TITLE: PROGRAM REVIEW

POLICY STATEMENT:
Red Deer College (RDC) reviews its programs through an Annual Program Improvement Process (APIP) and a Quality Improvement Program Review (QIPR). Programs complete a QIPR at minimum once every seven years.

PURPOSE:
The purpose of program review at RDC is to ensure students receive the highest possible quality educational experience through a continual academic program improvement process. This policy provides an overview of the process that RDC applies in improving 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 information base. The quality improvement process supports developing, adapting, and planning programs to better meet the needs of students and the community. The process identifies specific areas for improvement and planning appropriate resource allocation.

SCOPE:
This policy applies to all Credit and Apprenticeship Programs provided by RDC or contracted to others by RDC. Program review for the School of Continuing Education is described in the Non-Credit Programming Policy.

PRINCIPLES:
Procedures and decisions at Red Deer College:
1. Treat all persons fairly and respectfully.
2. Are non-discriminatory and non-intrusive.
3. Incorporate open, honest and timely communication.
4. Are made in a timely manner.
5. Provide appropriate confidentiality and privacy.
6. Provide appropriate access to education.
7. Ensure that all persons have access to informed support regarding policies, procedures, rights and responsibilities.
8. Operate with clear written expectations for conduct and handling of complaints.
9. Meet all accreditation standards.
10. Maintain and clearly state a high standard of instruction and administration in all areas of educational programs and services.
11. Are communicated in alternate forms to those who require such accommodation.

Specifically for this policy:
1. RDC regularly evaluates its effectiveness and efficiency in order to ensure the currency of program curriculum and that its programs meet students' needs and are aligned with

RDC's vision, mission, values, and priorities. Such accountability assists in maintaining responsiveness to students and the community.

2. The values of RDC are honoured through a commitment to:

    2.1. Excellence by supporting and encouraging innovation and continuous quality improvement practices to ensure the availability of high quality learning experiences and opportunities for students.

    2.2. Exploration and accountability by providing programs areas the opportunity to engage in self-study through internal reflection, critical inquiry, and creative problem solving.

    2.3. Community and inclusiveness wherein program review is collaborative and includes broad stakeholder input and feedback from students, alumni, faculty, administration, employers, the community, and other key groups.

    2.4. Integrity by supporting honest, open, and timely communication processes. The program review schedules, processes, criteria, and outcomes are clearly communicated.

3. RDC follows fair and equitable processes. People are treated with respect and individuals are encouraged to take personal responsibility. Members of the RDC community collectively share responsibility for maintaining and enhancing the quality of its programs and for improving the quality of student learning experiences.

4. Program quality is outcomes based and informed by evidence and data. In this way RDC ensures that program curriculum and instruction meets or exceeds national, provincial, and professional standards.

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

6. The program review process allows for flexibility to accommodate specific program circumstances.

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

8. Program reviews are conducted with the efficient use of resources such as the time required of faculty, students, staff, and others involved in the review process.

9. Programs are reviewed according to six general criteria. There is flexibility to add criteria as needed to meet individual program requirements.

    9.1. The program is aligned with RDC's strategic plans *(not applicable for Apprenticeship Programs)*.

    9.2. The program's curriculum and learning environment are based on achieving learning outcomes that promote personal development and prepare students for employment or further learning *(modified for Apprenticeship Programs)*.

    9.3. The program's faculty and staff complement meets program needs.

    9.4. The program's students are supported to become successful program completers.

    9.5. The deployment of resources in the program is effective and consistent with the program's learning outcomes.

9.6. Faculty are engaged and supported in scholarly activity.

DEFINITIONS:

Apprenticeship Program: a post-secondary education program approved by Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training that combines work experience, on-the-job, and technical training.

Credit Program: A set number of courses that, upon completion, result in the awarding of a credential (e.g. certificate, diploma, applied degree or degree) or university transfer credit that has received or requires Academic Council approval.

Major Redevelopment: Any redevelopment that results in one or more of the following: change of credential name, change in major or concentration, substantial change in program learning outcomes, design, and/or length.

Program Completer: Includes students who complete the final portions of their Certificate, Diploma, Advanced Certificate, Applied Degree, and Apprenticeship program requirements. Program completers also include students from University Transfer, Career and Academic Preparation, and Open Studies who only complete portions of their programs before leaving.

Program-Specific Service Area: Services such as laboratories or specific technical support areas that only support specific programs.

