. The report will then be reviewed by a panel of external experts selected by the SHEQAB. The panel members conduct a site visit to the applicant institution and prepare an evaluative report for the Board's consideration.

The standards are the overall requirements that must be met; the criteria are the factors or means by which the Board and the external review panel will assess if the standards have been met. In conducting a Program Review, the SHEQAB and the external review panel will be guided, but not limited, by the criteria; other issues or questions may emerge during the course of a review and the institution may be requested to provide additional information.

**NOTE:** The standards and criteria apply to institutions seeking authorization for baccalaureate and graduate-level (e.g., master's and doctoral) programs. The standards and criteria specifically applicable to graduate programs are noted as such and are supplemental to all other standards.

### Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework

In 2007, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) endorsed a *Ministerial Statement on Quality Assurance of Degree Education in Canada* (the CMEC Statement). The CMEC Statement, to which Saskatchewan is a signatory, includes the Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework (CDQF), which describes the relevant characteristics of degrees at the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels, as well as procedures and standards for assessing new degree-granting institutions and proposed new degree programs.

Institutions seeking authorization for a baccalaureate level program must meet the *Quality Assurance Review Process Bachelor's Degree Level Standard*, which describes the characteristics of a bachelor's degree and stipulates the demonstrable learning skills and level of mastery required at the bachelor's level. Similarly, institutions seeking authorization for a graduate level program must meet the *Quality Assurance Review Process Graduate Degree Level Standards*, which describe the characteristics of master's and doctoral degrees and stipulates the demonstrable learning skills and level of mastery required at these levels. Both the bachelor and graduate degree level standards are consistent with the CDQF.

The standards presented in this document generally align with the Procedures and Standards for *New Degree Program Quality Assessment* presented in the CDQF.

## Acknowledgements

The ministry and the SHEQAB wish to acknowledge, with thanks:

- the Government of British Columbia and the Degree Quality Assessment Board of British Columbia for allowing the use of its *Degree Program Review Criteria and Guidelines* to inform the development of the baccalaureate degree standards and criteria;
- the use of materials published by other provincial quality assurance agencies in Canada, including the Campus Alberta Quality Council, the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board of Ontario, and the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission, in the development of the standards and criteria for graduate degree standards and criteria;
- the offices of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research at the University of Regina and the College of Graduate Studies and Research at the University of Saskatchewan for their assistance in the development of graduate degree standards and criteria; and
- the use of materials published by the Campus Alberta Quality Council pertaining to quality assessment standards for programs delivered in blended, distributed or distance modes.

## Submission Guidelines for Applicants

The guidelines are intended to assist applicant institutions with the preparation of a *Program Self-Evaluation Report*. Applicant institutions are encouraged to contact the SHEQAB Secretariat prior to commencing the self-evaluation process.

### Relationship between Organizational Review Standards and Program Review Standards

[Appendix A](#) outlines the organizational and program standards used by the SHEQAB and shows how the two sets of standards align. When preparing for a Program Review, an institution that has already undergone an Organizational Review may be able to draw from materials prepared for the Organizational Review, particularly materials related to institutional and academic policies and procedures.

[Appendix B](#) is a list of policies that an applicant institution should have in place and be prepared to address during the course of an Organizational or Program Review. For ease of reference, the policies are cross-referenced with applicable standards. Institutions may wish to use the list as a planning tool or checklist to assist in the preparation of the *Program Self-Evaluation Report* and when preparing for the external panel review. Please note that the list is not definitive; external review panels and/or the SHEQAB may identify other operational areas/policies during the Program Review.

### Length of Submission

Submissions should be complete and concise. A limit of 5,000 words is suggested to prevent the report from becoming too long and unmanageable for consideration by the SHEQAB and the external review panel.

## **Structure of Submission**

The report should be structured to align with the numbering of the standards as follows:

1. Executive Summary
2. Program Review
3. Program Design, Content and Delivery
4. Program Resources
5. Faculty and Staff
6. Academic Policies, Admissions and Credit Transfer
7. Contingency Plans in the Event of Program Discontinuation
8. Credential Recognition and Nomenclature.

## **Pagination**

For ease of reference, all pages within the submission (including appendices) must be numbered.

## **Saskatchewan Public Post-Secondary Institutions**

Where requirements pertain to items that are governed by Saskatchewan legislation, or fall under current government agreements and/or reporting requirements, institutions may simply reference the relevant section of the legislation or report(s). When referencing a report, please indicate the name of the document, its date of publication, and the relevant page number(s).

## **Use of Appendices**

The use of appendices is encouraged to present supplementary information and/or information considered proprietary. For example, when providing information on policies, please include only a summary of the policies in the main body of the submission and attach full policies as appendices. Examples of proprietary information include referee letters; letters of support which contain personal information, such as individuals' names and addresses; and financial information. Appendices should be cross-referenced to the applicable standard(s) and criteria.

## **Use of Links**

The use of links to information housed on an institutional website is permitted, however, they should be used carefully. The overuse of links can make it difficult to review the document. Ensure that links are active and a hard copy compilation of all linked documents is included with your submission.

## **Use of Previously-Prepared Documents**

If the institution has undergone a previous quality assurance review (e.g., for accreditation purposes), =previously-prepared documentation may be submitted for consideration; however, please ensure that materials are updated and formatted to adhere to these guidelines.

