

## 2021/22 QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS AUDIT SELKIRK COLLEGE

*The Summary was prepared by the Degree Quality Assessment Board Secretariat using the Institutional Report, the Expert Panel Report, and the Response to the Expert Panel Report. Selkirk College was one of four post-secondary institutions to undertake the Quality Assurance Process Audit in 2021/22.*

### Introduction

The Terms of Reference for the Degree Quality Assessment Board establish that audits will be based on information provided by public post-secondary institutions to ensure that rigorous, ongoing program and institutional quality assessment processes have been implemented.

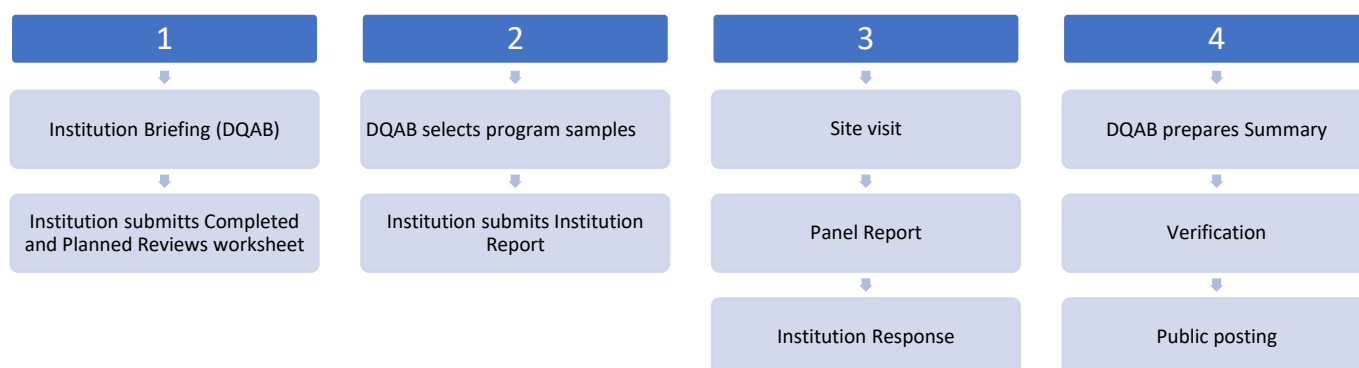
The main objectives of the quality assurance process audit (QAPA) are to ascertain that the institution:

- a) Continues to meet the program review policy requirements outlined in the DQAB's *Exempt Status Criteria and Guidelines* and the *Degree Program Review Criteria and Guidelines*, as applicable to the institution;
- b) Has and continues to meet appropriate program review processes and policies for all credential programs; and
- c) Applies its quality assurance process in relation to those requirements and responds to review findings appropriately.

The QAPA assessment is focused on answering questions in two categories:

1. Overall process
  - a. Does the process reflect the institution's mandate, mission, and values?
  - b. Is the scope of the process appropriate?
  - c. Are the guidelines differentiated and adaptable to respond to the needs and contexts of different units, e.g. faculties or departments or credential level?
  - d. Does the process promote quality improvement?
2. Review findings
  - a. Were the responses to the sample program review findings adequate?
  - b. Does the process inform future decision making?
  - c. Are the review findings appropriately disseminated?

**Figure 1: QAPA Process**



## Selkirk College – Institutional Context

Selkirk College is located on the traditional, ancestral, unceded territory of the West Kootenay and Boundary regions: the Sinixt (Lakes), the Syilx (Okanagan), the Ktunaxa, and the Secwépemc (Shuswap) peoples. Selkirk College covers a region of 45,000 square kilometres. The college's largest campus and administrative centre is in Castlegar. Additionally, there are three campuses in Nelson.

