

**SUBJECT**
**NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT  
PROCEDURE (NON-DEGREE)**
**Procedure Overview**

Occasionally, to address changing community, employer, government, and student needs, the College must develop new academic programs. The development process considers the College's strategic mandate agreement, strategic plan, employer and industry needs, confirmation of program viability and sustainability, and external regulatory or accrediting body requirements, as needed.

This procedure outlines how programs of study are developed at Northern College. Adhering to this procedure ensures approval of new academic programs is communicated to relevant internal and external stakeholders.

This procedure applies to the requirements for program development prescribed by the Ministry of Colleges and University's Binding Policy Directive: Framework for Programs of Instruction, as well as local College certificates. This procedure describes the required internal administrative and operational functions that contribute to program development, approval, and delivery.

**Definitions:**

**Board of Governors (BOG):** the Board of Governors has responsibility for establishing the overall goals, objectives and strategic directions of Northern College. The BOG ensures that the College operates efficiently and effectively and is evolving in a manner that is aligned with the institution's stated goals, objectives, and strategic direction.

**Credential:** recognition awarded upon completion of a program of study as set out by the Ministry. Approved credentials include: Local College Certificate, Ontario College Certificate, Ontario College Diploma, Ontario College Advanced Diploma, Ontario College Graduate Certificate, and Degree.

**Credentials Validation Service (CVS):** CVS provides timely validation of programs of study to Ontario Colleges. CVS is consistent with the Minister's Binding Policy Directive, Framework for Programs of Instruction.

ISSUE DATE	SUPERSEDES	REFERENCE	SECTION	PAGE OF	
2024-03-19	NEW	A-25	ACADEMIC	1	7

<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT PROCEDURE (NON-DEGREE)</b>
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**Environmental Scan:** an academic and labour market scan to research and support a program of study's viability within the region during the anticipated delivery timeframe.

**Essential Employability Skills (EES):** non-vocational skills critical for success in the workplace, in day-to-day living, and for lifelong learning that students learn as part of the formal curriculum, and as stipulated by the Ministry of Colleges and Universities (MCU).

**General Education Course:** A course that engages students in learning beyond their vocational field of study. The course will fall into at least one (1) of the following five (5) MCU mandated themes: Arts in Society, Civic Life, Social and Cultural Understanding, Personal Understanding, and Science and Technology.

**Vocational Learning Outcomes:** Vocational learning outcomes represent culminating demonstrations of learning and acquisition of skills. They are interrelated and, as a result, should be viewed as a comprehensive whole rather than in isolation. Vocational learning outcomes describe the career-related skills and knowledge a student shall be able to reliably demonstrate upon graduation.

**Ministry of Colleges and Universities (MCU):** The MCU assesses all program of study proposals for determination of appropriate classification, funding weight, Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) eligibility, and program titling.

**Minister's Binding Policy Directive: Framework for Programs of Instruction:** this binding policy directive applies to all colleges of applied arts and technology and defines expectations for all programs of study offered by colleges regardless of the funding source, except for ministry-funded apprenticeship programs.

**Program Pathway:** a planned and coordinated selection of courses delivered to an identified student body leading to a credential awarded by the Board of Governors.

### **Responsibilities**

#### **Academic Schools:**

- Align new academic program of study development with Northern College's strategic vision, mission and values, the Strategic Mandate Agreement, and the strategic enrolment plan for the School.

ISSUE DATE	SUPERSEDES	REFERENCE	SECTION	PAGE OF	
2024-03-19	NEW	A-25	ACADEMIC	2	7

**SUBJECT**
**NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT  
PROCEDURE (NON-DEGREE)**

- Ensure vocational learning outcomes align with provincial program standards, where they exist, or with the validated program description that is the basis for program of study development, structure, and design.
- Determine expectations and requirements of external regulatory and/or accrediting bodies, where they exist, and consult with Program Advisory Committees (PAC) and related industry experts.
- Conduct an environmental analysis to confirm the viability and sustainability of the proposed program over the anticipated delivery timeframe.
- Work collaboratively with institutional stakeholders including, but not limited to: Learning Excellence and Innovation Department (LEID), Quality Assurance, the Office of the Registrar, Finance, Information Technology, Institutional Research, and Marketing, as necessary.
- Adhere to Northern College's critical path and timelines for program intakes, delivery and implementation.
- Collaborate with the Marketing Department to ensure all required promotional materials are created and available for prospective and enrolled students prior to the start of the program.
- Work collaboratively with Quality Assurance to facilitate CVS validations for funded and non-funded programming, and Ministry program funding approvals.
- Complete a Consultation Report (Appendix A)
- Initiate internal program proposal reviews and approvals including the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC), Academic Operating Working Group (AOWG), Senior Management Team (SMT), and the Board of Governors.

**Office of the Registrar**

- The Registrar reviews admission requirements for accuracy and appropriateness and outlines the impact of program design on cohorts as they complete each academic level of the program of study.
- Ensure all admission-related approvals are in place before admission information is made active in internal and external systems.
- Enter admission and information into appropriate internal and external systems for admission processing upon notification of a program's approval.
- Advise the academic school of program of study launch timelines according to admission requirements and intakes for program of study cohorts.
- Review credit transfer opportunities or challenges with proposed programs of study.

ISSUE DATE	SUPERSEDES	REFERENCE	SECTION	PAGE OF	
2024-03-19	NEW	A-25	ACADEMIC	3	7

**SUBJECT**
**NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT  
PROCEDURE (NON-DEGREE)**

- Ensure all approvals are in place before a proposed program of study is made active in internal and external systems.
- Load and maintain new and existing programs of study in the student information system (MIS).