### **Electronic and Hard Copies**

The *Program Self-Evaluation Report* should be submitted as an Adobe PDF document. In addition, one complete hard copy of the Report and all referenced documents (including linked documents and appendices) must be submitted to the SHEQAB Secretariat at the following mailing address:

Secretariat, Saskatchewan Higher Education Quality Assurance Board (SHEQAB)  
1120 – 2010 12th Ave  
Regina, Canada S4P 0M3

### **Permission to Consult with External Agencies**

Institutions must provide SHEQAB with written permission to consult with any professional, accrediting or regulatory body named in the submitted documentation. Permission should be provided in the form of a letter from the institution's legal counsel. (See Standard 1.2.)

### **Out-of-Province Applicants**

An out-of-province applicant must specifically address how the provision of the proposed program will occur in Saskatchewan, and identify any differences between Saskatchewan delivery and delivery in the home jurisdiction.

### **Release of Information**

Submissions will be subject to the provisions of [\*The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act\*](#) and to any SHEQAB policies regarding the release of information.



## 1. Executive Summary

Provide an Executive Summary that succinctly presents the purpose of the program and a summary of the program's key objectives and outcomes.

The Executive Summary must include the following information:

- a) An overview of the institution's history, mission and academic goals.
- b) The proposed credential to be awarded, including the specific discipline or field of study.
- c) The location of the program.
- d) Faculty(ies) or school(s) offering the proposed program.
- e) Anticipated program start date.
- f) Anticipated completion time in years or semesters.
- g) A summary of the program addressing:
  - the aims, goals and/or objectives of the program;
  - the anticipated contribution of the program to the mandate and strategic plan of the institution;
  - linkages between the learning outcomes and the curriculum design, an indication as to the requirement for a work experience/work place term for degree completion, and, if so, a description of the purpose and role of the work experience within the program;
  - to what extent the curriculum, if not originally developed for a Canadian audience, will be modified to incorporate relevant Canadian content/practices and Canadian regulatory and legal frameworks;
  - to what extent the curriculum addresses the particular demographics of Saskatchewan (e.g., First Nations population);
  - potential areas/sectors of employment for graduates and/or opportunities for further study;
  - delivery methods;
  - program strengths;
  - an overview of the level of support and recognition from other post-secondary institutions and relevant regulatory or professional bodies, where applicable; and plans for admissions and credit transfer; and
  - related programs within the institution or within other Saskatchewan post secondary institutions. Indicate rationale for duplication, if any.
- h) Provide the name, title, phone number and e-mail address of the institutional contact person, in the event more information is required.

### Submission Guidelines:

- Some of the required information may have already been provided in the program proposal that formed part of the *Application for Authorization* and may be duplicated here.
- The length of this section should be restricted to two or three pages.

## 2. Program Review and Assessment

### Standard 2

The institution implements a periodic external program review and assessment process to ensure the ongoing currency of the program and the quality of its learning outcomes.

#### Criteria:

- a) The institution has a formal, institutionally approved policy and procedure for the periodic review of degree programs (i.e., formative and ongoing reviews and a summative review, normally every five to seven years) against published standards (including the institution's own learning outcome standards for the program) that has the following characteristics:
  - A self-study undertaken by faculty members and administrators of the program based on evidence relating to program performance, including strengths and weaknesses, desired improvements, and future directions. For example, a self-study considers:
    - Involvement of students participating in the program or unit. In most cases, the self-study is student focused as it aims to assess the student experience and, in the case of academic programs, to assess the quality of teaching and learning;
    - the continuing appropriateness of the program's structure, admission requirements, method of delivery, and curriculum for the program's educational goals and standards;
    - the adequacy and effective use of resources (physical, technological, financial and human);
    - faculty performance, including the quality of teaching and supervision and demonstrable currency in the field of specialization;
    - the continuing appropriateness of learning outcomes achieved by students/graduates to meet the program's stated goals, the degree level standards, and, where appropriate, the standards of any related regulatory, accrediting or professional bodies;
    - the continuing adequacy of the methods used for evaluating student progress and achievement to ensure that the program outcomes and degree level standards have been achieved; and
    - where appropriate, the graduate rate and the graduate employment rate, as well as the satisfaction levels of students, graduates, employers, and the program's advisory board.
  - An assessment conducted by a panel consisting of experts external to the institution that normally includes:
    - a site visit;
    - a report of the external panel that includes recommendations for strengthening program quality;
    - the institutional response to the external panel's recommendations; and
    - a summary of the conclusions of the expert panel's evaluation, and the institutional response to the evaluation, both made publicly available by the institution.

Note that for programs subject to accreditation reviews, the accreditation review process does not supplant the external review required by this standard.

**Supplementary Criteria for Institutions Proposing a Graduate Program:**

- b) The program review process includes an assessment of individual student work in the terminal stage of the program against program outcomes.

**Submission Guidelines:**

- Identify the mechanisms through which the achievement of student learning outcomes will be measured.
- Describe the process of maintaining the currency of the program and the quality of its learning outcomes.
- Append the formal, approved policy(ies) and procedures relative to periodic program review.
- Append the findings of any program reviews that have previously occurred.
- Verify that the program review process includes the advice of independent academic experts external to the institution.

**Submission Guidelines for Institutions Proposing a Graduate Program:**

- Describe how, in the terminal stage of the program, individual student work is assessed against program outcomes.

### 3. Program Design, Content and Delivery

#### Standard 3

Students receive an education of a breadth and depth comparable to similar programs at the proposed degree level offered by recognized provincial, national and international post-secondary institutions.

The curriculum is current and reflects the state of knowledge in the field, or fields (in the case of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary programs).

The content of the program, in both subject matter and outcome standards, is appropriate to the level of the degree and the field of study.

The design of the program, including both content and delivery methodologies, assures that students can achieve the learning outcomes of the program.

The institution has consulted appropriate individuals and organizations in the development of the program.

