TITLE: PROGRAM REVIEW

POLICY STATEMENT:

Red Deer College (RDC) reviews its programs utilizing a two level process and comprehensive reviews. The first level consists of periodic data gathering and reporting of key performance indicators. The second level, when requested or warranted by level one indicators, consists of a more in-depth assessment of the program. Programs (excluding apprenticeship programs) undergo a comprehensive review every five years.

PURPOSE:

This policy defines the process that RDC applies in maintaining the quality of its programs. The need for accountability, adaptation, and improvement can be met by starting with a systematic evaluation process that ensures the existence of a credible and solid information base. Such a process provides the tools required to plan appropriate resource allocation, develop and adapt programs to better meet the needs of learners and the community, and provide indicators for specific performance improvement.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to all programs provided by RDC or contracted to others by RDC.

PRINCIPLES:

1. RDC ensures that program curriculum and instruction meets or exceeds national, provincial, and professional standards.

2. The College ensures that a high standard of administration and instruction in all areas of educational programs are maintained and clearly stated in College practices and policies.

3. The College is committed to excellence, offering high quality learning experiences. It works to improve processes, services and learning opportunities.

4. The College value of integrity provides for honest, open, and timely communication. RDC follows fair and equitable processes. People are treated with respect and individuals are encouraged to take personal responsibility.

5. The College regularly evaluates its effectiveness and efficiency in order to ensure that its programs and services meet learners' needs. Such accountability assists in maintaining responsiveness to our learning communities and business partners.

6. Program and service review is part of the overall planning cycle at the College. It provides data to support the decision-making process as well as planning processes related to resource allocation and priority setting.

7. Programs and service areas are consulted in the establishment of program and service review criteria.

DEFINITIONS:

Level 1 Program Review: Annual review of all RDC educational programs—credit and non-credit. Statistics are reported in a number of key performance indicators related to demand, enrolment, completion, employment, goal attainment, cost, and graduate satisfaction (Appendix 1). An advisory committee reviews the data and reports its findings and recommendations to the College community.

Level 2 Program Review: At the request of an academic department or as recommended by the advisory committee, a level 2 review may be carried out. Such reviews are customized to the needs of the department and/or the recommendations of the committee. It usually involves a more in-depth study of an aspect or selected aspects of the program.

Comprehensive Program Reviews: Every 5 years credit programs and career development certificates programs (excluding apprenticeship programs) undergo a comprehensive program review. The criteria established for this review are found in Appendix 2.

Key Performance Indicators: Consist of data that are verifiable and reliable that vary depending on the quality and success of a program or service. These indicators are used to alert the College about situations that require further study or that require immediate action.

Program and Service Review Advisory Committee (PSRAC): This committee oversees the establishment of key performance indicators, the reporting of data, and the program and service review process. It reviews the data and formulates recommendations based on the criteria it establishes. The recommendations are forwarded to the service or program groups as well as any other person or group that the committee deems appropriate.

Membership on the committee includes: three faculty members, two service area members, two students, one member from the Curriculum Committee, one academic dean and the Executive Director of Strategic Planning and Analysis.

PROCEDURE:

1. The program review process is coordinated by the Executive Director of Strategic Planning and Analysis

2. Level 1 Program Review is carried out annually by the Program and Service Review Advisory Committee for all credit and career development certificate programs. Research Services is responsible for collecting and compiling the data as specified by the PSRAC.

3. Comprehensive program reviews are carried out every 5 years for credit programs and career development certificate programs (excluding apprenticeship programs).

4. The PSRAC meets to review the data and make any recommendations it deems necessary to the program, service group or any other group within the College that the Committee deems appropriate. These groups could include but are not restricted to: department councils, Deans' Council, Service Council, Academic Council or its sub-committees.

5. PSRAC:
    a. is appointed by the Executive Director of Strategic Planning and Analysis. Members should be as broadly representative of the programs and services of the College as possible. Appointments are normally for two years with no more than half the committee newly appointed each year and with no limit on consecutive terms.

b. makes recommendations on matters pertaining to, but not exclusively restricted to:
      i. Programs/services requiring Level 2 Review.
      ii. Programs/services that should be adjusted in terms of budget and resource allocation.
      iii. Benchmarks and standards for achievement against which program/service review data can be compared.
      iv. Action plans that result from Level 2 reviews.
      v. Recommendations regarding new program initiatives, feasibility studies, program expansions, program contractions as proposed by the program planning efforts of the College.
      vi. Program suspensions or closures.
      vii. Service changes.
   c. Provides an annual report to Academic Council, Deans' Council and Service Council.