**Quality Assurance**

- Work collaboratively with the academic school to provide guidance in ensuring the proposed program of study complies with the Minister's Binding Policy Directive: Framework for Programs of Instruction.
- Support the alignment of program vocational learning outcomes with program standards, where they exist, or program descriptions, where applicable.
- Manage CVS and MCU approval processes for program proposals.
- Manage internal and external program of study development documentation for the purpose of record keeping.

**Learning Excellence and Innovation Department (LEID)**

- Provide advice and relevant training to the academic school related to the alignment and building of curriculum from concept through implementation phases, in accordance with best practices and College procedures.

**Finance**

- Advise the academic school on the financial viability of the new program of study and funding allocation through the Ministry, as applicable.

**Institutional Research**

- Assist the academic school with the collection of environmental analysis information such as labour market data, student demand, etc.

**Marketing**

- Ensure all approvals are in place before program of study information is made public on the Northern College website and into College publications and promotional material.

ISSUE DATE	SUPERSEDES	REFERENCE	SECTION	PAGE OF	
2024-03-19	NEW	A-25	ACADEMIC	4	7

**SUBJECT**
**NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT  
PROCEDURE (NON-DEGREE)**

- Work collaboratively with the Academic School to ensure accuracy of program of study information.

**Procedure**

1. Program development is a component of academic planning related to the Academic Plan of the school based on fit with the academic school's strategic enrolment plan and alignment with Northern College's expectations, Strategic Mandate Agreement, and Strategic Plan. It is the responsibility of the dean or designate to assign a project lead or subject matter expert to begin the program development process.
2. The project lead or subject matter expert prepares a briefing memo for the Dean to present to the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) for consideration that includes:
  - a. The purpose of the program.
  - b. Credential type.
  - c. Mode of delivery.
  - d. Student, labour market and/or community demand for program.
  - e. Anticipated timeline for launch.
3. The project lead or subject matter expert works collaboratively with Quality Assurance to meet College, CVS, and Ministry expectations regarding program design, EES, general education, and program structure (e.g., hours, content, delivery, pathways, etc.).
4. The project lead or subject matter expert completes a program map of courses to program vocational learning outcomes in coordination with Quality Assurance, as required for program validation.
5. The Academic School:
  - a. Ensures discussion has taken place with all relevant stakeholders using the Consultation Report, including consultation with regulatory and/or accrediting bodies to ensure requirements are addressed in the development of the program of study.
  - b. Brings forward the program proposal, enrolment projections, and delivery implications for review and endorsement from the PAC.
  - c. Works collaboratively with Quality Assurance to ensure alignment of the proposed program vocational learning outcomes with the program standard, where they exist, or program description, where appropriate.

ISSUE DATE	SUPERSEDES	REFERENCE	SECTION	PAGE OF	
2024-03-19	NEW	A-25	ACADEMIC	5	7

<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT PROCEDURE (NON-DEGREE)</b>
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- d. Presents the program proposal documentation to the required internal committees and stakeholders for review, feedback, further development, and approval in accordance with the New Academic Program Development Process.
6. When reviewing a new academic program proposal, the QAC may:
  - a. Recommend the proposal move forward with no changes,
  - b. Partially recommend the proposal, providing suggested revisions to the proposal,
  - c. Not recommend the proposal if significant amendments to the proposal are required, and that as presented. In this case, a revised proposal may be brought back to the QAC for consideration.
7. Upon receiving the QAC's recommendation and completion of any required revisions, the new academic program proposal will move through the other internal committees for the required approvals.
8. If the proposed program is to receive MCU funding, upon receiving internal approvals, including approval from the Board of Governors, the Academic School works collaboratively with the Quality Assurance department to submit an Application for Program Funding Approval to the MCU. The documentation must include the following attestations, signed off by the President:
  - a. CVS has confirmed the program of study conforms to the Credentials Framework.
  - b. There is a demonstrated labour market and student demand.
  - c. A relevant PAC is in place and has recommended the program of study.
  - d. The program of study content and delivery are, and will continue to be, compliant with all requirements of regulatory bodies related to and/or responsible for the field of study.
  - e. The program of study meets relevant provincial program standards, where they exist, as well as essential employability skills and general education requirements.
  - f. The Board of Governors has approved the program of study.
9. Upon receiving required internal program approvals, a course writer will be assigned to develop course outlines in the (Course Outline Management and Mapping System (COMMs system, in alignment with the program as validated by the CVS.
10. Upon external program approval:
  - a. The Office of the Senior Vice-President, Academic will communicate program of study approval to the Academic School and impacted departments.

ISSUE DATE	SUPERSEDES	REFERENCE	SECTION	PAGE OF	
2024-03-19	NEW	A-25	ACADEMIC	6	7

**SUBJECT****NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT  
PROCEDURE (NON-DEGREE)**

- b. The Office of the Registrar will enter the appropriate admission and program of study information in the necessary College systems for admissions processing.
- c. Marketing will publish program of study information on marketing materials, including but not limited to, the College's website, academic calendar, and all other promotion materials.
- d. Academic schools will continue liaising with accrediting and/or regulatory bodies upon notification of final approval to complete any required accreditation and/or regulatory requirements.

11. As a measure of quality assurance, program development documentation will be maintained in the College's program document repository; records of program of study approvals must be stored for a minimum of seven (7) years.

ISSUE DATE	SUPERSEDES	REFERENCE	SECTION	PAGE OF	
2024-03-19	NEW	A-25	ACADEMIC	7	7