As a public post-secondary institution governed by the *College and Institute Act*, The college's governance structure is composed of a Board of Governors and an Education Council (EdCo). The Board of Governors has overall financial and fiduciary responsibility for the college and is responsible for determining programs to be offered in conjunction with the college's Education Council (EdCo). EdCo is required by legislation to provide advice to the board on matters of academic policy, educational programming, student progression and any other matters the board may direct.

Selkirk College is guided by the province's mandate letter, the *Strategic Plan 2019-2024: Building Remarkable Futures* and the *Indigenization Plan 2019-2024: Our Journey Together, Land Life, Learning*, and the soon-to-be renewed Education Plan and other plans. The college also produces an annual Institutional Accountability Plan and Report to government. Together these plans and reports provide a clear path for programs to develop annual operational plans.

The Education Plan will align with the *Internationalization Plan* and the development of an Applied Research and Innovation and Strategic Enrolment Plan. This renewal will contribute to program planning, providing context and improving the ability of programs to set targets in line with the goals of Selkirk College.

**Table 1: Student enrollment**

	Undergraduate	Graduate	Degree Programs	Non-Degree Programs
<b>Full-time equivalent (FTE)</b>	2,203.44	0	280.91	1,922.53

**Table 2: Program offerings**

Credential Type	# of Programs
Bachelor Degree	1
Associate Degree	3
Diploma	17
Advanced Diploma	5
Post-Grad Degree Program	6
Certificate	38
Advanced Certificate	4
Short Certificate	1
Apprenticeship	3
Developmental	4

## **Institution Self-Study**

The Selkirk QAPA review was initiated with an institution briefing on May 3, 2021. Due to the public health order in place to limit the spread of COVID-19, the briefing was conducted virtually by video conference. The briefing provides an overview of the QAPA process and the documentation institutions are requested to submit.

At its meeting on August 23, 2021, the Quality Assurance Audit Committee reviewed the Completed and Planned Review worksheet submitted by Selkirk and selected the following for sampling: Advanced Diploma and Bachelor of Geographic Information Systems; Forest Technology Diploma; and Pharmacy Technician Diploma.

### Self-Evaluation Approach

The approach used by Selkirk College for the development of this institution report and preparation for the site visit was collaborative and consultative. The Vice President Education held several information and consultation sessions with the Deans & Chairs Committee (including instructors, school chairs, deans, department heads and other operational leads), the Leadership Committee (executive members of the three college divisions—College Services, Students and Advancement and Education), Education Council, Indigenous Services staff and Indigenous instructors, and the college Board.

Members from the Education Division Leadership Committee (EDL) and others formed a QAPA working group in Fall 2019 to prepare for the 2021 site visit and guide the institutional self-study process. This group held several planning meetings or consultation meetings to outline key milestones and tasks and participants. Members of this working group were:

- VP, Education (co-team leader)
- Dean, Community Education & Workplace Training; School of Business; School of Environment & Geomatics (co-team leader)
- Dean, School of Health & Human Services, TLC
- Dean, Academic Upgrading & Development, University Arts & Sciences, Mir Centre for Peace
- Dean, Industry Trades Training, Arts, and Hospitality & Tourism
- Director, Department of Applied Research and Innovation
- Manager, International Education and Development
- Education Developer, TLC, Instructor
- Executive Assistant to the VP Education
- Education Council Chair, Instructor

Others consulted with included:

- Consultations with nine school chairs
- Education Council
- College Board
- Members of the Leadership Team
- Manager of Institutional Research

The working group at Selkirk had already started to consider quality changes before the QAPA process began. Noting the inconsistency in the scheduling, quality and completion of program

review, student and graduate feedback, program feedback from accrediting bodies, and the need to update policy, Selkirk College started work on addressing renewal.

This work led to the development of a quality assurance framework document, guidance documents for level 1, 2, and 3 renewal and review, guidance for the development of new programs, guidance and tools to undertake external review, development of a range of tools, and training for key people—school chairs and others. This work has already been implemented ahead of the QAPA site visit.

