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During the 2017-2018 academic year, a dedicated group of faculty and staff representing Teaching and Learning and related academic supports and services worked with the Manager of Curriculum Development and a Higher Education Consultant to develop, guide and refine the Curriculum Framework. Focus groups consisting of faculty, staff and students provided feedback on critical elements of the framework, as well as the required processes and resources to support its implementation. This document is the result of all of the efforts from the contributors. This Quality Curriculum Framework will be a foundational resource to guide Curriculum Development at NorQuest College.

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What is curriculum and curriculum development?

Curriculum is defined in multiple ways throughout higher education. John P. Portell, a Canadian professor, researcher and scholar says there is no one generally agreed upon definition of curriculum (Portelli, 1987), and underscores that it is not enough to think of it only in terms of content, experiences, and plan. Toombs and Tierney (1993) suggest that curriculum can be defined as “an intentional design for learning negotiated by faculty in light of their specialized knowledge and in the context of social expectations and students’ needs.” This definition also adds the necessary components of student need and social collaboration. In developing a complete curriculum, Smith (1996) suggests looking at the knowledge to be transferred, the desired product, the processes of interactions, and the praxis that leads to its practical application.

For our purposes then, and not as curriculum theorists, curriculum can be considered as the sum of knowledge and activities that an institution designs and plans for its learners. Ornstein and Hunkins (1998) suggest that curriculum development involves how a curriculum is planned, implemented, and evaluated, and can be combined with “curriculum renewal,” a process by which existing curriculum is further developed or enhanced (Wolf, 2007). Curriculum development is best considered as a complete and iterative cycle that includes development, evaluation and renewal. Institutional processes supporting each of these components supports curriculum quality.

NorQuest follows an outcomes-based education (OBE) approach to curriculum. “Outcomes-based education addresses one fundamental question: ‘What do learners need to be able to do upon completion of the course?’ All curriculum decisions are based on the answers to this question” (NorQuest College, 2009, p. 2). Outcomes describe the vision of what a learner will be able to do because of their learning once they leave the classroom. At its most basic, OBE considers the learner experience along with outcomes, learning activities, and assessments.

Curriculum is a combination of content, learning outcomes and various assessment strategies that are influenced by the learning environment, teaching approaches, industry and professional standards, discipline-specific practices, best practices in higher education, and diverse learners. Curriculum development is the process by which curriculum is designed and developed to best support teaching and the learners to meet desired outcomes. Following a quality process during development ensures that curriculum is a reliable, high-quality and valued resource.
Quality Curriculum Development Framework Preface and Background

Purpose

This Quality Curriculum Development Framework is intended to support faculty, subject matter experts, and curriculum developers in the institution to create and implement a quality curriculum for NorQuest’s learners.

What does our quality curriculum development framework do?

- Ensures that NorQuest is working toward a unified vision that includes learner outcomes utilizing quality curricular approaches and resources within the NorQuest desired learner experience
- Puts the learner at the centre of the curriculum process, ensuring a quality curriculum development process, regardless of course, program, or delivery method
- Supports faculty and others involved in the curriculum development process by providing guidance and resources through the process
- Guides the development process to ensure that curriculum aligns with the key elements and considers principal factors in curriculum development
- Creates opportunity to adapt to changing views or trends (e.g., indigenization, technology)
- Unifies our language of curriculum development across the college
- Provides direction, sets boundaries, and directs action
- Provides opportunities for measurement, comparison, and evaluation

What doesn’t the quality curriculum framework do?

- Limit the academic freedom of faculty or curriculum developers in determining the curriculum
- Dictate the curriculum development process for faculties and programs
- Compete with faculty and program requirements for curriculum development such as accreditation, etc.

Why now?

Curriculum is at the core of every program at NorQuest, and is a valued asset. A curriculum framework supports all phases of curriculum development from planning, developing, evaluating and revising. The framework will be the benchmark to which all curriculum is planned, developed, and measured so curriculum quality is ensured.

What does it include?

The Quality Curriculum Development Framework includes these essential components, and it is only in their totality that a Quality Curriculum Development Framework for the institution is created:

1. Vision
2. Curriculum Development: Foundation
3. Curriculum Development: Principles
4. Curriculum Design Considerations
5. Curriculum Quality Resources
6. Curriculum Management Process
7. Learner Experience
VISION
NorQuest plans and implements a quality curriculum development framework to achieve this vision
1.1 Workforce-ready learners

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES
NorQuest’s development principles relay the institution’s efforts to ensure rigor in curriculum development
3.1 Legal Requirements
3.2 Citation and Formatting Requirements
3.3 Credible and Best Practice Resources
3.4 Outcome Mapping and Validation
3.5 Accreditation and Other Review

CURRICULUM QUALITY RESOURCES
NorQuest uses curriculum quality resources to prepare and deliver quality curriculum
5.1 Open Educational Resources (OER)
5.2 Technology
5.3 Curriculum Development Toolkit
5.4 Professional Development

