

Section:	Academic/Student (AC)
Subject:	Programs and Curriculum
Legislation:	
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APPROVED: _____
President and CEO

POLICY

The policy of the Board of Governors is that SAIT maintains a program quality assurance process that ensures that programs align with SAIT's strategic direction and with internal, external and industry requirements.

PROCEDURE

DEFINITIONS

Academic Quality Council (AQC)	Specific to quality processes, AQC reviews the program action plans and creates recommendations to school leadership and the vice president, academic regarding program projects and improvements. Detailed information governing the council and its roles and responsibilities is found on SAITNOW.
Action Plan	A document in which a program sets out its goals and plans to improve and/or grow.
Action Plan Progress Report	An annual check-in report on a program four or five years after the program's action plan has been approved. It is completed during the implementation and monitoring phase of the program quality assurance cycle.

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Action planning	A phase within the program quality assurance cycle that focuses on the actions that a program must take to improve and/or grow, based upon recommendations.
Annual Quality Review (AQR)	A yearly program report including a self-reflection designed for programs to review the quality of their program, with a focus on continuous improvement.
Comprehensive self-study	A report outlining further recommendations from the external review panel after the external review has taken place.
Continuous improvement	An evidence-based process used to ensure programs are working towards their goals in alignment with SAIT's strategic plans and that focuses on assessing and improving the merit or the worth of an enhancement or its compliance with given standards.
External review	As part of the program quality assurance cycle, it is a program review conducted by at least two reviewers who are external to the program's school/department and/or SAIT. Detailed information governing the selection of the reviewers and their roles and responsibilities is set out in the Program Quality Assurance Manual.
Program	A prescribed curriculum leading to a SAIT credential. A program is divided into a number of courses. For the purposes of this procedure, a program includes credit programs, apprenticeship programs and non-credit programs.
Program quality assurance	A developmental process that includes a systematic collection and review of multiple program quality criteria and evidence from both a qualitative and quantitative perspective. The program's faculty, support staff and management work together in this process to evaluate and report on how well the program meets the needs of students and employers, and to recommend and implement improvements to the program
Program quality assurance cycle	A quality assurance process at SAIT that consists of several phases: readiness, self-study, external review, action plan, implementation, and monitoring.

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Program Quality Assurance Inquiry Framework

A document that ensures credit programs are being reviewed according to consistent standards, and provides structure to program quality assurance review.

Program Quality Assurance Manual

A document that sets out the detailed guidelines and expectations for the Program Quality Assurance Process.

Review year

As part of the program quality assurance cycle, the first year of the program quality assurance process, during which the program completes a self-study and an action plan.

Self-study

As part of the program quality assurance cycle, a systematic, structured examination of program quality criteria in relation to the program’s internal, external and industry requirements.

GOVERNING PRINCIPLES

1. SAIT supports program quality as a component of institutional quality.
2. Templates for documents that are part of the program quality assurance process can be found on the Centre for Academic Development and Innovation (CADI) SharePoint website. Employees are strongly encouraged to use these templates.
3. Programs are expected to meet SAIT’s standards for continuous improvement. To achieve this, a SAIT program will either be enrolled in the program quality assurance cycle or the annual quality review process.

PROCEDURE

A. Program Quality Assurance Cycle

1. The program quality assurance process is a five-year to seven-year cycle, unless modified as described below for accreditation requirements, apprenticeship requirements or external requirements. This cycle starts with a review year, which is then followed by several self-assessment years.
2. On an annual basis, the Office of the Vice President Academic, in consultation with schools/departments, identifies the programs that will initiate their review cycles in the upcoming academic year. The decision as to which programs will initiate their

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review cycles in any given year takes into account the criteria and factors set out in the Program Quality Assurance Manual, Schedule A, an Associated Document to this procedure. Programs are reviewed according to the criteria and standards set out in the Program Quality Assurance Inquiry Framework, Schedule B, an Associated Document to this procedure. At the discretion of the vice president, academic, an unscheduled review cycle may be initiated for a program.

3. A new program completes the Action Plan Progress Report and provides an update to the dean, the Office of the Vice President Academic and Academic Quality Council, for four years starting from the year of its first intake of students. In the fifth year, it initiates the review cycle.
4. During the review year:
 - a) The program's academic chair/coordinator, faculty, support staff and CADI work together to complete a self-study, whereby the program gathers and analyses feedback from stakeholders and service/resource areas (individuals and groups directly and indirectly involved with the program). This may include students, industry, alumni, program staff, instructors, program advisory committees, etc.
 - b) The program goes through an external review, whereby the external reviewers review the self-study, may participate in a site visit to SAIT and submit a final report to the dean of the school.
 - c) The program's academic chair/coordinator, faculty and support staff work together to develop an action plan in response to the comprehensive self-study and the external review. The action plan contains specific recommendations for program improvement and enhancement.
 - d) Working within the context of SAIT's institutional plans and SAIT principles of quality, Academic Quality Council reviews the program's action plan and provides its recommendations on the plan for continuous improvement to the vice president, academic, the dean and the academic chair.
5. The program's academic chair/coordinator is responsible for ensuring that the program moves through the program quality assurance process.
6. During subsequent self-assessment years, the program's academic chair/coordinator, faculty and support staff work together to conduct an action plan progress report. An update will then be provided to the program's dean and the Office of the Vice President Academic, including an update on the progress that the program has made towards the goals identified in its action plan.

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B. Annual Quality Review Process

1. When a program is not enrolled in the Program Quality Assurance Cycle, it participates in the Annual Quality Review (AQR) process.
 - a) The academic chair completes the AQR on an annual basis, using an approach similar to that set out in paragraph A.4.a) of this procedure.
 - b) The program’s dean/designate is accountable for approving the AQR.
 - c) At the end of each academic year, the academic chair works with the dean/designate to complete the reflective section of the AQR describing the progress that the program has made towards the program goals.
 - d) Apprenticeship programs are expected to complete the AQR process.

C. Exceptions to this procedure

1. Exceptions to this procedure must be documented and formally approved by the vice president, academic.
2. The program quality assurance process may be modified for programs subject to external accreditation reviews, to ensure process efficiencies. Modifications may include but are not limited to adapting the timelines and/or scope of the review.
3. SAIT’s degree programs will follow the procedures outlined in section A of this procedure, adapted as necessary to meet Campus Alberta Quality Council requirements.

ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- Schedule A Program Quality Assurance Manual (under revision)
- Schedule B Program Quality Assurance Inquiry Framework

POLICY/PROCEDURE REFERENCE

- AC.2.19 Program Quality Assurance policy

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