GUIDELINES:

1. Program-Specific Service Areas are reviewed as part of the program's APIP and QIPR.

PROCEDURES:

1. **Quality Improvement of Programs Committee (QIPC)**

   1.1. RDC maintains QIPC with the following mandate to:

      1.1.1. Advise the Executive Director of Strategic Planning and Analysis, the Vice President Academic (VPA) on matters pertaining to program review.

      1.1.2. Establish the criteria and processes for program review.

      1.1.3. Coordinate program review as part of the overall program planning processes of RDC.

      1.1.4. Review APIP data for general trends.

      1.1.5. Confirm all steps of the QIPR have been completed.

      1.1.6. Recommend changes to program review policy to Academic Policy Committee.

   1.2. Committee membership is broadly representative of RDC programs with majority faculty representation. A faculty member serves as co-chair with the Executive Director of Strategic Planning and Analysis.

   1.3. Committee members are appointed by the Executive Director of Strategic Planning and Analysis. Appointments are normally for two years with no more than half the committee newly appointed each year and with no limit on consecutive terms.

   1.4. The Committee submits an annual report to Academic Council, Deans' Council, and Service Council.

2. Annual Program Improvement Process (APIP)

2.1. Annual Program Improvement Process is conducted for Credit and Apprenticeship Programs. Strategic Planning and Analysis (SPA) meets with Associate Deans and program area representatives to review the information provided and give programs the flexibility to identify additional data requirements.

2.2. SPA collects and provides annual data along with a preliminary analysis to program areas and School Councils.

2.3. QIPC meets to review the annual data to identify and report general trends to the VPA, Deans' Council, Academic Council, and School Councils.

2.4. Programs use the data from APIP to improve program quality. Action plans related to quality improvements are incorporated into continuous program improvement, and operational and budget planning.

3. Quality Improvement Program Review (QIPR) Process: for Credit Programs

3.1. Quality Improvement Program Reviews are carried out at minimum every seven years for Credit Programs. The Associate Dean may request to schedule a QIPR earlier than the seven year cycle. Upon approval from the Dean and VPA, programs complete the Process for Programs with Accreditation (PPA) in place of the QIPR process.

3.2. The Executive Director of Strategic Planning and Analysis sets and maintains the schedule for QIPR in consultation with the Associate Deans.

3.3. The Associate Dean strikes a steering committee which includes the Associate Dean, program faculty member(s) from the School Council, a faculty member who does not teach in the program under review who may or may not be a member of the School, and a Learning Designer from the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL). A consultant from SPA is a resource for the steering committee.

3.4. The steering committee completes a self-study of the program through a process of critical inquiry, self-reflection, and consultation with stakeholders. The consultant provides guidance related to the structure, design, data analysis and process of the review. The steering committee, in consultation with the Associate Dean, has the flexibility to determine the level of focus and detail for each of the self-study criteria.

3.5. Credit Programs complete a curriculum review as part of their QIPR.

3.6. The self-study is approved by the Dean in consultation with the VPA and presented to School Council before it is sent to the external/peer reviewer.

3.7. For all Credit Programs a qualified external or peer reviewer participates in the review by reviewing the self-study, visiting the campus; and preparing a report for the steering committee.

3.8. Using the self-study and external or peer reviewer's report, the Associate Dean, in consultation with the School Council and Dean, develops an action plan. The Associate Dean forwards the self-study, external or peer reviewer's report, and action plan to QIPC, prior to presenting the action plan to QIPC.

3.9. The Associate Dean presents the final action plan to QIPC.

3.10. After the presentation, QIPC sends a confirmation memo to the VPA indicating that the QIPR is complete.

3.11. Schools use this process to inform continuous program improvement, and operational

and budget plans.

3.12. To provide the flexibility needed for continuous program improvement, the Associate Dean may request alterations to the process from the Executive Director of Strategic Planning and Analysis.

4. **Process for Programs with Accreditation/External Approval (PPA): for Credit Programs**

4.1. Upon approval from the Dean and VPA, programs complete the PPA in place of a QIPR. The PPA is completed when the program undergoes a regularly scheduled accreditation/approval process.

4.2. The Associate Dean notifies the Executive Director of Strategic Planning and Analysis of the accreditation/approval schedule.

4.3. If curriculum review is not completed as part of the accreditation/approval process, the program completes a curriculum review at minimum every seven years.