With this context as background, the institution report was drafted by the Dean, Community Education & Workplace Training; School of Business; School of Environment & Geomatics, and the VPEd, referring to consultation with a broad group of stakeholders, institutional research data, other information found in the college's Strategic Plan, the Institutional Accountability Plan and Report, the Quality Assurance Framework and associated guiding documents, academic and administrative policies and procedures, and the program review documentation for the selected programs. The near finished draft of the QAPA self-study report was further validated and refined by members of the QAPA working group and the college's communications team and by Education Council, the College Board, and the Leadership team.

Final drafts were shared with the college's Leadership Team, Board of Governors, Deans & Chairs committee, and EdCo for feedback and endorsement. Before and during the writing of the institutional self-study, Selkirk College had been active in refining its program development and program review processes, as well as identifying a workplan to update and refresh its Policy 8100: *Instructional Programs*.

Writing the QAPA institution report was a top priority, and its continued prioritization while responding to the COVID-19 pandemic is testimony to the commitment of college staff and instructors who have contributed to the finished product and renewal of a quality assurance framework. The preparation and writing of the report and strengthening the college's quality assurance framework was a valuable process to reflect and bolster current tools and consistent utilization of these tools and the development of plans and continuous improvement.

## **Quality Assurance Policy and Practices**

Selkirk College is committed to program quality and relevance across all offerings. The Office of the Vice President, Education (VPEd) collects operational plans from each school for most programs on a two-year rolling period. These operational plans, in conjunction with annual enrolment plans, inform institutional budgeting and resourcing. Additionally, informed by the college's Quality Assurance Framework, the VPEd works with the Education Division and EdCo to roll out quality assurance mechanisms such as Program Review and New Program Development guidelines and templates.

The college employs a broad range of practices within a context of continuous improvement and excellence to support a diverse array of programming. All policies are developed and periodically reviewed for alignment with Selkirk College's Strategic Plan. Additionally, all new program proposals and program review self-study reports are assessed on how well they align with the college's Strategic Plan, including Selkirk College's mission and vision, and strategic

directions and other plans (Indigenization Plan, Internationalization Plan, Enrolment, and others).

Program quality and associated policies, procedures, templates and resources are the responsibility of the VPED, with the support of Education Division Leadership Committee, and the school chairs. All materials and links are located on the Deans & Chairs Committee Moodle site for their reference. Program areas are also supported by the college's Teaching & Learning Centre (TLC) and the Department of Institutional Research.

### *Learning Outcomes*

Selkirk College supports a learning outcomes approach for all for-credit programs. Instructors are supported by the Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC) to develop program and course learning outcomes. This approach includes program design that aligns the achievement of learning outcomes with learning strategies and authentic assessment and evaluation. To ensure currency and relevancy, the learning outcomes process includes incorporating program advisory committee feedback, mapping outcomes with accreditation competencies, and participation with articulation and other professional bodies. The learning outcomes process continues as programs look to include outcomes related to the important Canadian societal conversation (and our strategic plan commitments) in Indigenization, inclusion, environmental sustainability, health and wellness, and innovation.

The college has increased resources in the TLC; hiring education developers; supporting the Academic Integrity Working Group; and working increasingly closely with IT Services, Indigenous Services and others. Currently the Indigenous Services Department is hiring an Indigenous Education Developer to support programs to further develop meaningful opportunities for student learning and reconciliation.

The college also has plans to develop institutional learning outcomes over the next two years to support achievement of strategic goals including our commitments in our strategic plan.

### *Scholarship and Professional Development Support*

Selkirk College actively supports instructor scholarship and professional development. The TLC offers a wide range of training topics and activities, education development support for individual instructors and instructor teams, and supports a network of school instructional learning fellows.