6. Responsibility and Process for Level 2 and Comprehensive Reviews:
   a. It is the responsibility of the Dean and Chair of each program to initiate and conduct a Level 2 or Comprehensive Review in consultation with the Division of Strategic Planning and Analysis.
   b. For the Comprehensive Review:
      i. A steering committee for the review is struck that includes the Dean or delegate, program chair, a number of program faculty member (s), an academic faculty member from the College who teaches in a program not being reviewed and a consultant from the Strategic Planning and Analysis Division. The consultant provides guidance related to the structure, design, data analysis and process of the review.
      ii. A qualified external reviewer may participate in the review by reviewing the self-study, visiting the campus and/or conducting on-site interviews; and preparing a report. Programs may use this approach when deemed necessary by the PSRAC, the Dean, the Chair, or the Department Council.
      iii. The Comprehensive Program Review Report is presented to the Department Council and the Dean.
   c. The Dean provides a copy of all final Level 2 and Comprehensive Program Review Reports to the PSRAC, for reference in subsequent reviews of the program. Normally Deans' Council reviews a summary of Level 2 reviews, which is provided by the Dean.
   d. Action plans that arise from the reviews are reflected in the Academic Council submissions, business plans and budget proposals that are approved by the Department Council and forwarded to the College for inclusion in the annual planning cycles of the College.
   e. Extraordinary and urgent needs for change are managed through contingency requests for immediate infusion of resources at any time.

OFFICER RESPONSIBLE: Chair of Academic Council

RECOMMENDING AUTHORITY: Academic Council

CONSULTATION FOR REVIEW: Vice President Academic, Executive Director Strategic Planning and Analysis, Program and Service Review Advisory Committee, Deans' Council, academic departments.

POLICY REVIEW DATE: July 2015

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2011

REVISION HISTORY: October 17, 1996 (Program and Services Review Standard Practice)
July 1, 2010 (Standard Practice rescinded)

October 17, 1996 (Program and Services Review Policy)
July 1, 2011 (Policy revised; Program Review Policy in effect)

RELATED POLICIES:
- Curriculum for Credit Programs
- Program Development and Redevelopment for Credit Programs

CONNECTION TO BOARD POLICIES:

All RDC policies support relevant Board of Governors operational policies.

APPENDIX 1

Level 1 Program Review
Key Performance Indicators

The following Level 1 indicators are provided as guidelines for the PSRAC. From time to time, they may be changed to better reflect the availability of data and the requests of program areas.

Student Demand

FLE Enrolments (FLE): Full Load Equivalent (FLE) for on/off-campus and evening students for All Years of Study.

% of Capacity (%): Full Load Equivalent (FLE) divided by Program Capacity.

Year 1 Applications (N): Total number of first-year applications received prior to application closure dates. Programs with application closure dates are shaded on the Level 1 program Planning Spreadsheet.

Funded Seats (N): The number of funded seats for all levels of Apprenticeship

Seats Filled (N): The number of seats filled for all levels of Apprenticeship

Funded Seats Filled (%): Seats Filled divided by Funded Seats.

Program Costs

Average Cost Per FLE ($): The total average cost (direct and indirect) attributed to each Full Load Equivalent enrolment in each RDC program.

Graduate Satisfaction

Goal Attainment (%): % choosing either '4' or '5' on a five point scale measuring satisfaction with their overall goal attainment at RDC.

Quality of Educational Experience (%): % choosing either '4' or '5' on a five point scale measuring satisfaction with the overall quality of the educational experience in the program that they completed.

Recommending Program (%): % indicating that they would recommend their program at RDC to other people.

Benefited for Current Studies (%): % choosing either '4' or '5' on a five point scale measuring the usefulness of the education and training they received in their program in preparing them for their current studies.

Helped to Continue Learning (%): % choosing either '3' or '4', 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree', respectively, indicating agreement that they acquired skills at RDC that will help them to continue learning in the future.

Benefited to Gain Employment (%): Of those in the labour force (employed and unemployed, but seeking), the % choosing either '4' or '5' on a five point scale measuring the usefulness the education and training they received

in their program for obtaining their current (main) job. (Note: Unemployed, but seeking respondents were counted as receiving education and training that was not useful for obtaining their present job since they did not have one.)

Satisfaction with Program (%): % choosing either '4' or '5' on a five point scale measuring overall satisfaction with the program that they completed at RDC.

Graduate Success Criteria and Measurement

Not Seeking Employment (%): % indicating that they are not employed and not looking for a job.

(Note: Includes those who may be attending school.)

Training Related Employment (Knowledge) (%): Of those employed, the % choosing either '4' or '5' on a five point scale measuring how related their current (main) job is to the subject-area knowledge that they acquired in the program that they completed.