CURRICULUM DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS
NorQuest’s curriculum design considerations include the learner and the learning environment, best practices, and aims to meet employer/professional expectations
4.1 Pedagogy
4.2 Learning Activity
4.3 Assessments
4.4 Learning Spaces
4.5 Work Integrated Learning
4.6 Flexible Modalities and Location

CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT PROCESSES
NorQuest manages an engaged, collaborative, and informed curriculum development process
6.1 Guided by Quality CD Framework
6.2 Utilizes the Toolkit
6.3 Planned
6.4 Consultative
6.5 SME Informed

LEARNER EXPERIENCE
NorQuest creates a unique learner experience
7.1 Exemplary Faculty
7.2 Inclusive Learning Experience
7.3 Preparation for Career or Next Stage of Learning
7.4 Meet You Where You Are At
The Framework

1. Vision

**VISION**

NorQuest plans and implements a quality curriculum development framework to achieve this vision.

1.1 Workforce-ready learners

“Workforce-ready learners”

Consistent with NorQuest’s Strategic Plan, the vision of the Quality Curriculum Development Framework is to ensure workforce-relevant programming for all learners. The framework supports faculty who develop and deliver curriculum to learners.

2. Curriculum Development Foundation

**CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION**

NorQuest’s curriculum development foundational pieces underscore commitments to all learners, our values, and our curriculum development approach.

2.1 College-Wide Learning Outcomes (CWLOs)

“College-Wide Learning Outcomes reflect the essential skills, abilities, and attitudes that NorQuest promotes in its programs and culture” (NorQuest College, 2017). As such, aligning curriculum outcomes to the College-Wide Learning Outcomes ensures purposeful and transformational learning.

2.2 Outcomes-Based Education (OBE)

“Outcomes-based education addresses one fundamental question: ‘What do learners need to be able to do upon completion of the course?’ All curriculum decisions are based on the answers to this question” (NorQuest College, 2009). Outcomes describe the vision of what a learner will be able to do because of their learning once they leave the classroom. At its most basic level, OBE considers the learner experience along with concepts, skills, issues, outcomes, learning activities, and assessments.

NorQuest’s curriculum development foundational pieces underscore commitments to all learners, our values, and our curriculum development approach.

Curriculum foundation pieces guide curriculum development to ensure a quality curriculum. Regardless of design considerations, curriculum foundation pieces are always present in NorQuest’s curriculum development approach.
2.3 Equity and Diversity

A curriculum that embraces equity and diversity “[has] the ability to function with awareness, knowledge, and interpersonal skill when engaging people of diverse backgrounds, assumptions, beliefs, values, and behaviours.” In general, equity and diversity are meant to include concepts that embrace human rights, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, and political beliefs. Specifically, curriculum embraces principles of indigenization and decolonization, interculturalization, and internationalization. Approaches might include consultation and collaboration, content expertise, and methodologies for assessment, teaching, and learning in general.

2.4 Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

Universal design for learning (UDL) works to provide flexibility and diversity to the curriculum, thereby allowing curriculum to be available or to be made available to all students who face barriers to education (including, but not limited to, language barriers, cultural barriers, physical barriers, learning barriers, and neurological barriers).

### 3. Curriculum Development Principles

**NorQuest’s curriculum development principles relay the institution’s efforts to ensure rigour in curriculum development.**

Curriculum development principles are met to ensure rigour and quality. In conjunction with curriculum foundation pieces, the principles are also firmly embedded in NorQuest’s curricular approach.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principles</th>
<th>Curriculum Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Legal Requirements</td>
<td>Understanding how copyright law, FOIP, and other legislative requirements apply to the development and application of curriculum ensures quality in curriculum development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Citation and Formatting Requirements</td>
<td>APA and MLA are both used at NorQuest as standard formatting and referencing styles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Credible and Best Practice Resources</td>
<td>Credible and best practice resources are expected to be used as part of the curriculum development process. Resources should reflect current and changing practices in industry and professions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Principles

| 3.4 Outcome Mapping and Validation | Program outcomes state what the learner will be able to do upon program completion. Program maps visually represent the path that learners take from admission to program completion. Alignment of CWLOs to program outcomes and then course outcomes allows for connections to assessments and meaningful and measurable related assessments. In accredited programs, mapping program and/or course outcomes to competencies demonstrates how learners develop competencies at distinct levels. |

| 3.5 Accreditation and Other Review | The process of review for professional and other accrediting bodies or other review panels. This may include internal and external program review as well accreditation reviews and input through Program Advisory Committees (PACs). |

### Curriculum Design Considerations

**CURRICULUM DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS**

NorQuest’s curriculum design considerations include the learner and learning environment, best practices, and aims to meet employer/professional expectations.