### Program Development

The college has invested in improving program development, developing new tools, and adding staff in the TLC who directly support program development by offering training and support to instructors. Funding for new programming and existing program development is an on-going challenge. The college successfully accesses funding opportunities from AEST (e.g., new technology fund supporting two new programs, work integrated learning funding—round 1 and 2, and expanding Health & Human Services seats), and other soft-funding, to continue to meet the expanding needs of students and the communities served by Selkirk College. The college has also expanded training with recent successful funding, and significantly expanded applied research with successful NSERC applications including technology access centre funding, initiatives that directly contribute to for-credit students and graduate learning and employment opportunities.

A New Program Development Guide has been created to guide proponents of new credit-based programs. In addition to responding to industry and student demand based on environmental scans, as a new program moves through the approval process, the program is also posted on PSIPS to provide additional peer/expert review. Policy 8100: *Instructional Programs* guides both program review and new program development. This policy was last renewed in 2010.

The college is refreshing Policy 8100 and continuing to build tools to help deans and school chairs operationalize the Quality Assurance Framework, including reviewing data sets available to deans and school chairs, providing agenda templates to help with organizing PACs, operational planning, and external team review meetings, and finalizing a new program development template which has received positive feedback from Deans & Chairs Committee and EdCo.

The following procedure is required for the approval of all new credit programs.

RESPONSIBILITY	ACTION
School Chair and Dean	1. Complete form A1-New Program Proposal (Part One): Application for Approval in Principle with the appropriate Dean and Registrar.
Dean	2. External consultation: Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training for health-related, ITA for Trades and/or partners, if appropriate.
Dean	3. Internal consultation: Provide proposal to Deans & Chairs Committee for information and feedback.
VP ASD	4. Determine whether to approve the application and recommendation that the Dean forwarded to EdCo.
Dean	5. Begin external approval on PSIPS and bring a proposal to EdCo for approval in principle.
Education Council	6. Review proposal from and determine whether to grant approval in principle. Forward copies of documents to Curriculum Committee (CC) and Admissions and Standards Committee (A&S) for information only. If approval is not granted, reasons for decision-making and/or suggestions for a revised application will be provided.
School Chair and Dean	7. Develop proposal for internal review including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Develop courses in consultation with CC;</li> <li>b. Develop program policies in consultation with A&amp;S</li> <li>c. Confirm credential type and program code in consultation with Registrar</li> <li>d. Complete form A1</li> <li>e. Initiate preliminary program marketing</li> </ul>
CC	8. Determine whether to recommend approval of courses and forward recommendations to EdCo.
A&S	9. Determine whether to recommend approval of policies and credentials and forward recommendations to EdCo.
EdCo	10. Review proposal, recommendation of CC, A&S, and external review and determine whether to approve program curriculum and policies.
EdCo Chair	11. Bring final recommendation to the board.
Dean	12. Make recommendation on inclusion in instructional plan.
VP ASD	13. Develop instructional plan. Determine when to include new program.
Dean with School Chair	14. Begin implementation of new program, including rationalizing through the budget development process.

This process leads to the approval of a program from an educational perspective. The development and delivery of any new program also requires approval through the budget development process.

### Program Review

The college has undertaken review and renewal of its programming following the *Colleges and Institutes Act*, DQAB, college board, and EdCo policy and process. The processes engage instructors, students, employers, accrediting and professional bodies, transfer partners, British Columbia Council on Admissions & Transfer (BCCAT) and others. To improve the regularity, consistency and quality of the review and renewal process, the college is undertaking a renewal of policy 8100, has developed new guidelines and supportive tools, hired instructors in the TLC department to support the process, and is providing training and budget support. The new implemented draft guidelines include a new Education Quality Assurance Framework that integrates planning, policy and process through a three-level process starting with Level 1—Annual Operational Planning, Level 2—Focused Renewal (new to the process), and finally Level 3—Program Review (periodic review in Policy 8100). The college has already implemented this process.

Program renewal and review is defined in Policy 8100. The review process is designed to ensure programs are current, relevant and aligned with college strategic plans and priorities and other accreditation and professional competencies and standards. The regular review process includes significant instructor engagement with an annual development of program operational plans, including program and course outcomes process, and periodic program review and renewal.

