

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 Associate Vice President of Strategic Planning and Research.

PROCEDURE:

1. The program review process is coordinated by the Associate Vice President of Strategic Planning and Research.
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 Associate Vice President of Strategic Planning and Research. 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 Research.
- 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 Research 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: Associate Vice President Academic, Strategic Planning and Research, 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, 2010 (Policy revised; Program Review Policy in effect)

RELATED POLICIES:

- [Curriculum for Credit Programs](#)
- [Program Development and Redevelopment for Credit Programs Policy](#)

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

A. Feasibility

1. Fit with College Goals
 - program mission and program mandate statements relate to College goals and Board ends
 - clear fit with major goals identified in the Comprehensive Institutional Plan
 - program mission and program mandate statements clearly relate to College values
2. Current Resources
 - Use of financial resources (adequate, if not how much more is required?)
 - Use of human resources (adequate, if not how much more is required?)
 - Use of physical resources (adequate, if not how much more is required?)
 - Academic credentials and experience of faculty.
3. Impact on Infrastructure
 - Requirement for physical space, services such as Finance, Registrar's, administration.
4. Additional resources required
 - Value of specialized facilities and equipment that are unique to a program.
 - Information technology and software that is unique to a program.
 - Resources from the College or community that are unique to a program.
5. Current demand
 - Applications for the program relative to capacity.
 - Enrolment.
 - 5 year trends.
6. Community impact—students
 - Relative numbers impacted by program (i.e. large numbers of students from central Alberta vs. only a few students from central Alberta).
7. Community impact—graduates
 - Size of sector impacted by loss of graduates in this field.
 - Are other program graduates a reasonable second choice for employment in the field.
8. Cost effectiveness
 - Comparison of cost per FLE to the expectation (benchmarks) in Alberta system.

9. Impact on existing programs

- How does this program area affect other credit and non credit programs/activities?
- How many courses in the program are service courses for other programs?
- On an annual basis how many students are transferring between this and other programs (and which programs are they transferring to)?

10. 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 RDC?
- 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)?

11. 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?

12. Employability/transfer rate

- Employment in training-related occupations.
- UT transfer rate
- 5 year trends.

B. Sustainability

13. Long term applicant pool

- Review of 5 year trends.
- Relate trends to employment outlook (by sector and local demand) and demographics (e.g. If average age of students in program is 19, what is the projected population of 18 to 22 year olds over the next 5 years?)
- Analyze 5-year trends and determine if there is a reasonable expectation of change.
- Projected size of high school graduate cohort over next 5 years.

14. Continued resource investment

- What will the program cost to maintain the capital that is unique to the program and required to keep the program current?
- What is the cost of the resource requirement that is unique to the program that will be required to continue the quality of program?

15. Processes for continuous assessment and revision of curriculum and delivery methods

- How is the relevance and currency of the curriculum assessed on an ongoing basis? Examples should be provided.
- How does the department review program delivery and student assessment on an ongoing basis? Examples should be provided.

16. Employment outlook

- Occupational outlook from AB Employment & Immigration
- Regional employment outlook
- Analyze the employment trends of past 5 years and project into the future for each program.

17. Graduate Satisfaction

- How satisfied are graduates with the program?
- Analyze the 5 year graduate satisfaction summary data from the Level 1 Review results.

18. Potential for program expansion

- Demand.
- Cost, including development costs
- Revenue.

19. Long term community impact

- Impact of graduates in the region
- Relative numbers of people in central Alberta impacted.
- Is there a specific community of interest relevant to the program?
- Service learning activities in the community
- Regional employment projections
- Regional student demand.

20. Impact on program mix

- How does the program contribute to the comprehensive nature of the College?
- Assess post-secondary program demands in central Alberta and compare to program mix at RDC.

21. Alternate providers

- What is the impact (if any) of other educational providers in the region or quality distance programs offering similar programming?

22. Flexible modes of delivery/Universal Design

- How easily can the program accommodate the needs of a wide diversity of learners (for example: distance, alternate schedules, learners with disabilities)?
- What elements of universal design are incorporated into the delivery of this program?
- What efforts are made to serve under-represented groups?

23. Environment and social responsibility

- How does program content reflect environmental and/or social responsibility?

24. International perspective

- How does the program content reflect an international perspective?
- How does the program actively encourage participation from international students?
- How does the program provide for international experience for its students?

C. Curriculum Review

For guidelines and requirements for Curriculum Review, see the Curriculum for Credit Programs Policy.

25. 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?

26. Curriculum Elements

- Are the components of the curriculum (e.g. Admission requirements, graduation requirements, course outcomes, learning activities, student assessment) aligned with the Program Outcomes and best educational practices? See the Curriculum for Credit Programs Policy for standards for curriculum elements.

D. Faculty and Staff

27. Scholarly and Professional Activity of Faculty

- Scholarly and professional activity of faculty within the program should be included.

28. 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 ration 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?
- Do faculty and staff contribute to local, regional, and global communities in relation to their role at the College?

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 Research 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.