

Outcomes Assessment Accreditation Model for Child and Youth Care Programs¹

Pre-amble/rationale

In Canada all publically funded post-secondary educational institutions are accredited according to a set of standards which are set provincially through legislation for post-secondary education. In addition, British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island have a second level quality assurance authority for publically funded degree granting institutions (college and university). (http://www.aucc.ca/qa/pdf/reg_prov_overview_e.pdf). The quality assurance process requires that all new degree programs for any profession or discipline be reviewed by the qualifications authority prior to admitting students and again on a regular program review cycle (5 to 7 years). The Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (www.aucc.ca) and the Association of Canadian Community Colleges (www.ACCC.ca) do not play a specific standard setting role but various professional disciplines, such as Nursing, Education, Medicine, Engineering, Social Work, Law, Health Services, etc. have separate educational accreditation boards that set standards and review programs for compliance to ensure that professionals in the field are trained to a specific standard of competence. CETAC licenses private career colleges across Canada and has just released a new set of standards for licensing these colleges (there are several private colleges offering CYW programs (e.g. Eastern College), however with the exception of Newfoundland private colleges are not reviewed by the same qualifications authority and do not meet the same standards and expectations as publically funded programs.

There are over 50 different publically funded post-secondary institutions offering Child and Youth Care (CYC)/Child and Youth Work(CYW) education in Canada and CYC/CYW Educators believe that quality of care and service to young people and their families will be enhanced by setting standards for educational programs and thereby assuring both the public and aspiring professionals that graduates of those programs will have a common base of knowledge and skill. To that end, the Task Force on Educational Accreditation is recommending the adoption of the following model for accreditation of CYC/CYW post-secondary programs. The specific standards and model presented here have undergone extensive and comprehensive review and adjustment based on the feedback of educators across Canada. The model is intended to be one that is implemented in conjunction with existing provincial and institutional program approval and program review processes. As new CYC programs develop and as existing programs undertake their regular cycle of review and evaluation the model may define additional data that needs to be collected or inputs and processes that must be documented within a self-assessment process. Outcomes assessment as part of accreditation means that programs must demonstrate that their institutions have plans in place for assessing educational outcomes. They must show evidence that the results of these assessments have led to the improvement of teaching and learning processes and improved preparation of program graduates to enter professional positions upon graduation. Accrediting bodies are moving away from “input” models that prescribe specific courses, credit hours, etc. to the examination of “output” that has been validated by advisory committees and program graduates and “operational processes” that ensure that students have demonstrate competence and will be safe and successful in their professional work following graduation. The proposed Accreditation Model needs to be supported by tools and specific guidelines developed by an Accreditation Council. Given the extent of additional work required for implementation, the formation of a Council to undertake the development of structures and processes for implementation is essential.

¹ This outline is based upon the “Outcomes Assessment Accreditation Model for Industrial Technology Programs” (revised December 2008) available at <http://www.nait.org/>. The model follows the trend in the United States towards outcome assessment in post-secondary program accreditation as well as outlining a logic model for accreditation that provides a structure for identifying the standards that are important and assessable. The specific standards are presented as samples only- they do not represent recommendations; only a framework for language and areas to include that is relatively comprehensive.

Definition of Terms

Program Title: The official approved title of the degree program being considered for accreditation.

Program Mission: A general statement which identifies the broad purpose of a program.

General Outcomes: A list of general expectations for “what” you expect students to achieve in the form of knowledge and skills that can be demonstrated in the field. These “outcomes” exist already in many regions of Canada and consist of certification competencies, vocational outcomes, and field-based competence or standards documents that define the domains of practice and the performance standards expected.

Competency Measures: The activities used within the educational program to determine if students have achieved a competency such as written tests, demonstrations & observations, case studies & discussion groups, exemplars, peer reviews, self assessments and work placement portfolios, presentations, mock events and monitors.