Program review and renewal are conducted to reflect the college's mandate, mission, vision, and values yet flexibly designed to meet unique individual program requirements. The processes at the college have been designed to focus on key principles—based on evidence from student and graduate and other data sources (enrolment, retention, completion), instructor engagement and participation, program currency and relevancy, employer and articulation participation external review and feedback, supportive and effective processes, processes can be adapted to respond to program needs and contexts, and actually improve quality.

Program renewal is a continuous process that programs and services engage with on an annual basis. The renewal process identifies priorities, outcomes, and deliverables and assesses them against key performance measures. To support continuous improvement annual renewal and periodic review were considered. At Selkirk College, program renewal is categorized as “Level 1: Operational Planning” or “Level 2: Program Renewal”, while program review is categorized as “Level 3: Program Review”. Level 1 is an annual plan completed by all schools or programs (to be determined by dean or other educational leader). Level 2 is an in-depth look at one or more variables that over an extended period of time (one to three years) are not meeting the required criteria set by the college or other requirements. Level 3: Program review is an in-depth assessment that either occurs every five years or as needed to ensure a program is sustainably meeting long-term needs of the strategic directions of the institution.

The Level 3: Program Review includes an internal self-study, as well as engagement with the Program Advisory Committees (PACs) and an external panel review of the program/service. External review has not been a consistent aspect of program review at Selkirk College. The

college is currently focusing on providing much more guidance on how to incorporate external reviews into program review. In order to meet QAPA requirements, an external review process has been incorporated into the college's most recent Quality Assurance Framework and Level 3—Program Review Self-Study Guide and Template. The external review guide provides timelines, suggested tasks, tools and templates. Training for deans, chairs, instructors, and administrative assistants on how to conduct external reviews is planned to take place during fall 2021 and the college looks forward to ongoing improvement in this area with these tools and support newly in place.

The program review process will be supported by the TLC and, in most instances, be led by the school chair and supported and approved by the relevant member of the Education Division Leadership Committee (dean, director, or manager). The process will include participation of faculty, engagement with students, employers and other key stakeholders. A completed comprehensive review report will be published internally at the college's intranet site. Each program or bundle of programs where appropriate will conduct a Level 3 program review every five years and the self-study will follow the provided template, which will include such topics as admission requirements, program delivery, curriculum requirements, adequacy and effective use of resources, instructor performance measures, program learning outcomes, regulatory standards/accreditation requirements, student evaluation and progression, student and graduate feedback, and employer and/or PAC satisfaction levels. These self-studies will incorporate data that is collected and analyzed on a yearly basis through each school's operational planning template.

Upon completion of the self-study and external review, a brief summary of the findings, specific recommendations, proposed timelines, required resources and budget implications and a plan for ongoing evaluation will be drafted and inform future operational plans. As outlined in Policy 8100, the college uses its annual operational plans as a way to document any follow-up actions resulting from program reviews. Additionally, any curricular or program policy changes are submitted for approval through its EdCo governance processes. These documents will be stored in a central repository for the VPEd, deans, school chairs, and instructors to access for ongoing review and consideration.

A tentative schedule has been formulated for 2021-22 and five years beyond for Level 3 reviews of all programs and has been agreed upon by EDL.

#### *Accredited Programs*

Selkirk College has drafted a checklist template for accredited programs to complete in order to demonstrate alignment between the various accreditation self-study reports and the college's Level 3 Program Review. This is designed so as not to duplicate work, determine compliance with Selkirk College's Quality Assurance Framework, and in the case where there are gaps between accreditation self-study report requirements and the college's Level 3 program review expectations to add this information.

