



Expectations for Quality Assurance – University Certificates and Diplomas

MPHEC Assessment

- Universities are required to submit proposals for new or modified credit-based certificate and diploma programs that **can be completed independent of a degree program**¹.
- Universities are required to submit proposals for **some embedded** programs (i.e., those that must be completed/awarded within the context of a degree program), namely, proposals are required for:
 - embedded undergraduate certificates and diplomas that are 30 credits or more;
 - embedded graduate certificates and diplomas that are 15 credits or more.
- **All credit-based certificate and diploma programs are expected to meet the parameters outlined within the *Maritime University Certificate and Diploma Framework* (see Appendix A). The MPHEC recognizes that universities may currently be offering certificate and diploma programs that do not align with the proposed framework, e.g., that may fall outside of the credit thresholds. Such programs should be modified to meet these standards by 2029²; however, universities will not be required to submit full proposals for program modifications when carrying out these changes. Instead, these changes will be documented on a simplified form (see Appendix C; this form is also posted on the [MPHEC website](https://www.mph.ec.ca/quality/ongoing-ga/guidelines-2016.aspx)). **We will be reaching out to each university to confirm the certificates and diplomas they currently offer and those that require updating.****
- The MPHEC recognizes that non-credit certificate programs are also offered at Maritime universities. **It is important for universities to clearly distinguish between for-credit and non-credit certificates when advertising any certificate program** to current and prospective students given the common terminology of 'certificate.' Clear differentiation between for-credit and non-credit certificates will help students to better understand that these programs are intentionally different in their design and in their learning and graduate outcomes. For credit-based programs, universities are strongly encouraged to indicate in their program materials that the certificate is aligned with the MPHEC's *Maritime University Certificate and Diploma Framework*. **For non-credit certificates, universities are required to clearly indicate to current and prospective students that the program is not credit-based.**
- A set of information requirements specific to **new** certificate and diploma programs is currently under development and will be circulated for feedback in February/March 2023. In the meantime, universities should continue to use the three forms available on our website, as applicable: *Information Requirements for Proposals for New Undergraduate Programs*, *Information Requirements for Proposals for New Graduate Programs* (Note that, effective March 2022, external reviews are no longer required for graduate certificate

¹ If the certificate or diploma can be completed either as an embedded program or independent of a degree (i.e., stand-alone), a proposal is required.

² A seven-year timeframe has been proposed to align with the Commission's expectation for cyclical (i.e., at regular intervals) assessment of all programs following implementation <http://www.mph.ec.ca/quality/ongoing-ga/guidelines-2016.aspx>. Universities may choose to incorporate the review and update to each of their certificate and diploma programs through these established internal processes.

and diploma programs), and *Information Requirements for Proposals to Modify Programs* (i.e., for significant modifications to existing certificates and diploma programs unrelated to the introduction of this framework).

Internal Assessment & Reporting

In addition to MPHEC-led assessment, we note that **all** credit-based certificate and diploma programs will be expected to undergo the following internal assessments and reporting.

- Certificates and diplomas are required to go through an **internal review and approval process** within the university **prior to implementation**. The MPHEC recognizes that universities in the region likely already have internal processes in place for approving certificate and diploma programs: for many, this will likely be a continuation of existing practice. (For instance, Senate or equivalent approval may already be required in order for these programs to be included in the academic calendar and/or acknowledged on transcripts and parchments.)
- Universities will be asked to describe their policies for approving and ensuring the quality of certificate and diploma programs during the next round of **Quality Assurance Monitoring**.
- Certificates and diplomas are to be included in **cyclical quality assurance reviews** undertaken at regular intervals by departments/units offering these programs. When possible, reviews of these programs should coincide with reviews of cognate degree programs. For certificate and diploma programs that are not clearly connected to degree programs (e.g., some stand-alone programs, interdisciplinary programs not housed within a single department), separate schedules will need to be developed.
- To allow for an accurate understanding of certificate and diploma offerings in the region, universities should report enrolments in **all** credit-based certificate and diploma programs through the Commission's Post-Secondary Student Information System (PSIS). Certificates and diplomas are identified under Credential Type (Element #2010).