For a program using a blended, distributed, or distance delivery model, the institution considered national and international norms and benchmarks in the design of the program.

#### Criteria:

- a) The program has been approved by the institution's senior academic governance body (e.g., senate, education council or equivalent), or an academic planning and priorities committee to which it has delegated authority, and which has sufficient qualifications to ensure that the curriculum is current and reflects the state of knowledge in the field and the needs of the field in practice.
- b) The learning outcomes and standards for the program demonstrate how graduates will be prepared with a sound basis in theory, as well as with the intellectual, communications and other skills necessary to be effective in the workplace upon graduation, and how graduates will remain current in their field.
- c) Courses provide exposure to increasingly complex theory, and, in those programs with an applied or professional focus, the application of that theory to practice in the field.
- d) The program has sufficient breadth (i.e., courses outside the professional or main field of studies, some of which are free electives) and/or an appropriate balance of professional and liberal studies.
- e) Time allotments assigned to the program as a whole, and to its components, are appropriate to the stated learning outcomes.
- f) Procedures are in place for the monitoring and evaluation of students, which will provide adequate feedback to the program administrators and to students.
- g) The type and frequency of evaluations of student learning are commensurate with the stated learning outcomes and provide appropriate information to students about their achievement levels.

- h) Levels of student achievement for successful course completion and the graduation requirements for the program are appropriate to the learning outcome goals and degree level standard and allow for confirmation that a student is progressing normally through the program.
- i) Programs with an applied or professional focus that include work experiences, field placements, or other experiential learning opportunities have appropriate articulated learning outcome goals and a method for joint instructor and employer evaluation leading to the assignment of a grade.
- j) The institution has the expertise and resources (both human and material) to support the proposed method of delivery and ensure its effectiveness.
- k) The delivery method(s) and quality assurance policies are appropriate to the content, the students and the learning outcomes.
- l) Where applicable, policies pertaining to technology-based modes of delivery (including computer/web-based) ensure:
  - student and faculty preparation and orientation;
  - reliable and sufficient course management systems;
  - accessible technical assistance for students and faculty;
  - appropriate hardware, software, and other technological resources and media; and
  - well-maintained and current technology and equipment.
- m) In developing the program, the institution has done due diligence in consulting with employers, students, program advisory committees and other post-secondary institutions.
- n) The program has undergone an external review by academics from Saskatchewan and other jurisdictions.
- o) There is evidence of support for the program and, in cases where consultations resulted in negative feedback, the institution has clearly addressed that feedback.
- p) Program leadership anticipates the ongoing evolution of their disciplines, which is reflected in evolving program delivery and program planning activities. There is an anticipation and analysis of how future trends in the discipline may impact on the recruitment and selection of students; on the content and quality of program delivery; and, ultimately, on the student experience.
- q) Per the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's "Calls to Action" related to education (e.g., 1, 12, 16, 24, 28, 62, 63, 65, 86, 92), consideration is given to the implementation of Indigenous content and knowledge into program curricula and ensuring that there is respectful use of Indigenous knowledge and wisdom (i.e., where possible, developed in collaboration with the Indigenous communities where the content originates).

**Supplementary Criteria for Institutions Proposing Graduate Programs:**

- r) Student learning success is assessed through written and oral examinations of knowledge and skills in all aspects of the discipline.
- s) Interdisciplinary collaborations provide opportunities for the acquisition, synthesis, application and integration of knowledge, cultivating the intellectual development of graduate students.

- t) Graduate course instruction uses state of the art modalities and processes that enhance the student learning experience.

**Criteria for Institutions Proposing a Program that relies on a Blended, Distributed, or Distance Delivery Model:**

- u) When important elements of a program are supplied by individuals or groups outside the institution, or outsourced to other organizations or contractors, the responsibility for program quality remains with the credentialing institution(s), that is, the institution(s) awarding the degree.
- v) When adopting materials supplied by other institutions or developed within a consortium, the credentialing institution(s) negotiate(s) permission to amend materials if changes are necessary to meet SHEQAB quality standards.
- w) The institution has in place appropriate risk management provisions, including those that ensure that:
- the technological infrastructure is stable, reliable, well maintained and secure;
  - a disaster recovery plan is available in the event that servers or other technologies fail; and
  - students will not be adversely affected should an agreement with a partner or contractor be abrogated.
- x) The institution has appropriate safeguards in place to assure the authentication of student identity and the integrity of student work. Documented procedures and appropriate storage protocols assure that security of personal information is protected in conducting assessments and evaluations and in the dissemination of results. The institution has established procedures and timelines by which personal data no longer needed for authentication purposes will be destroyed.
- y) The institution has policies to deal with the requirements of copyright and intellectual property laws, and to address issues pertaining to digital rights management and appropriate use of learning object repositories.
- z) The technology used to administer and deliver the program, both pedagogically and administratively, is adequate to facilitate program delivery. The institution is committed to appropriate updating of any technologies employed and the identification and evaluation of emerging technologies. Sufficient resources are available for development and sustainability. The support for the building and maintenance of the technology for learning activities is maintained and supported and is as failsafe and secure as possible.
- aa) The institution has given due consideration to the substantial amount of learning that comes from peers, and to the implications of cohort models and other team, collaborative and networked learning environments.
- ab) Students are full informed, in a timely manner, of:
- the competencies, the self-discipline and the equipment they will need to participate in the program;
  - the program, courses, required texts and/or materials and other requirements to enable them to acquire the materials for their course as it begins; and
  - the costs associated with the mode of delivery of the program.