#### **QAPA Review**

The QAPA panel conducting the assessment were Dr. Beverlie Dietze, panel chair, and panel members Dr. Thor Borgfordt and Dr. Robin Hicks. The site visit, held virtually using MS Teams



video conferencing, occurred on December 8-9, 2021. A member of the DQAB Secretariat, Ms. Dao Luu, also attended the site visit.

The QAPA panel submitted its report on January 5, 2022. The panel report provided commendations, affirmations and recommendations.

Commendations are areas where the institution has shown exemplary practice. Areas of exemplary practice:

### **1. Selkirk College Culture for and Commitment to Continuous Improvement**

Throughout the Self-Study document and during the site visit, the Panel observed that Selkirk College employees exhibited a positive culture around continuous improvement. The Panel noted during the site visit the sense of collegiality among leadership, faculty groups and across departments. The Panel recognized this as a strength, particularly when considering the dispersed geographic locations of the campuses.

The Panel noted the extensive knowledge of, and commitment to, the operational plan document and related actions taken by faculty, instructors, and program Chairs. The Panel noted the power with which the operational plan guides practice from a continuous improvement perspective.

### **2. Program Quality Assurance Policies, Processes and Frameworks**

Selkirk College has developed an array of tools and resources that are intended to support faculty, instructors, and administrators in their continuous improvement processes. The Panel commends Selkirk College for creating these tools and in providing varying levels of training on the use of the tools.

The Panel is extremely supportive of the College's efforts to create a new policy framework that clearly delineates the boundaries between Board, Administrative and Educational policies, and separates 'procedures' and 'program descriptions' from policy. The Panel also supports the College's efforts to revise and clarify the language and processes concerning the development of new policies (formerly embodied in Selkirk's College Policy Manual).

Notably, Selkirk College intends to revise policies 8100 and 1000 that influence program quality processes. As before, the Panel is very supportive of these efforts to add rigor and improve standardization in program development and review. The Panel noted the support that the Teaching and Learning Centre extends to faculty and instructors engaged in program review and continuous improvement. It was evident throughout the site visit that the Teaching and Learning Centre employees contribute significantly to faculty and instructors in guiding program and curricula development, program review, and in the creation of quality teaching and learning experiences.

The Panel also noted the positive processes that Selkirk College has established to ensure the appropriate qualifications and success of faculty and instructors, starting from the selection process to the orientation, onboarding and throughout the probationary period. Having training, mentorship, workshops and supports available reinforce creating a culture of continuous improvement.

As outlined by faculty and administrators during the site visit, the operational plans are completed consistently across programs and are data informed. Faculty and instructors have a direct role in developing and implementing the core aspects of the plan.

The Panel noted from the site visit, the College has a significant strength in processes to meet and maintain quality with respect to externally accredited programs.

### **5. Data Informed Practices**

The Panel noted that the College is effectively using data from a variety of sources, including surveys and feedback from stakeholders such as students, employers, graduates, PACS, and BC outcomes to inform program quality and continuous improvement strategies.

### **6. Budget Allocations**

The Panel commends Selkirk College for recognizing the need for program and administrative budgets to allocate funds for program review and continuous improvement. Having a budget line reinforces Selkirk's commitment to a continuous improvement model and reinforces to faculty and instructors its importance within the college ethos.

Affirmations are areas where the institution has identified weaknesses and intends to correct it. Areas the institution identified for improvement:

#### **1. Program Review Cycle**

As identified in the Self-Study report and during the site visit, establishing a formal program review cycle that includes an external review is beneficial to programs as it supports faculty and instructors in reviewing their programs in-depth. Having the external reviewers as part of the process provides different perspectives for faculty and instructors to consider in curriculum and program delivery.

#### **2. Policies**

The Panel strongly supports Selkirk College's recognition of the need to revise and expand Policies 1000 and 8100 to clearly articulate policies related to program review and continuous improvement. As well, the establishment of clearly defined procedures will support the consistency and efficiency of program review.