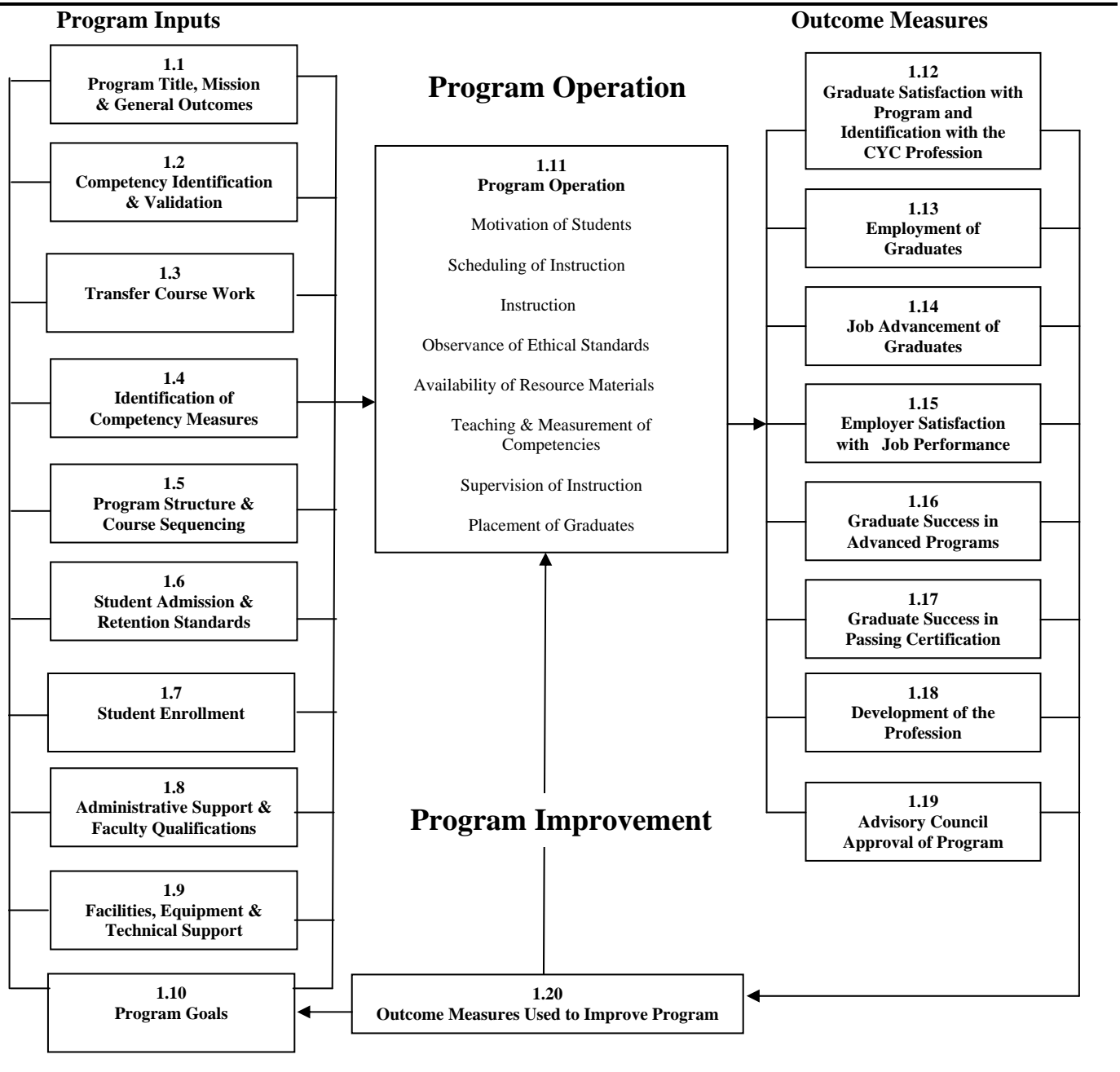
Outcome Measures: A series of activities, using instruments such as surveys, undertaken after students have completed a program to determine the overall effectiveness of the outcomes and competencies identified and covered in the program.

Outcomes Assessment Accreditation Model

The objective of accreditation is to ensure that programs in Child and Youth Care that are accredited meet or exceed established standards for service in the field and that outcome measures are used to continuously improve programs. The “Outcomes Assessment Accreditation Model” requires that consideration be given to both the qualitative and quantitative criteria set forth in these standards.

The Self Study Report shall follow the guidelines established by the Accreditation Council and be completed by a Program Review committee which includes a representative portion of the institution’s administrative staff, teaching faculty and students. In addition to meeting the institutions requirements for reviewing program quality the Self Study Report shall show how each program and program option meets each standard².

Table 1.1 – Outcome Assessment Accreditation Model



² For a new program proposal the proposal must address program inputs and describe operational methods to receive provisional accreditation.