The curriculum development process allows for critical reflection of design considerations. Along with the curriculum foundation pieces and principles, these design considerations help to build a comprehensive quality curriculum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curriculum Design Considerations</th>
<th>Curriculum Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Pedagogy</td>
<td>Faculty approach the curriculum using a wide variety of educational approaches appropriate to the curriculum, NorQuest’s values, and professional and industry standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Learning Activities</td>
<td>Activities to support the outcomes-based approach are combined with teaching strategies and consideration of the concepts, skills, and issues identified. High-impact activities and other purposeful strategies are employed to assist with the engagement of learners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Assessments</td>
<td>Assessments should be purposefully designed with an understanding of best practice assessments appropriate for the course, content, mode(s) of delivery, and learners. Assessments should also reflect real-life and authentic experiences that the learner will face in the workforce. Where necessary, programs shall also adhere to accreditation standards or requirements for assessments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 Learning Spaces</td>
<td>Learning spaces can enhance and support experiences for students and student engagement. Creating virtual and non-virtual learning spaces to enhance the curriculum are equally important.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.5 Work Integrated Learning

Practical application in a workplace or work setting relevant to a student’s program or goals and encompassing some form of experiential learning is a desired approach. This can include applied research, community service learning, co-op or field placement, practicum, observation, work experience, volunteering, and more.

4.6 Flexible Modalities and Location

Curriculum may be delivered via flexible modalities, by synchronous or asynchronous means, and curriculum development must support modalities and locations such as, but not limited to, full-time, part-time, distance, hybrid, blended, online, and face to face.

5. Curriculum Quality Resources

NorQuest uses curriculum quality resources to prepare and deliver quality curriculum.

NorQuest assists faculty with resources to design quality curriculum. These resources are also considered as part of a comprehensive approach to curriculum development, which also includes the foundational elements, principles, and design considerations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curriculum Quality Resources</th>
<th>Curriculum Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Open Educational Resources (OERs)</td>
<td>OERs that are in the public domain or licensed under a Creative Commons license can be used as curricular resources. OERs are often peer-reviewed, provide diversity to curriculum, and can be customized for the learner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 Technology</td>
<td>Technology enhances learner engagement and can support authentic learning experiences and assessments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3 Curriculum Development Toolkit</td>
<td>NorQuest believes that to implement this framework, college constituents require a toolkit to assist with examples of “how to” introduce and develop elements of the framework into the curriculum and to provide resources to guide the curriculum components/elements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4 Professional Development</td>
<td>Professional development ensures that curriculum developers have the knowledge, tools, and resources to develop quality curriculum. Sessions may be available through Curriculum Development and in collaboration with other areas such as College Learning Teaching and Development (CLTD), Education and Information Technologies (E&amp;IT), the Indigenous Learning Centre, Assistive Technologies, the International Office, and faculty areas. Professional development will be accessible through online resources, one-on-one sessions, workshops, and presentations, and can be customized as requested.</td>
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6. Curriculum Management Processes

**CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT PROCESSES**

NorQuest manages an engaged, collaborative, and informed curriculum development process.

NorQuest manages an engaged, collaborative, and informed curriculum development process.

Curriculum development is managed through an informed process that is collaborative and learner-focused. It defines roles and responsibilities, invites support from leaders, engages stakeholders, and embraces evidence-based decision making. The processes enhance relationships among the developer, college resources, stakeholders, and learners. Documented processes and resource management help to ensure that curriculum remains an asset of the institution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curriculum Management Processes</th>
<th>Curriculum Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.1 Quality CD Framework</td>
<td>Elements of the Quality Curriculum Development Framework are integrated into the curriculum management process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2 Utilizes the Toolkit</td>
<td>The Toolkit contains the resources to support curriculum management. Documented processes provide guidelines and suggestions for ensuring a collaborative, informed approach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3 Planned</td>
<td>Curriculum is managed through a planned process of course review, enhancement and development. Scheduled internal or external curriculum reviews inform and influence the processes to ensure curriculum quality and workforce relevance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4 Consultative</td>
<td>NorQuest supports a collaborative approach to curriculum development, making use of valuable resources, including documented information and supports such as the Curriculum Development Office; the Library; College Learning, Teaching and Development; E&amp;IT resources; best practice resources; and so on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5 SME Informed</td>
<td>Stakeholders, learners, subject matter experts (SMEs), industry, and faculty should provide expertise, input, and guidance to develop curriculum. Multiple perspectives will add value to the product.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. Learner Experience

**NorQuest creates a unique learner experience.**

The NorQuest learner experience is the College’s promise to provide a unique and comprehensive learning experience for all students. Curriculum is one way to enhance the learner experience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Learner Experience</th>
<th>Curriculum Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.1 Exemplary Faculty</td>
<td>Curriculum is developed using faculty as subject matter experts. Curriculum development opportunities build on the capacity of faculty to share their knowledge with like-minded individuals. Faculty know their learners best and can support curriculum development that is meaningful for learners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2 Inclusive Learning Experience</td>
<td>Curriculum includes world views and perspectives that expose learners to diversity and engages learners in activities that encourage collaboration and inclusion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3 Preparation for Career or Next Stage of Learning</td>
<td>Curriculum includes authentic, real-world resources and experiences that prepare learners with the knowledge and skills that are endorsed by industry. Curriculum supports the achievement of a NorQuest College credential.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4 Meet You Where You Are At</td>
<td>Curriculum is accessible and leverages the experience of the learners to enhance and contribute to the learning process.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**References**