#### **3. Repositories**

As identified during the site visit, Selkirk College plans to develop centralized repositories for documents such as the program review results and other related program quality documentation. This centralized system will support faculty, instructors, and administrators in being able to access previous reviews that might inform recommendations going forward. Furthermore, having one centralized repository will provide the means to track the consistent implementation of and compliance with quality assurance processes and timelines.

#### **4. Program Advisory Committees**

As outlined in the Self-Study and during the site visit, Selkirk College recognizes that one of the key roles of their Program Advisory Committees is to provide input on currency and relevancy of curricula, learning experiences and the necessary job-ready skills required of graduates in their respective programs. The administration acknowledged the need to implement and maintain active advisory committees across all applied programs.

## **5. Indigenization of Curriculum**

Selkirk College has an Indigenization Plan that is intended as a guide for programs in examining ways in which Indigenous ways of knowing and doing might be incorporated into the learning environment. Indigenization is weaved through the Strategic Plan and human resources have been allocated to support this initiative.

Recommendations are areas needing improvement. The panel identified the following areas:

### **1. Formal Review Cycle/Level 3 Reviews**

As identified in the Self-Study report and during the site visit, establishing a formal review cycle that includes an external review is beneficial to programs in identifying program strengths and opportunities for further development. Selkirk College has determined that each program will engage in a Level 3 review every five years, but this will be challenging from a human resources perspective. The Panel is recommending that Selkirk College consider extending the timelines to every seven years and/or consider grouping similar programs for review at the same time to reduce the overall number of reviews in each year, while including an option for an earlier review if determined through the Level 1 and 2 processes.

The Panel recommends after all three levels of the review process have been implemented by many programs, that Selkirk College engage in a comprehensive review to determine if there is a need for the three levels or if levels one and two may be amalgamated. Reducing the number of regular review processes from three to two could significantly reduce the administrative burden without compromising rigor.

The Panel supports and encourages Selkirk College to proceed with their plans to consistently incorporate external reviews for all programs (Level 3). It is recommended that resources be set aside to compensate external reviewers and a Terms of Reference be developed to guide the external review process. The Panel recommends that the College only include external review panel members (e.g., Deans, Faculty, or Industry Partners) who are entirely 'arms-length' from the program.

### **2. Establishing Timelines for Policy Development and Reviews**

The Panel noted in the Self Study that there were timelines for policy development and reviews that had not been achieved. The Panel recommends that a mechanism be developed that track the timelines on policy development and reviews, and that there be an individual(s) within the institution assigned to manage the timelines and tracking system.

### **3. Central Repository for all Program Quality Review Documents**

The Panel supports and encourages Selkirk College to establish a central repository system as soon as possible to archive core program review documents, operational plans, reports from external reviewers, validation plans, action plans and college-wide responses to recommendations made within the reviews. As part of the development process, the Panel suggests that there be a matrix established that identifies the levels of access extended to the various college employee groups. This repository would support increasing the transparency, evidence and accountability of actions taken to address findings from the program review process.

#### **4. Program Advisory Committees**

As outlined in the Self-Study and during the site visit, Selkirk College recognizes that one of the key roles of their Program Advisory Committees is to provide input on currency and relevancy of curricula, learning experiences and the necessary job-ready skills required of graduates in their respective programs. It is recommended that all **applied** programs have a PAC.

The Panel also recommends that there be a common Terms of Reference for Program Advisory Committees and it encourages the College to proceed with their plans to create templates for agendas and minutes.

#### **5. Faculty and Instructor Faculty Evaluations**

The Panel recommends that Selkirk College continue to work with stakeholders including human resources, school chairs, unions, and faculty as necessary to determine an acceptable strategy to support all faculty and instructors, after their probation, to have regular, standardized performance reviews that would support faculty and instructors in identifying growth opportunities for advancing their pedagogical approaches that support and align with their program outcomes.

Selkirk College provided a response on March 30, 2022 that included an action plan to address the recommendations.