4.4. The Associate Dean presents the action plan resulting from their accreditation/approval process, developed in consultation with the School Council and Dean, to QIPC. If an action plan is not developed as part of the accreditation/approval process, the Associate Dean develops an action plan in consultation with the School Council and Dean and presents it to QIPC.

4.5. After the presentation, QIPC sends a confirmation memo to the VPA indicating that the PPA is complete.

4.6. Schools use this process to inform continuous program improvement, and operational and budget plans.

4.7. To provide the flexibility needed for continuous program improvement, the Associate Dean may request alterations to the process from the Executive Director of Strategic Planning and Analysis.

5. **Quality Improvement Program Review (QIPR) Process: for Apprenticeship Programs**

5.1. Quality Improvement Program Reviews are carried out at minimum every seven years for Apprenticeship Programs.

5.2. The Executive Director of Strategic Planning and Analysis sets and maintains the schedule for QIPR in consultation with the Associate Deans of the School of Trades and Technologies.

5.3. The Associate Dean strikes a steering committee which includes the Associate Dean, program faculty member(s) from the School Council, a faculty member who does not teach in the program under review who may or may not be a member of the School, and a Learning Designer from the CTL. A consultant from SPA is a resource for the steering committee.

5.4. The steering committee completes a self-study of the program through a process of critical inquiry, self-reflection, and consultation with stakeholders. The consultant provides guidance related to the structure, design, data analysis and process of the review. The steering committee, in consultation with the Associate Dean, has the flexibility to determine the level of focus and detail for each of the self-study criteria

5.5. The self-study is approved by the Dean in consultation with the VPA and presented to

the School Council before it is sent to the external/peer reviewer.

5.6. A qualified external or peer reviewer participates in the review by reviewing the self-study, visiting the campus; and preparing a report for the steering committee.

5.7. Using the self-study and the external or peer reviewer's report, the Associate Dean, in consultation with the School Council and Dean develops an action plan. The Associate Dean forwards the self-study, external or peer reviewer's report, and the action plan to QIPC, prior to presenting the action plan to QIPC.

5.8. The Associate Dean presents the final action plan to QIPC.

5.9. After the presentation, QIPC sends a confirmation memo to the VPA indicating that the QIPR is complete.

5.10. The School of Trades and Technologies uses this process to inform continuous program improvement, and operational and budget plans.

5.11. To provide the flexibility needed for continuous program improvement, the Associate Dean may request alterations to the process from the Executive Director of Strategic Planning and Analysis.

6. Formative Program Review Process for New Programs and Programs that have Completed a Major Redevelopment

6.1. All new programs and programs that have completed a Major Redevelopment undergo a Formative Program Review. Associate Deans may request a formative review for any redeveloped program. Formative Program Review is aimed primarily at identifying program strengths and need for change during early implementation.

6.2. At least one Formative Program Review is completed for new programs or programs that have completed a Major Redevelopment, normally one year following the graduation of the first class using data from the first graduates. If the Formative Program Review results in extensive changes to the program, another formative program review is recommended following implementation of changes.

6.3. The Associate Dean is responsible for initiating and conducting Formative Program Reviews for new programs and programs that have completed a Major Redevelopment.

6.4. Following Academic Council approval of a new program or program that has completed a Major Redevelopment, the Associate Dean contacts the Office of Strategic Planning and Analysis to schedule a Formative Program Review, to make arrangements for timely data collection, and to coordinate the scheduling of the formative review with the next QIPR or PPA.

6.5. The checklist for Formative Program Review is approved by QIPC and published in the Guide for Program Development and Redevelopment of Credit Programs posted on the RDC portal (TheLoop).

OFFICER RESPONSIBLE: Chair of Academic Council

RECOMMENDING AUTHORITY: Academic Council

CONSULTATION FOR REVIEW: Vice President Academic, Executive Director Strategic Planning and Analysis, Quality Improvement of Programs Committee, Quality Improvement of Services Committee, Deans' Council, Associate Deans, School Councils, Academic Policy Committee.

POLICY REVIEW DATE: July 2021

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2016

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)
October 1, 2016

RELATED POLICIES:

- [Curriculum Standards for Credit Programs](#)
- [Non-Credit Programming](#)
- [Program Development and Redevelopment for Credit Programs](#)
- [Programs: Advice from Stakeholders](#)

CONNECTION TO BOARD POLICIES:

All RDC policies support relevant Board of Governors' policies.