Standards for Accreditation

Program Inputs:

1.1 Program Title³, Mission, and General Outcomes: The program/option title, definition and mission shall be compatible with the definition of Child and Youth Care described by either the provincial professional association and/or the CCCYCA and outcomes will ensure that graduates are capable of the Scope of Practice required in the province. The program/option shall lead to a diploma (community college) or a degree at the bachelors, masters, or doctoral level. Definitions for programs are as follows:

- a) **Diploma:** Two or three year programs/options that prepare individuals for front-line positions that work with children, youth, and families.
- b) **Baccalaureate Degree:** Four year programs/options (including post-diploma/degree completion tracs) that prepare individuals for positions that involve program design and evaluation, management, clinical work, and preparation for advanced degrees related to clinical intervention and research.
- c) **Master's Degree:** Programs/options that prepare individuals for career advancement that involves advanced clinical intervention, post-secondary teaching and/or research.
- d) **Ph.D.** Programs/options that prepare individuals for post/secondary teaching and/or research.

General outcomes shall be established for each program/option that provide a framework for the development of specific measurable competencies. Validation of the general outcomes may be accomplished through a variety of mechanisms. In provinces where educational or vocational outcomes and/or certification boards exist the general outcomes for the educational program should match local norms. In jurisdictions where there is no formal body or consortium which has agreed to general outcomes then a combination of external experts, program advisory committee and, after the program is in operation, follow up studies of graduates should review and validate the defined general outcomes.

Only institutions legally authorized under applicable provincial law to provide diploma or degree programs beyond the secondary level and that are recognized by the appropriate provincial post-secondary institutional accrediting body are considered for Child and Youth Care accreditation. Evidence must exist that the programs are understood and accepted by the university/college community, and the human services community.

1.2 Competency Identification & Validation: Methods for assessing practice competencies shall be identified and validated for each program/option. These competencies must closely relate to the general outcomes established for the program/option and validated in a similar manner. Assessment methods could include practicum evaluations, case studies, skill-based assignments, and written assignments throughout the course of the program. Professional identity is encouraged through an exploration of the value-base that Child and Youth Care holds as important and communication of those values to students. Students are expected to assess and explore professional and personal values within their coursework. Programs also have a responsibility to lead the field in developing new competency in practice (see outcome measures)

1.3 Transfer Course Work/Prior Learning Assessment: The institution shall have policies regarding coursework transferred to the program from previous post-secondary education. Previous coursework should be evaluated and approved by faculty or instructors knowledgeable in the courses for which credit is provided. Elective courses should be approved within the appropriate departments.⁴ All transfer credits must meet the minimum course requirements for the program (hours of instruction; assessment methods).

³ Each program of study and/or program option shall have appropriate titles consistent with the definition of Child and Youth Care.

⁴ Transfer credits may be assessed on a student by student basis, or institution to institution; or a combination thereof.

Accelerated diploma programs, articulated or collaborative undergraduate degree programs and undergraduate degree completion programs have mechanisms in place to determine how previous education is recognized and to assess the relevance of previous education to the portion of the program recognized for prior learning. **Prior learning assessment follows a standardized** process that provides recognized credit for work experience and prior learning when transfer credit is not possible. Students must successfully complete 50% of their program at the institution providing the graduating certificate.

1.4 Identification of Competency Measures: Assessment measures exist for each of the measurable Child and Youth Care outcomes identified for the program/option and the program/option is able to demonstrate how competence is assessed.

1.5 Program Structure & Course Sequencing: Each program/option shall meet minimum foundation requirements. Programs/options may exceed maximum foundation requirements specified in each area, but appropriate justification should be provided. A specific list of courses and hours of classroom time that are being counted toward each course shall be included in the Self Study Report. Minimum and maximum foundation requirements for degree programs/options are listed below:

- a. **Diploma:** Programs shall be a minimum of 2 years, equivalent 20 single semester courses averaging 36 hours each, and shall meet the following minimum/maximum foundation requirements:

Communications and counseling (both oral and written)	2-3 courses
Therapeutic Activities and Group work	1-3 courses
Family Studies	1-2 courses
Theory*	1-2 courses
Practicum/Internship	750-1500 hours
General Electives	1-3 courses

*theory may include study in other disciplines such as psychology, sociology.

Students must successfully complete 50% of their program at the institution providing the graduating certificate.

