A. Background and Definitions

Pursuant to the Minister’s Binding Policy Directive on Framework for Programs of Instruction made under the Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technologies Act, 2002 (OCAAT Act) regarding Advisory Committees for Programs of Instruction as defined by Ministry Policy Directives, the Board of Governors at Niagara College has enacted a bylaw regarding advisory committees for programs of instruction.

Niagara College is committed to providing well-qualified graduates to meet the current requirements of industry, business, health care agencies and community services. To meet this goal, there is a continuing need for guidance from industry with respect to maintaining relevance within the various programs.

The key to this guidance is the system of program advisory committees that provides the vital link between the community at large and the Niagara College administration, faculty and students.

Although the Board of Governors and the administration of Niagara College are ultimately responsible for all decisions, they depend to a large degree on quality advice from advisory committees.

Program of Instruction: a group of related courses leading to the awarding of one of the following credentials: Ontario College Certificate, Ontario College Diploma, Ontario College Advanced Diploma, Applied Degree or Ontario College Graduate Certificate. Programs of Instruction are approved by the Board of Governors and conform to the levels of learning articulated in the Credentials Framework (Ministry Binding Policy: Framework for Programs of Instruction). Programs of Instruction also include joint college-university programs that lead to the awarding of a degree by the university partner.

Other Programs: all other programs offered by the college, including those leading to a certificate or other document of recognition but not including a Program of Instruction. Carefully developed and well-constituted policy statements provide a framework for consistent decision-making across the College. New or revised policy will be required to respond to changes in the College or its environment.

B. Purpose

This practice established the operational requirements for a Program Advisory Committee (PAC) that is required for each Program of Instruction under Board by-law.
C. Practice Statements
Terms of Reference

1. Each advisory committee reports through the College organizational structure to the Vice-President, Academic.

2. The advisory role of each committee encompasses a number of areas of responsibility which include such program-related activities as:
   2.1. reviewing curriculum, course materials and equipment needs to ensure the relevance of same to current employment realities
   2.2. identifying the initial and continuing need for programs in the light of employment opportunities for graduates and regional economic requirements
   2.3. recommending modifications to program content to meet the future requirements of the workplace
   2.4. assisting in public relations and promotions for the program
   2.5. identifying and working with professional associations or agencies that certify or accredit graduates
   2.6. advising and providing human resource expertise relevant to program requirements
   2.7. recommending new types of equipment and training facilities
   2.8. providing advice on planned enrolment strategies
   2.9. providing counsel and support in matters of student field placement and other community linkage
   2.10. assisting in the preparation of formal program reports and reviews
   2.11. reviewing new program initiatives that might occur from time to time to meet new training demands
   2.12. assisting in obtaining student awards, scholarships and bursaries for deserving students
   2.13. periodically meeting with current and prospective students to provide related career information
   2.14. developing sub-committees as appropriate to address such topics as curriculum changes, field or clinical placement, etc.

3. The College may establish advisory committees for programs and services other than post-secondary Programs of Instruction. These advisory committees will report to the appropriate administrative authority and the College President or delegate shall define the structure, mandate and terms of reference of such committees.

Structure of the Committee

4. Each program advisory committee will collectively represent, as appropriate to each program, the following constituencies:
   4.1. representational employer groups
   4.2. field-work, field or clinical placement, co-op or other in-program work experience sites
   4.3. other educational institutions including the secondary school system
   4.4. graduates of the program
   4.5. professional associations
   4.6. employee associations
5. To the extent possible, the membership of each program advisory committee will broadly represent the region served by the program.

6. Members representing the above constituencies are appointed by the Vice-President, Academic. The normal term of office is for three years but terms of individual committee members can be extended by the Vice-President, Academic.

7. College employees and student curriculum committee representatives act as resource persons but are non-voting members.