Training Related Employment (Skills) (%): Of those employed, the % choosing either '4' or '5' on a five point scale measuring how related their current (main) job is to the skills and abilities that they acquired in the program that they completed.

Completion Rates

RDC Completion Rate (%): Certificate - The number of first time students in a particular program is the entering cohort. The % of these students who complete their program requirements (or another program at the same or greater level) within the first year plus an additional three years is the completion rate.

Diploma - The number of first time students in a particular program is the entering cohort. The % of these students who complete their program requirements (or another program at the same or greater level) within the first two years plus an additional three years is the completion rate.

APPENDIX 2
Five-year Comprehensive Program Review

In an effort to maintain quality standards for programs at RDC, periodic comprehensive reviews of programs take place every five years according to a schedule established and monitored by the PSRAC. The review takes into account the annual Level 1 program review data over the past five years and augments this information with quantitative and qualitative data gathered during the comprehensive review process.

Review Criteria

I. **Introduction**

II. **Program Review**
   1. Fit with College Goals
      - How does the program exemplify the College Values?
      - Is there a clear fit with major goals identified in the RDC Strategic Plan and the Academic Plan?

   A. **Resources**

   2. Current Resources
      - Are financial, human, physical resources sufficient?
      - Identify any shortcomings.

   3. Quality of Faculty and Staff
      - Do faculty and staff possess the minimum credentials/qualifications as defined by the department and/or other outside agencies (for example: approval/accreditation bodies, university transfer agreements)?
      - Is there evidence of succession planning, including monitoring faculty and staff turnover, recruitment and retention strategies?
      - Is there an appropriate ratio of full time to part time faculty and staff to ensure sustainability of the program?
      - Are faculty engaged in academic governance through membership on relevant department and College committees? Provide documentation of the involvement.
      - Do faculty and staff contribute to local, regional and global communities in relation to their role at the College? Provide documentation of the involvement.

   4. Scholarly and Professional Activity of Faculty
      - What proportion of faculty are reporting scholarly activity (based on the 4 Domain model)? Provide examples, including scholarly activity related professional development.
      - What areas of scholarly activity are strengths?
      - What areas are weakest?

   5. Cost effectiveness
      - What are the 5 year trends of program costs compared to other RDC programs? (direct costs/FLE)
      - How do costs compare with other Alberta programs? (total cost/FLE)
      - When impact and number of students are compared, is our program more or less cost effective than others?

6. Access to Infrastructure Services
   - What College resources are required to effectively support our program? (include physical space and services such as Finance, Registrar's, administration)

7. Additional resources required
   - What extraordinary resources are required to adequately support our program? (special use facilities that cannot be accessed by other programs, specialized technology, specialized technical support)
   - Are these additional resources going to require substantial upgrades to keep the program effective?
   - Does the program have adequate access to required community resources (e.g. work experiences, practicum placements)?

8. Continued resource investment
   - In general, what continuing investment (additional to operational costs) will be required to maintain currency and effectiveness of the program?
   - How can the impact of the program and achievement of its outcomes be maintained?

B. Learners

9. Current demand
   - What are the 5 year trends in enrolment (FLE and unduplicated headcount)?
   - What are the 5 year trends in applications?
   - How does enrolment compare to the capacity of the program?

10. Long term applicant pool
    - How do our 5 year enrolment and application trends relate to employment data? (current and future)
    - What is the age distribution of our students? How does the future age distribution of the region compare to the age distribution of our program?
    - What are the 5 and 10 year outlooks for school populations in the region? (expected number of high school graduates)
    - Do we anticipate any major shifts in the region that would impact our potential applicant pool?

11. Current community impact—students
    - Where do our students come from?
    - What proportion are from Central Alberta? Alberta? Canada?
    - Are students connected to the community through the program? (service learning, work experience, coop, volunteer time, part time workers, arts and entertainment)
    - What service learning activities are students likely to engage in?

12. Current community impact—graduates
    - How many graduates are employed within the region?
    - If RDC did not provide graduates in this field, what impact would that have on the community? (number of positions difficult to fill)
    - Are other program graduates a reasonable second choice for employment in the field?

13. Long term community impact
    - What impact does the program have in the region?
    - What long term impact has there been from graduates of the program?
    - Is there a specific community of interest (formal or informal group) relevant to the program?
    - What are the long term regional employment projections?
    - Will the profile of regional student demand likely change in the future? (changes in demographics or changes in regional economy)

14. Graduate satisfaction
    - How satisfied are graduates with the program?
    - Analyze the 1 year graduate satisfaction summary data from the Level 1 Review results.
    - Provide any recommendations/commendations that were indicated by the Level 1 program review with a report on any actions taken by the department resulting from these recommendations.