- b. **Bachelor's Degree:** Major programs/options shall be a minimum of 4 years (40 single semester courses averaging 36 hours) and shall meet the following minimum/maximum foundation requirements:

Communications and counseling (both oral and written)	2-3 courses
Therapeutic Interventions and Group work	2-4 courses
Family Studies	1-3 courses
Theory*	4-6 courses
Practicum/Internship	750-1500 hours
Research and Evaluation (could include thesis work)	2-4 courses
Liberal Arts	4-6 courses
Professional Electives/Specialization	2-4 courses

*theory may include study in other disciplines such as psychology, sociology.

Appropriate laboratory activities shall be included in the program/option and a reasonable balance shall be maintained between the practical application of “how” and the conceptual application of “why.” There shall be evidence of appropriate sequencing of courses in each major program/option to ensure that advanced level courses build upon concepts covered in beginning level courses. Students must successfully complete 50% of their program at the institution providing graduating certificate.

- c. **Master's Degree:** Major programs/options shall be a minimum of 1 year, equivalent to 10 single semester courses) and shall meet the following minimum/maximum foundation requirements:

Research Methods.....	2-4 courses
Communications and/or Therapeutic Intervention	2-4 courses
Professional Theory	3-6 courses
Major Research Project/Thesis	2-4 courses

Students must successfully complete 75% of their program at the institution providing graduating certificate.

- c. **Doctoral Degree:** Major programs/options shall be a minimum of 2 years, equivalent to a combined total of 15-20 single semester courses including the dissertation requiring independent research and an oral defense. The program shall meet the following minimum/maximum foundation requirements:

Research Methods.....	2-4 courses
Professional Theory	2-4 courses
Dissertation	5-7 courses

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1.6 Student Admission & Retention Standards: There shall be evidence showing that the quality of Child and Youth Care students is comparable to the quality of students enrolled in other programs at the institution. Admission standards must include a minimum entering average from the pre-requisite standard (high school, undergraduate degree, etc.) with the provision for an alternative method of demonstrating academic potential. Sources of admission information may include test scores and grade rankings. Student retention and graduation from the program is comparable to institutional standards. Sources of retention information may include general grade point averages and average length of time to completion for Child and Youth Care students compared to majors in other programs.

1.7 Student Advising: Students have access to academic advising to help them complete the program in a timely fashion. Advising is provided regarding career and future educational opportunities. Students are adequately prepared for the demands of advanced educational programming within the program curriculum and competency measures (1.4) demonstrate how this preparation is accomplished.

1.8 Administrative Support & Faculty Qualifications: There must be evidence of appropriate administrative support from the institution for the Child and Youth Care program/option including appropriately qualified administrators, an adequate number of full time faculty members and budgets sufficient to support program/option goals. Financial and personnel resources should not be significantly different from the institutional standard and should be comparable to the standards of similar institutions and programs/options. Full time faculty assigned to teach courses in the Child and Youth Care program/option must be appropriately qualified. Faculty qualifications shall include an emphasis upon the extent, currency and pertinence of: (a) academic preparation; (b) professional experience; (c) membership and participation in appropriate professional organizations; and (d) scholarly activities. The following minimum qualifications for full time faculty are required:

- a. **Diploma:** The minimum academic qualifications for a regular full-time faculty member is a bachelor's degree Child and Youth Care or a bachelor's degree in a related discipline with a diploma in Child and Youth Care. For documented reasons, a combination of education and experience plus professional certification as a Child and Youth Care practitioner may be

substituted. Membership and participation in the provincial Child and Youth Care Association is expected. A minimum of 75% of full-time faculty members should meet this qualification.

- b. Bachelor's Degree:** The minimum academic qualifications for regular tenure track, or full time, faculty members shall be a Masters degree in Child and Youth Care or a discipline closely related to the instructional assignment with practice experience. A minimum of fifty percent of the regular tenure track, or full-time, faculty members assigned to teach in the program of study content area(s) shall have a PhD in a related field. Membership and participation in the provincial Child and Youth Care Association is expected. Active professional involvement and/or scholarly activity in Child and Youth Care is expected. Exceptions may be granted to this standard if the institution has a program in place that will bring the faculty demographics into compliance within a reasonable period of time.
- c. Master's Degree:** A Ph.D. in a discipline closely related to the faculty member's instructional assignment. Membership and participation in the provincial Child and Youth Care Association is expected. Active professional involvement and scholarly activity in Child and Youth Care is expected.
- d. Doctoral Degree:** A Ph.D. in a discipline closely related to the faculty member's instructional assignment and an active research program contributing to the knowledge base in Child and Youth Care. Membership and participation in the provincial Child and Youth Care Association is expected.