- ac) Students are provided with training in how to use online tools, and are updated when changes are planned or implemented.
- ad) Procedures are in place to ensure that students are supported in their use of the hardware and software required and have access to advice on these matters. In particular, before starting the program, students are advised of the technical and time requirements (e.g., synchronous learning sessions).
- ae) Individuals involved in course design and delivery are adequately trained and assisted in the technology and pedagogy of online learning. Academic staff are assisted and supported in making the transition from classroom to online teaching, or vice versa, and are assessed and mentored as they progress in their online teaching.
- af) Academic staff are provided with an orientation to, and sufficient ongoing training/technical support for, any hardware and software resources required in the program, and are also updated in a timely manner about any impending or actual changes that could affect their access to or involvement in their online programs.

**Submission Guidelines:**

- Describe the program’s structure and the length (i.e., number of credit hours) and proposed student evaluation methods.
- Demonstrate that the program is designed and the content is structured to assure that the student is expected to meet clear and achievable learning objectives and outcomes.
- Identify the prescribed set of core and prerequisite courses. Course descriptions should be of the level of detail found in an academic calendar. Append full course outlines.
- Demonstrate that the content of the program, in both subject matter and learning outcomes, is appropriate to the level of the degree and the field of study.
- Demonstrate that the curriculum is current and reflects the state of knowledge in the field, or fields in the case of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary programs.
- Identify which courses already exist at the institution and which are new courses that will be implemented as a result of the program.
- Explain how the course and curriculum requirements will contribute to the intended goals of the program.
- Describe any accreditation requirements.
- Describe the learning methodology(ies) to be used. Indicate which of the following will be incorporated into the learning environment of the program, and how it/they will be used:
  - experiential learning (e.g., co-operative education, clinical practice, work terms or simulated work experiences);
  - blended, distributed or distance education;
  - independent study, computer assisted instruction, etc.;
  - lectures, labs, tutorials; and
  - other methodologies as applicable.
- Describe the procedures in place for the monitoring and evaluation of students.

- Demonstrate that the program has the expertise and resources to support the proposed method(s) of delivery and ensure its effectiveness.
- Append any policies pertaining to blended, distributed or distance modes of delivery.
- Where work experiences or field placements are a component of the program, describe:
  - how they will be utilized to achieve the program’s objectives;
  - how they will be developed and organized;
  - the level of support the institution will extend to students seeking these experiences;
  - how such experiences will provide the opportunity for students to put the stated learning outcomes into practice; and,
  - how students will be evaluated during their placements.
- Provide a list and brief explanation of the nature of the consultations that have occurred in the development of the program. Append all written comments, both positive and negative, from:
  - relevant employers;
  - relevant professional associations;
  - program advisory committees;
  - other Saskatchewan post-secondary institutions;
  - post-secondary institutions outside Saskatchewan;
  - experts in the proposed field of study; and
  - external academic consultants.
- Append a copy of the report prepared by the external review committee that evaluated the program.
- If there are other individuals or groups that have been involved in the design of the program, describe their roles in the collection and evaluation of information leading to the development and submission of this self-evaluation.
- Describe the plans and expectations for continuing program development and self-assessment.
- Include a list of anticipated employment destinations for graduates of the program.
- Provide evidence of sufficient planning to launch and deliver the program by the projected date of implementation.

**Submission Guidelines for Institutions Proposing a Graduate Program:**

- Discuss the relationship of the proposed program to undergraduate and other graduate programs (if any) of the institution. Consider aspects such as interdisciplinary programs, service function, joint research projects, support programs, etc.



## 4. Program Resources

### Standard 4

Physical, learning and information resources (both start-up and continuing) are in place to assure a quality degree program. These include classrooms, shops, laboratories and other facilities, equipment, libraries and other information resources, computing facilities, as well as cooperative work placements/practical/internships if part of the program.

### Graduate Degree Standard 4

The institution's laboratory, computer, studio, and /or creative facilities, as well as essential information resources, adequately support graduate faculty and students in their research.

Note: In some cases, an institution may not be able to ensure resources are in place until after the program has received authorization. In these instances, the institution must bring forward a proposal based on a realistic plan for putting the appropriate resources in place as an alternative to demonstrating that all resources are currently in place.

### Criteria:

- a) The physical plant, equipment, technology, and support services adequately support the institution's educational and student activities.
- b) There is evidence of reasonable student and faculty access to learning and information resources (such as library(ies), databases, computing equipment, classroom equipment, laboratories, shops, specialized equipment, etc.) sufficient in scope, quality, currency and type to support students, faculty and instructional staff in the program.
- c) The institution is committed to providing and maintaining necessary learning and other resources specific to the program, and to supplement them as necessary to meet standards applicable to the field.
- d) The institution has submitted any agreements describing the sharing of resources and services with other institutions.

### Supplementary Criteria for Institutions Proposing a Graduate Program:

- e) Appropriate space is provided for graduate students.
- f) Describe the extent and nature of financial support available to graduate students and the financial resources dedicated to support the proposed size, scope and nature of the program (including the critical mass of students necessary to make the program viable).

**Submission Guidelines:**

- Describe and discuss the adequacy of the resources that will be required to mount the program, including:
  - library and learning resources (i.e., on-site library resources relevant to the program area for faculty and students and other library access such as web-based or inter-library arrangements), including the number of print holdings relevant to the field of study and number of electronic holdings (i.e., program-specific databases);
  - computers and computer access;
  - classrooms, laboratories and equipment;
  - existing and shared resources at the institution or at other institutions that will be used to offer the program; and
  - any additional resources that will be required to offer the program.
- Demonstrate that the institution has the necessary resources to mount and sustain a quality program, or a realistic plan for putting the appropriate resources in place subsequent to program authorization.
- Provide the implementation schedule for the program and evidence of the appropriateness of the schedule and readiness of the institution to offer the program.
- Describe the institution's plans for renewal and upgrading of learning and information resources.