15. Completion rate/retention rate
    - How many students complete the program within a reasonable time frame? (e.g. a certificate within 4 years, a diploma within 5 years)
    - What are the term-to-term and year-to-year retention patterns over the past 5 years?
    - What is the departmental assessment of this data?

16. Employability/transfer rate
    - How many of our graduates are employed?
    - Are they employed in training related occupations?
    - How many of our graduates are enrolled in other post-secondary programs?

17. Employment outlook
    - What is the employment outlook in this field as projected by Alberta Employment and Immigration? (Particularly note the supply/demand data.)
    - Is there any specific regional employment outlook information that differs from the provincial outlook?
    - Does the employment outlook have an impact on application rates?
    - How is the future of our program likely to be impacted by these trends?

C. Program

18. Curriculum Review Summary
    NOTE: Please use the Curriculum Elements and Outcomes Map excel spreadsheet to document this section. You can submit your comprehensive program review report electronically by submitting a Word document based on this outline template, plus the excel spreadsheet.

Program outcomes
- Are the program outcomes clear statements of what students will be able to do upon completion of the program as a result of what they have learned in the program?
- Are the program outcomes consistent with stakeholder feedback and requirements of the field?
- How will we address gaps or issues that have been identified by the Curriculum Committee?

Curriculum elements
- Are the components of the curriculum (e.g. Admission requirements, graduation requirements, course outcomes, learning activities, and student assessment) aligned with the Program Outcomes and best educational practices? (See the Curriculum for Credit Programs policy for standards for curriculum elements.)
- Does our documentation of our curriculum elements satisfy the standard expected by the Curriculum Committee? If not, how will the discrepancies be addressed?

Processes for continuous assessment and revision of curriculum and delivery methods
- How do we (or plan to) assess the relevance and currency of the curriculum on an ongoing basis? Examples should be provided.
- How does the department review program delivery and student assessment on an ongoing basis?
- Does the program actively seek input from key stakeholders?
- How does the program actively seek input from learners when assessing and revising the curriculum and delivery methods? Examples should be provided.

19. Flexible modes of delivery/universal design
- Does our program accommodate the needs of diverse learners? (for example: distance, alternate schedules, learners with disabilities) How?
- What elements of universal design are incorporated into the delivery of this program?
- What efforts are made to serve under-represented groups?
- How do we know we are addressing these needs?

20. Impact on existing programs
- What courses/services do we offer for other programs at RDC?
- What courses do our students require from other programs at RDC?
- On an annual basis, how many students are transferring between this and other programs (and which programs are they transferring from or to)? Do these transfers negatively or positively impact our program? Explain.

21. Impact on program mix
- How does the program contribute to the comprehensive nature of the College?
- What kind of program mix does Central Alberta need?
- How does our program fit into this?

22. Collaboration/articulation
- How does the program provide for career laddering with full transfer into further credentials?
- How does the program provide for transfer between it and other programs within Red Deer College?

- How does the program provide for transfer between it and other programs in Alberta?
- How is credit given for educational and life experiences upon admission?
- How does the program give credit for educational experiences in other RDC programs, other institutions, or life experience (PLAR)?

23. Alternate providers
   - Are there other providers for this program in the region? If so, how do students access those programs?
   - What is the impact, if any, of other educational providers or quality distance programs offering similar programming?

24. Environment and social responsibility
   - How does program content reflect environmental and/or social responsibility?
   - Are there current social, environmental issues that we are not addressing?

25. International perspective
   - How does the program content reflect an international/cultural awareness perspective?
   - How does the program actively encourage participation from international students?
   - How does the program provide for international experience for its students?
   - Do we prepare our students for global work experiences?

26. Potential for program expansion
   - Does our student enrolment, application rate, and retention rate data indicate the feasibility of program expansion? Why or why not?
   - If an expansion is deemed feasible, provide a rough estimate of cost, including development costs for expansion. (include revenue in the estimate)

III.   Analysis
A. Summary of Themes and Trends
   - Be sure that all themes and trends are well supported by data from the report.

B. Opportunities and Issues

IV.   Program Recommendations and Conclusions

This section should include an action plan related to any issues, deficiencies, expansion or contraction, significant changes in curriculum/program outcomes.

V.   Appendices

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Resources for Comprehensive Reviews

Centre for Teaching and Learning. The Centre for Teaching and Learning provides advice, templates, and tools that departments can use in carrying out comprehensive reviews. CTL provides expertise in the areas of curriculum review and outcome and objective mapping.

Strategic Planning and Analysis Division. The Division provides consulting services for the structure, design, data analysis and process of the review. Research Services provides advice

and expertise in the areas of research design and logistics of research that will provide data for the comprehensive review. This includes surveys, interviews, focus groups, or other research processes that will provide data to the department.