Variation from these standards must be explained and justified and the need for such variation should consider a balanced equivalent of education and experience and demonstrate that faculty members are supported to upgrade their qualifications. Policies and procedures for faculty selection, appointment, reappointment and tenure shall be clearly specified and shall be conducive to the maintenance of high quality instruction. Faculty teaching, advising, and service loads shall be reasonable and comparable to the faculty in other professional program areas.

1.9 Facilities, Equipment & Technical Support: Facilities and equipment, including the technical personnel support necessary for maintenance, shall be adequate to support program/option goals. Evidence shall be presented showing the availability of library resources, student support and counseling, audio/video equipment, computer equipment and software programs to facilitate student success in each program area. Facility and equipment needs shall be included in the long range goals for the program.

1.10 Program Goals: Each program shall have current short and long range goals, and plans for achieving these goals.

Program Operation:

1.11 Program/Option Operation: Evidence shall be described in the Self-study showing the adequacy of instruction including: (a) motivation and counseling of students; (b) scheduling of instruction; (c) quality of instruction; (d) observance of ethical standards; (e) availability of resource materials; (f) teaching and measurement of competencies (specific measurable competencies/outcomes shall be identified for each course along with the assessment measures used to determine student mastery of the competencies); (g) supervision of instruction; and (h) placement services available to students for work experience.

Course syllabi must be presented which clearly describe appropriate course objectives, content, references utilized, student activities, and evaluation criteria.

Outcome Measures:

1.12 Graduate Satisfaction with Program/Option: Graduate evaluations of the program/option shall be sought on a regular basis. These evaluations shall include questions related to the importance of the general

outcomes and specific competencies identified for the program/option. Summary data shall be available for graduate evaluations of the program/option. (Graduate Survey)

1.13 Employment of Graduates: Information on job placement, titles, and salaries of graduates shall be collected on a regular basis. The jobs held by graduates will be consistent with program/option goals and outcomes. Summary data shall be available for the employment of graduates.(Graduate Survey; Employer Survey)

1.14 Job Advancement of Graduates: Information on the career advancement of graduates shall be collected on a regular basis to demonstrate promotion to positions of increasing responsibility. Summary data shall be available for the career advancement of graduates. .(Graduate Survey; Employer Survey)

1.15 Employer Satisfaction with Job Performance: Information on employer satisfaction with the job performance of graduates shall be collected on a regular basis including employer attitudes related to the importance of the specific competencies identified for the program. Summary data shall be available showing employer satisfaction with the job performance of graduates. (Employer Survey)

1.16 Graduate Success in Advanced Program: If a goal of the program/option is to prepare students for advanced studies, then the success of graduates in applying to, being admitted, and completing advanced study programs shall be tracked and confirmed. Summary data shall be available showing graduate success in advanced programs (Faculty member survey; Graduate Survey.)

1.17 Graduate Success in Passing Certification Requirements: If a goal of the program/option is to prepare students to pass certification requirements, then the success in passing these (examinations) shall be tracked and confirmed. Summary data shall be available showing success in achieving certification. (Graduate Survey; Professional Association Survey)

1.18 Development of the Profession: Dissemination of current and new knowledge to the field occurs through students as they graduate. Research productivity of some faculty will focus on field competencies and/or faculty members demonstrate a leadership role in the field through community/outreach. College and teaching focused University programs are linked to research-based universities and summary data is provided which demonstrates how the faculty members contribute to the development of knowledge and skill in the profession. (Faculty member survey; Graduate Survey; Employer Survey; Professional Association Survey)

1.19 Advisory Council Approval of Overall Program: An advisory council shall exist for the program/option and shall have responsibility for general outcome and competency validation and the review and evaluation of overall program success. Guidelines for the advisory council shall exist that include: (a) criteria for member selection that demonstrates representative expertise in the field; (b) procedures for selecting members, including student and/or graduate membership; (c) length of member appointment; (d) council responsibilities; (e) frequency of meetings (at least one per year); and (f) methods of conducting business. Minutes of advisory council meetings shall available which demonstrate that the council has reviewed and approved the program/option and any changes. (Faculty member survey; Student Survey; Advisory Council Meeting/minutes)

1.20 Outcome Measures Used to Improve Program: Evidence shall be presented showing how outcome measures (identified above) have been used to improve the overall program/option. (Quality Enhancement Plan and Goals for the future.)