## 5. Faculty and Staff

### Standard 5

The program, whether disciplinary or interdisciplinary in nature, is supported by suitably qualified academic faculty and instructional staff to develop and deliver the program and to supervise students.

#### Graduate Degree Standard 5 – Graduate Supervision Plans

The institution has a detailed graduate supervision plan in place to organize the advising, supervision and monitoring of graduate students.

Note: In some cases, it may not be feasible for an institution to hire faculty until the program receives authorization. In such cases, the institution must provide the specific faculty selection criteria that will be used to ensure new faculty hires have the necessary qualifications.

#### Criteria:

- a) Faculty and instructors are sufficient in numbers and have the appropriate credentials to develop and deliver the program. Staff resources are sufficient to ensure the coverage required within the discipline.
- b) The institution's policies and practices on the type of academic appointment of faculty (e.g., continuing or regular appointments and temporary assignments) are appropriate to sustain the program.
- c) The institution has satisfactory policies pertaining to faculty (see Appendix B) that address issues such as:
  - the protection of academic freedom;
  - academic/professional credentials;
  - the regular review of faculty performance;
  - the means of ensuring that faculty knowledge of the field is current;
  - teaching, supervision and student counseling loads;
  - the professional development of faculty; and
  - an equitable, diverse and inclusive faculty culture.
- d) Faculty members have an appropriate level of scholarly output and/or research or creative activity for the program.
- e) For programs with an applied or professional focus, including programs that include clinical practice components, faculty maintain continuing academic and professional competence and accreditation in the relevant area.

#### Supplementary Criteria for Institutions Proposing a Graduate Program:

- f) The program is anchored by a designated complement of faculty who are primarily responsible for its delivery and continuity.

- g) Faculty have an appropriate level of scholarly output and/or research or creative activity to ensure the intellectual vitality of the proposed graduate program.
- h) The institution has engaged a critical mass of scholars/researchers, not only in the program area but in related areas, with a range of expertise to allow for intellectual leadership and challenge.
- i) Faculty teaching graduate courses will normally have the terminal academic degree credential in the field in which they are teaching.
- j) No fewer than 80 per cent of the faculty teaching in the program hold the terminal academic credential in the field or in a closely related field/discipline.
- k) Faculty providing doctoral supervision have an active research program in their discipline or field of study.
- l) All faculty acting as thesis/dissertation supervisors and/or as members of examining committees hold the terminal academic credential in the field or in a closely related field/discipline.
- m) The program has criteria for the appointment of faculty who will supervise graduate students and for the appointment of supporting or adjunct faculty.
- n) Mentoring practices are in place to enhance the graduate supervisory skills of faculty.
- o) The program specifies graduate supervisory loads for faculty and advising and monitoring practices for graduate students.

**Submission Guidelines:**

- Indicate the number of faculty and instructors (present and future) and other staff required to mount the program and the required faculty qualifications. Provide an enrolment plan for the program (e.g., four-year projection of cumulative enrolment) that accounts for projected attrition and indicates the number of staff (faculty, technical, teaching assistants, etc.) assigned to the program. Indicate if any of these faculty positions will be new to the institution. In cases where new faculty will be hired, provide the specific faculty selection criteria that will be used to ensure new faculty hires have the necessary qualifications for the disciplinary and specialty areas of the program.
- Provide any policies pertaining to faculty and instructors specific to the program, including:
  - policies that define the minimum academic/professional credentials required of faculty teaching all courses in the program, and, where appropriate, serving as members of project or examining committees;
  - protection of academic freedom;
  - review of faculty performance;
  - teaching, supervision and student counseling loads; and
  - professional development for faculty.
- Provide the institution's policies and practices on the type of academic appointment of faculty specific to the program (e.g., continuing or regular appointments and temporary appointments).
- Append the Curriculum Vitae (CVs) of faculty members and instructors assigned to the program to demonstrate that they possess an appropriate balance from amongst the following requirements:

- academic credentials appropriate to the program. Faculty teaching baccalaureate degrees with an applied or professional focus must have an appropriate balance of professional qualifications, academic credentials and experience;
- required academic and/or desired professional credentials; and
- current involvement in research and professional activity representing an appropriate balance of research and intellectual leadership in the discipline and the field of specialization.

By submitting the CVs, the institution attests to have received permission to distribute the CVs, for the purposes of this program assessment, from all faculty and staff whose CVs are included and that measures are in place to ensure the truthfulness and completeness of the information contained in the CVs.

- Describe the additional staff resources that will be drawn upon to support the program (e.g., adjunct faculty, guest lecturers and administrative support).
- Provide a human resources deployment plan for the first five years that takes into account the proposed program as well as current offerings.
- Provide an estimate of the additional human resource needs beyond the first five years.
- Provide any additional information to confirm that a critical mass of faculty exists and that the proposed faculty complement provides sufficient breadth of disciplinary expertise.
- Describe any institutional resources and plans for future development of faculty to enhance their research/scholarship.