8. The voting members of the committee are responsible for electing a Chair and Vice-Chair, who will not be members of Niagara College staff. The term of office of the Chair and Vice-Chair is two years with an extension to a subsequent one-year term by a majority committee vote. The maximum length of service for a Chair, in any case, shall be three consecutive years.

9. Each committee shall strive to maintain an active roster of eight (8) to twelve (12) members except where program cluster committees may require substantially larger constituencies. The minimum requirement is normally eight (8) voting members.

10. Appointments to the committee may be made at any time, and the relevant Academic Administrator is responsible for seeking input from the advisory committee on new appointees as required and then recommending new appointments to the Vice-President, Academic. The Academic Administrator may recommend extensions of a member's term to the Vice-President, Academic after seeking input from the advisory committee.

11. Should a member miss two consecutive, scheduled meetings without comment to the Chair, that individual shall be deemed to have withdrawn. At the discretion of the Chair, a member may send an (non-voting) alternate who can represent the same stakeholder group.

12. Should an advisory committee member be appointed to the College’s regular staff or Board of Governors that individual’s resignation from the advisory committee shall be deemed to occur on the date of his/her appointment.

13. Advisory committee members are subject to the Minister’s Binding Policy Directive on Conflict of Interest, issued under the OCAAT Act.

**Procedures for Operating Committees**

14. Meetings are called by the Academic Administrator (or as delegated to the relevant Coordinator), in consultation with the Chair of the committee, normally once per term, but at least once per year.

15. Meetings of the advisory committee, or any sub-committees, may be held by means of such telephone, electronic or other communication facilities as permit all persons participating in the meeting to communicate with each other simultaneously and instantaneously, and a member of the advisory committee or of its sub-committees, as the case may be, participating in such a meeting by such means is deemed for the purposes of this practice to be present at that meeting.

16. Quorum shall consist of the majority of the voting members appointed to the committee. If a quorum is not present when a formal recommendation is being put to a vote, then the absent members must be polled by mail or telephone with the results appended to the minutes of the appropriate meeting.
17. Secretarial and resource services are provided by the College staff. This includes sending out notices of meeting, arranging meeting rooms, preparing and distributing agendas and minutes and other such activities that might be required from time to time.

18. The Academic Administrator will ensure that appropriate college staff are invited periodically to attend committee meetings to discuss areas relevant to the program(s) (e.g., Employment Services, Student Services, Foundation Studies, Continuing Education, College Foundation, etc.)

19. The Advisory Committee Chair is responsible for approving the agenda items that may come from any member of the committee including resource members such as the Program Coordinator or Academic Administrator.

20. Minutes of each advisory committee meeting are distributed to each member of the committee, including the Academic Administrator responsible for the administration of the program and the Vice-President, Academic.

21. Copies of all committee minutes, including any formal recommendations are sent to the Vice-President, Academic and maintained on file in the office of the Academic Administrator.

22. The Vice-President, Academic sends out letters of appointment to new members and letters of appreciation to members who retire from the advisory committees.

23. The Freedom of Information and Protection of Individual Privacy Act requires that the College obtain a signed 'Consent to Release Information' form from each Advisory Committee member prior to using what is considered personal information (e.g., name, address, place of work, position, telephone number, length of advisory committee service, name of advisory committee of which member serves) for mailing or statistical purposes. This form shall be completed (and maintained by the Academic Administrator's office) at the time a new member indicates a willingness to serve on an advisory committee.

24. The Advisory Committee's record of activity shall be maintained by program staff and be available to members of the committee upon request and shall consist of:

   24.1. Agendas
   24.2. minutes of the last three years
   24.3. advisory committee guidelines
   24.4. current program of instruction
   24.5. College Strategic Plan
   24.6. current membership list
   24.7. list of all current programs and advisory committees
   24.8. evaluation of advisory committee effectiveness

**D. Related Documents and Links**

MTCU Minister’s Binding Policy Directive on Framework for Programs of Instruction
Niagara College Board of Governor By-Law Number 6