

Pan-Canadian Quality Assurance Framework for the Assessment of International Academic Credentials (QAF) Steering Committee

Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

Recognizing the autonomy of organizations involved in assessing and recognizing academic credentials in Canada, the Pan-Canadian Quality Assurance Framework for the Assessment of International Academic Credentials (QAF) Steering Committee will:

- support the pan-Canadian assessment community's broad acceptance of the principles and guidelines outlined in the [Pan-Canadian Quality Assurance Framework for the Assessment of International Academic Credentials](#) (QAF), by improving the quality and consistency of academic credential assessments, and with a view to facilitating the integration of internationally educated students and professionals in Canada. The adoption of the QAF and its use by academic credential assessment organizations in Canada is anchored to a process that both situates the applicant's international academic credential in the context of the relevant issuing education system outside Canada, and also determines whether the academic credential is comparable to an academic credential issued within at least one of the 13 provincial and territorial education systems in Canada, taking into consideration the levels, types, and particular characteristics of academic credentials typically found in Canada.¹
- support the Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC) in:
 - the QAF's management to ensure its continuous improvement, and to guide organizations in applying the framework's principles; and
 - reporting evidence-based information on compliance to the QAF, as well as compliance with qualification-recognition-related international legal instruments adopted by Canada.
- promote the QAF's adoption among various sectors of the pan-Canadian academic credential assessment community, in line with Canada's international obligations regarding assessment and recognition of international academic credentials. This objective includes adoption of the QAF within their own respective organization, if applicable.

¹ Competent recognition bodies and assessment services in Canada may use various terminology to describe their academic credential assessment outcomes, such as but not limited to: assessment against Canadian education standards; comparative evaluation of studies taken outside Quebec (comparative evaluation).

2. Membership

The QAF Steering Committee shall comprise no more than 10 individuals. The majority of these individuals will be at a senior level and conduct or manage academic credential assessment functions in their respective organization and/or support policies and practices in this sector.

The makeup of the steering committee will consist of:

- a full member of the Alliance of Credential Evaluation Services of Canada (ACESC);
- a representative from the Association of Registrars of the Universities and Colleges of Canada (ARUCC) and/or a recognized public postsecondary educational institution in Canada;
- a representative from the Canadian Network of Agencies for Regulation (CNAR) and/or a recognized provincial or territorial professional regulatory body in a regulated profession in Canada;
- up to six (6) subject-matter experts with experience in the academic credential assessment and recognition sector;² and
- the CICIC coordinator as a non-voting member.

The Chair of the committee shall be elected from among the members described above and will serve a two-year term. In the absence of the Chair, the CICIC coordinator will perform the duties of the Chair.

Committee members are invited to serve a two-year term.

3. Roles and responsibilities

Members of the QAF Steering Committee will:

- participate in the activities, teleconferences, videoconferences, and in-person meetings of the committee;
- review the QAF and make amendments, as required, to ensure the continuous quality of the QAF, and remain in compliance with qualification-recognition-related international legal instruments adopted by Canada;

² Subject-matter experts may support policies and procedures within their organizations, such as but not limited to: an assessment service; a professional regulatory body and/or an organization supporting professional certification functions; postsecondary educational institution and/or an organization supporting admission functions, prior learning assessment, and/or transfer credit; an immigrant-serving agency or community organization; a provincial or territorial government; a secretariat and/or governance body of a qualification-recognition-related international legal instrument adopted by Canada.

- develop policies related to the administration of the QAF;
- review and approve new applications from organizations operating in a province or territory in Canada who wish to adopt the QAF and who carry out assessments of academic credentials for use by individuals in Canada;
- confirm that current organizations continue to comply with the QAF; and
- consider strategies to promote the QAF to relevant organizations operating in a province or territory in Canada that have not yet adopted it and encourage these organizations to submit applications to adopt the QAF.

The committee's Chair will:

- chair teleconferences, videoconferences, and in-person meetings, in accordance with the Terms of Reference;
- authorize the invitation of guests who are not committee members, in consultation with the CICIC coordinator;
- exercise the authority to amend these Terms of Reference, in consultation with the committee; and
- perform other related duties.

To support the work of the committee, CICIC will:

- manage the logistics of teleconferences, videoconferences, and in-person meetings, in accordance with the policies and procedures of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC). Such tasks include drafting and translating of agendas, proceedings, and records of decisions (as required), in collaboration with the Chair;
- coordinate the QAF applications process from new applicant organizations and provide them guidance based on the requirements set out in the QAF;
- coordinate the peer-review process of current organizations, to confirm continued compliance with the QAF, and thus collect evidence-based compliance information on qualification-recognition-related international legal instruments adopted by Canada;
- coordinate QAF revisions.

4. Teleconferences, videoconferences, and in-person meetings

The work of the committee will be conducted:

- primarily via teleconference or videoconference, to promote timely communication exchanges while minimizing costs, in English and in French; or
- in person, in rare circumstances, at the discretion of CICIC, in consultation with the Chair and according to available budget.

During these teleconferences, videoconferences, and in-person meetings:

- the Chair will be responsible for managing interactions, timekeeping, and summarizing the decisions of members;
- quorum shall be attained by a simple majority of members; and
- decisions will be made by consensus, either orally or by written poll, on the principle of one vote per committee member, including the Chair.

5. Conflict of interest

A conflict of interest is deemed to exist when a QAF Steering Committee member is confronted with a matter in which they have an interest, issue, or circumstance that could frustrate the individual's capacity to serve as a committee member.

For any potential situation that could be construed as a conflict of interest between a committee member and a matter pending before the committee, the committee member shall:

- disclose such interest to the committee;
- not vote on the matter; and
- not attempt to influence the decisions of other committee members.

6. Remuneration

Members of the committee are not paid honoraria for their contribution to the collective work of the QAF Steering Committee and/or for participating in its activities.

7. Amendments

The Terms of Reference were reviewed and then adopted by the QAF Steering Committee on April 26, 2023. It is recommended that the Terms of Reference be reviewed at least every three years; a review of the Terms of Reference may also be initiated by the committee Chair at anytime. Any changes are subject to the unanimous approval of the committee.