**Submission Guidelines for Institutions Proposing a Graduate Program:**

- Provide a summary table listing all faculty to support the program, including:
  - Name, rank, status
  - Highest degree held, university that granted it, year obtained
  - Specialty
  - List of courses taught (with course number)\*
  - Number of supervisions (bachelor, masters, PhD) underway versus completed\*
  - Source of grants received\*
  - Total amount of grants (\$)\*
  - Number of refereed publications\*
    - \*last seven years; please specify which years are included.
- Append the CVs of all faculty listed in the table above. By submitting the CVs, the institution attests to have received permission to distribute the CVs, for the purposes of this program assessment, from all faculty and staff whose CVs are included and that measures are in place to ensure the truthfulness and completeness of the information contained in the CVs.
- Describe the composition of the faculty to support the program, for example:
  - academic/professional credentials required of faculty teaching courses in the program;
  - academic/professional credentials required of faculty acting as thesis/research/clinical/exhibition supervisors in the program (include a description of the academic/professional credentials of faculty who participate on such committees, but not as the supervisor, where these credentials differ);

- expected versus current teaching, mentoring, supervision, etc. responsibilities of faculty in the program; and
  - proportions of full-time to part-time faculty for the program.
- Identify areas of content and research specialization among the core and supporting faculty.
- Specify the criteria related to:
  - the appointment of faculty who will supervise students;
  - the appointment of supporting or adjunct faculty; and
  - mentoring practices to enhance the supervisory skills of faculty.
- Specify graduate supervisory loads for faculty.

## 6. Academic Policies, Admissions and Credit Transfer

### 6.1 Academic Policies

#### Standard 6.1

The program is governed by academic and program policies and procedures appropriate to the administration of a full-time or part-time program at the proposed degree level.

#### Criteria:

Appropriate academic and program policies and procedures are in place.

#### Submission Guidelines:

- See [Appendix B](#).

### 6.2 Admission, Credit Transfer, and Prior Learning Assessment

#### Standard 6.2

The program provides flexible admission and credit transfer arrangements.

Where appropriate, the program, courses or curricular elements facilitate credit transfer by other post-secondary institutions both within the province and within other jurisdictions.

#### Graduate Degree Standard 6.2

The program's admissions and progression policies enable recruitment, retention and recognition of high-quality students who have the capacity and preparation necessary to meet the challenges of the program and to successfully complete their degrees.

#### Criteria:

- a) Admissions policies and procedures, including those related to direct entry and mature students, are clearly established and consistent with the level of the program. Students are informed of these policies and procedures and are advised when changes are made to them.
- b) Admissions requirements for the program are consistent with the post-secondary character of degree-granting organizations and, where appropriate, ensure suitable forms of prior learning assessment for admission to the program.
- c) Policies and procedures related to credit transfer are clearly established and consistent with the level of the program. Students are informed of these policies and procedures and are advised when changes are made to them.

- d) Policies on admissions and credit transfer reflect the institution's willingness to consider applicants from any post-secondary institution.
- e) Residency requirements are appropriate.
- f) Admissions policies and/or practices are demonstrative of equity, diversity, and inclusion and remove barriers to access.

**Supplementary Criteria for Institutions Proposing a Graduate Program:**

- g) Admission to a master's or doctoral program will normally require either a recognized undergraduate or graduate degree with an appropriate specialization or relevant bridging studies.
- h) The institution will expect those admitted to a graduate program to have achieved an academic standing in the previous degree (or equivalent) to enable success in the program and will require that students maintain standards appropriate to graduate study in order to progress and graduate from the program.
- i) The program has a systematic and effective process for recruiting high quality graduate students.

**Submission Guidelines:**

- Describe the admission requirements for the program. Append a copy of admissions policies and procedures.
- Institutions are encouraged to have in place policies and procedures that enable students to receive credit for previous post-secondary studies so that students are not required to repeat courses previously completed.
  - Describe and append a copy of the policy/practice for the granting of credit for equivalent courses and/or programs completed at other institutions.
  - Describe and append a copy of the policy/practice for the granting of credit based on prior learning assessment.
- Describe the residency requirements for the program. Specify the minimum number of credits that must be completed at the institution awarding the degree.
- Describe existing arrangements or plans for establishing articulation agreements with other institutions to enable credit transfer for courses completed in the proposed program.

**Submission Guidelines for Institutions Proposing a Graduate Program:**

- Specify the profile for students to be recruited to the program, the desired balance between different types of students in the program (e.g., part-time/full-time, master's/PhD/undergraduate, etc.) and the critical mass of graduate students necessary to provide students with an excellent program and to maintain program viability.
- Demonstrate that there is a systematic and effective process in place for recruiting high quality graduate students.
- Provide evidence that there is the expectation that those admitted to graduate programs will have achieved an academic standing in the previous degree (or equivalent) to enable success in the program, and that the program will require students to maintain standards appropriate to graduate study in order to progress and graduate from the program.
- Describe and assess the process for monitoring graduate students' progress and performance, and for advising students regarding academic and career matters.



## 7. Contingency Plans in the Event of Program Discontinuation

### Standard 7

The institution has a contingency plan in place to ensure students will have the opportunity to complete their studies in the event the program is discontinued.

A private institution has the ability to provide financial security in the required form and amount.

#### Criteria:

For public and private institutions:

- a) The institution has a contingency plan that addresses how students will be able to complete their studies in the event of discontinuation of the program, including arrangements made with other post-secondary institutions to train-out students impacted by the program's discontinuation.

For private institutions:

- b) The institution is capable of providing financial security in the form and amount as prescribed in sections 23 to 26 of *The Degree Authorization Regulations*.

#### Submission Guidelines:

- Private institutions should consult Part VII and VIII of *The Degree Authorization Regulations* for requirements related to the provision of financial security and potential claims against such security.

## 8. Credential Recognition and Nomenclature

### Standard 8

The credential aligns with Canadian standards, as exemplified by the Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework (CDQF) and stated in the *Quality Assurance Review Process Bachelor's Degree Standard* or the *Quality Assurance Review Process Graduate Degree Standards*, as appropriate.

The credential is recognized and accepted by other post-secondary institutions, professional and licensing bodies, and employers, both within Saskatchewan and in other jurisdictions.

Learning outcomes are as defined by the *Quality Assurance Review Process Bachelor's Degree Standard* or the *Quality Assurance Review Process Graduate Degree Standards*, as appropriate, and are consistent with national and international standards of quality.

In programs leading to professions (such as entry to practice programs), students are prepared to meet the requirements of the relevant regulatory, accrediting, quality assurance or professional body. Professional or clinical practice programs have sufficient empirical and theoretical foundations so that study can be integrated with and informed by original research in the unit.

The nomenclature of the degree conveys long-term meaning and is consistent with program content.

### Criteria:

- a) The learning outcomes of the program are consistent with the *Quality Assurance Review Process Bachelor's Degree Standard* or the *Quality Assurance Review Process Graduate Degree Standards*, as appropriate.
- b) The credential aligns with Canadian standards appropriate to the discipline and will be recognized and accepted by other post-secondary institutions, employers, relevant occupational and professional groups, and professional and licensing bodies, where applicable.
- c) The institution has made, or is making, provisions for degree recognition and credit transfer (see Standard 6) and will advise students of any changes in such provisions in a timely manner.
- d) There is an appropriate fit between the nomenclature of the degree and the content of the degree.
- e) The name of the degree is consistent with the traditional nomenclature of the degree or credential in Saskatchewan.

### Supplementary Criteria for Institutions Proposing a Graduate Degree:

- f) The program type and degree level is consistent with Canadian practice in graduate education.

**Submission Guidelines:**

- Demonstrate that the program type and degree level is consistent with Canadian practice, as exemplified by the *Quality Assurance Review Process Bachelor's Degree Standard* or the *Quality Assurance Review Process Graduate Degree Standards*, as appropriate.
- Explain how the design of the program facilitates credential recognition by other post-secondary institutions. Include an analysis of any research undertaken to ensure recognition of the degree.
- Where applicable, describe the consultations undertaken to ensure the program and its learning outcomes will be recognized by, and meet the standards of, industry/employers and regulatory, licensing or credentialing body(ies). Append the current requirements or standards of the applicable regulatory, licensing or credentialing body(ies) and copies of letters from licensing or regulatory bodies indicating that the degree program and learning outcomes will be recognized.
- In some instances, regulatory, licensing or credentialing bodies do not recognize or accredit programs but do require individuals to meet certification requirements (e.g., certification exams). If applicable, describe the role of the regulatory, licensing or credentialing body and the steps the institution has taken to ensure individuals will be eligible to meet its requirements. Append the current requirements or standards of the regulatory, licensing or credentialing body.
- Provide the rationale for the choice of program name and credential(s) to be granted, including comment on the process of selecting the name and credential(s). In the case of an articulated or other collaborative program, if two or more credentials will be awarded, specify which institution(s) will award the credential(s) and identify any regulations (e.g., to be awarded a degree, 50 per cent of program content must be completed at X university) that were taken into account.
- Demonstrate that the nomenclature of the degree reflects its content.
- Describe how advisory committees, if any, will be selected and what their roles will be.
- Append a copy of the policies and procedures relating to notifying students of degree recognition and/or credit transfer policies.

## 9. Commitment to Research and Scholarship

### **Graduate Degree Standard 9 – Commitment to Scholarship and Research**

The institution and the program have a research culture (the scholarly context within which graduate study will occur) which is fundamental to maintaining and enhancing high quality graduate programs. The institution is clearly committed to research that promotes the depth and breadth of knowledge, both within the field/discipline, and in a cognate field/discipline when necessary.

#### **Criterion for Institutions Proposing a Graduate Program:**

- a) The institution has established a research/scholarly/creative culture (as evidenced by publications or exhibition, research grants and prizes, and personnel policies that explicitly recognize the importance of research and scholarship) both within the institution and within the proposed program, which will maintain and enhance high quality graduate programs.
- b) For any proposal involving human research, a research ethics board is in place.
- c) For any proposal involving animal research, an animal care committee is in place and functioning.

#### **Submission Guidelines for Institutions Proposing a Graduate Program:**

- Provide evidence of institutional commitment to research, scholarship and creative activity that promotes the depth and breadth of knowledge, both within the field/discipline, and in a cognate field/discipline when necessary.
- Describe any institutional supports that will be provided to create and maintain a strong research/scholarly/creative culture.
- Describe the manner in which faculty and graduate students will be involved in a thriving and dynamic research/scholarly/creative culture.
- Demonstrate, within the context of the institution or unit, how students might participate in the research/scholarly/creative culture online or in a distributed experience as well as in an on- campus experience.
- Describe the mechanisms in place to support graduate students' participation in and contribution to the broader research community (e.g., conferences, international meetings, etc.).

## Appendix A - Overview of Organizational and Program Review Standards

Organizational Review		Program Review	
1.	Organization Overview 1.1 Information about the Organization 1.2 Corporate Structure and Legal Character	1.	Executive Summary
2.	Mission, Institutional and Program Reviews 2.1 Mission Statement and Academic Goals 2.2 Institutional Review 2.3 Program Review	2.	Program Review
3.	Governance and Administrative Capacity 3.1 Governance and Administrative Capacity (+ Graduate Std.) 3.2 Institutional Conduct 3.3 Dispute Resolution	3.	Program Design, Content and Delivery (+ Graduate Criteria)
4.	Financial Capacity, Facilities and Learning Resources 4.1 Financial Capacity 4.2 Facilities and Equipment (+ Graduate Std.) 4.3 Libraries and Learning Resources (+ Graduate Std.)	4.	Program Resources (+ Graduate Std.)
5.	Faculty 5.1 Faculty and Staff (+ Graduate Std.)	5.	Faculty and Staff (+ Graduate Std.)
6.	Academic Policies and Standards 6.1 Academic Policies (+ Graduate Std.) 6.2 Student Recruitment, Admissions and Credit Transfer (+ Graduate Std.) 6.3 Academic Freedom, Honesty and Integrity	6.	Academic Policies, Admissions and Credit Transfer (+ Graduate Std.) 6.1 Academic Policies 6.2 Admissions, Credit Transfer, and Prior Learning Assessment
7.	Student Policies and Services 7.1 Student Protection and Awareness 7.2 Student Life, Student Support Services (+ Graduate Std.)	7.	Contingency Plans in the Event of Program Discontinuation
		8.	Credential Recognition and Nomenclature
		9.	Commitment to Research and Scholarship (Graduate Std.)

## Appendix B - Summary of the Policies Required of an Applicant Institution

Policy	Organizational Standard(s)	Program Standard(s)
	"G" denotes Graduate Standard and/or Criteria	
<b>Institutional</b>		
Institutional Review	2.2	
Program Review	2.3	2
Strategic Planning	3.1	
Governance – selection, evaluation and succession of governing board members	3.1	
Intellectual leadership for graduate programs	3.1, <b>G</b>	
Consultative processes with students and external agencies	3.1	
Participation by academic staff in decision-making processes	3.1	
Ethical Conduct (business practices)	3.2	
Conflict of Interest	3.2	
FOIPP – Collection and use of personal information	3.2	
Dispute Resolution	3.3, 6.1	
Financial Audits	4.1	
Safety and Emergency Preparedness	4.2	
Academic Freedom	5.1, 6.3, <b>G</b>	5
Human Resource Development and Management	5.1, <b>G</b>	
Notification of Statement of Faith/Code of Conduct	6.3	
Natural Justice	6.3	
Contingency Plan for Program Discontinuation		7
<b>Faculty</b>	5	5
Numbers	5.1	
Appointments (balance between ongoing and temporary)	5.1	5, <b>G</b>
Institutional reporting structure(s)	5.1	
Qualifications/credentials	5.1	5, <b>G</b>
Due diligence on hiring	5.1	
Fraudulent credentials	5.1	
Duties and responsibilities	5.1	
Teaching, supervision and counseling loads	5.1, <b>G</b>	5, <b>G</b>
Expectations for research and scholarship	5.1, <b>G</b>	5, <b>G</b>
Performance standards	5.1, <b>G</b>	

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Organizational Standard(s)</b>	<b>Program Standard(s)</b>
Performance evaluation (including student evaluation of teaching and supervision)	5.1, <b>G</b>	5
Promotion	5.1	
Termination	5.1	
Currency of knowledge in the field	5.1	5
Professional development	5.1	5
Thesis/dissertation and oral examination committees	5.1, <b>G</b>	
Mentoring practices to enhance graduate supervisory skills		5, <b>G</b>
Research and sabbatical leaves	5.1, <b>G</b>	
Research output relative to salary rewards	5.1, <b>G</b>	
Comprehensive/candidacy examination requirements	5.1, <b>G</b>	
In-house grants to support research	5.1, <b>G</b>	
Support for research grant applications to external agencies	5.1, <b>G</b>	
<b>Research and Scholarship</b>		
Research culture	5	5, <b>G</b> , 9, <b>G</b>
Ownership of Intellectual Property (employees and students)	5.1, 6.1, 6.3, 7.1, <b>G</b>	
Ethical conduct	5.1, 6.3, <b>G</b>	9, <b>G</b>
Management of research funds	5.1, 6.3, <b>G</b>	
Safety and biohazards	5.1, <b>G</b>	
Responsibility and accountability	5.1, <b>G</b>	
Use of human research participants	5.1, 6.3, <b>G</b>	
Use of animals in research	5.1, 6.3, <b>G</b>	9, <b>G</b>
Technology transfer and commercialization	5.1, <b>G</b>	
<b>Academic/Student</b>	6, <b>G</b> , 7	6
Recruitment	6.2, <b>G</b>	6, <b>G</b>
Admission requirements, including:	6.2, <b>G</b>	6, <b>G</b>
• Credit transfer	6.2, 7.1, <b>G</b>	6, <b>G</b> ,8
• Academic prerequisites	6.2, 7.1, <b>G</b>	
• Prior learning assessment	7.1	6
• Provisions for part-time study	7.1	6
• Re-admission after time expiry	7.1	6
• Continuous registration requirements	7.1	6
• Entrance/placement examinations	7.1	
• Direct Entry	7.1	6
• Mature students	7.1	6
Payment of fees	7.1	

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Organizational Standard(s)</b>	<b>Program Standard(s)</b>
Fee differentials	7.1	
Financial assistance, scholarships	7.1,7.2, G	
Assessment, progression and graduation requirements	6.2, G	
Grading; satisfactory standing	6.2, 7.1	
Dispute resolution; appeal of grades	3.3, 6.2, 7.1	
Student withdrawal, dismissal, and refunds	6.2, 7.1	
International students	7.1	
Methods of course delivery	7.1	3
Experiential learning agreements, work placements		3
Academic honesty	6.1, 6.3, 7.1	
Student support services	6.1, 7.1	
Supervision, preparation and examination of projects	7.1	
Employment of graduate students – teaching assistantships	7.2, G	
Faculty commitment to graduate students	7.2, G	
Transcript protection	7.1	
Technology-based delivery		3
Residency		6
Credential Recognition		8