

Sheridan

Standards and Practices for Professional Advisory Councils

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THE PURPOSE OF PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY COUNCILS

The [Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Act, 2002](#), specifically notes within the [Framework for Programs of Instruction](#) binding policy directive that each College's Board of Governors establish an Advisory Council for each program or cluster of related programs offered by the College and that the structure, terms of reference and procedures for these Advisory Councils, referred to in this document as Professional Advisory Councils (PACs), be determined by the Board through bylaw or resolution.

The Role of Professional Advisory Council Members

Professional Advisory Councils (PACs) strengthen programming through direct connections to industry, academic and business colleagues. Successful Professional Advisory Councils provide strategic advice and input in the review of a program and help the College respond to changing academic, business and industry requirements. Professional Advisory Councils help ensure that our programs stay relevant to the needs within the community and anticipate future trends. Their perspective assists us to ensure that new and existing programs are relevant and curricula are up to date so that graduates will possess the skills and competencies required by employers in the current and future labour markets.

From time to time, and at the discretion of individual members, PAC members may undertake additional activities to strengthen and promote Sheridan programs and enhance the student experience (see section 1.2 for examples of these activities). In recognition of the significant time and effort spent on these activities, they are tracked and reported on annually in order to provide an accurate picture of the significant contribution that Professional Advisory Council members make to Sheridan and to the programs.

The Role of College Faculty and Staff

Sheridan faculty and staff may attend PAC meetings in a non-voting resource capacity at the discretion of the PAC Chair. The role of faculty and staff in a PAC meeting is to provide administrative and clerical support, to provide context with respect to specific agenda items, to answer PAC questions, to observe or as invited guests. The ability for PAC members to engage in dialogue and provide their expertise and experience is of primary importance at all PAC meetings.

The Role of Students

The PAC Chair may request that students be invited to meetings either on a regular or ad-hoc basis. Similar to faculty and staff, students attend in a non-voting resource

capacity to provide feedback and answer questions raised by PAC members. Where the PAC Chair requests that students be invited, the Dean or Associate Dean is responsible for inviting students that represent the breadth of experience requested by the PAC (for example, a representative from each year of the program, a certain number of graduating students, etc.).

GOVERNANCE OF PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY COUNCILS

The necessity and importance of Professional Advisory Councils is maintained by three governing bodies; the Ministry of Colleges and Universities (MCU), Sheridan's Board of Governors, and by the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB). The following excerpts guide Sheridan's commitment to functional and active Professional Advisory Councils.

Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Framework for Programs of Instruction Issued April 1, 2003; Revised July 31, 2009

C. Advisory Councils

The board of governors is to ensure that an advisory council for each program of instruction or cluster of related programs offered at the college is established and is made up of a cross-section of persons external to the college who have a direct interest in and a diversity of experience and expertise related to the particular occupational area addressed by the program. The board of governors is to establish in by-law the structure, terms of reference, and procedures for professional advisory councils.

Sheridan Operating Bylaw Issued December 13th, 1989; Revised: June 1, 2016

12. THE PRESIDENT AND VICE-CHANCELLOR

12.8 Advisory Councils

Sheridan shall establish a professional advisory council for each program of instruction or cluster of related programs offered by Sheridan, and such other advisory councils as it deems advisable from time to time. The Board shall establish the structure, terms of reference and procedures for advisory councils.

Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB) Handbook for Ontario Colleges Applying for Ministerial Consent under the Postsecondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000; Revised 2017, p.21

The Professional Advisory Council (PAC)

- a) includes experts in the field external to the organization and, for degrees in applied and professional areas of study, employers and representatives from industry and professional associations

- b) is engaged and positioned to regularly comment on the currency of the curriculum in relationship to developments in the discipline/field of study as well as the relevant labour market
- c) confirms the currency of the curriculum and, as appropriate, its relevance to the field(s) of practice
- d) endorses the program as represented in the application
- e) strives to achieve best practice

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY COUNCILS (PACs)

PACs are advisory and not administrative or executive in nature. The Councils are not responsible in any way for the allocation of institutional resources (e.g. human, facilities/space and capital). PACs report to the Board of Governors through Sheridan's President or designate.

1.1 The primary responsibility of Professional Advisory Councils is to provide program related advice by:

- Reviewing and making recommendations for new and existing programs of instruction and curriculum in relation to community requirements and the changing needs of the labour market;
- Advising on the development of new programs of instruction (see Appendix 1 for more information on Ad Hoc PACs).

1.2 Consistent with their overall advisory role, Professional Advisory Councils may also contribute to the programs in the following capacities:

Comprehensive and Annual Program Reviews, and Consent Renewal (degrees only)

- Participating in the annual assessment and scheduled comprehensive reviews of the program to ensure that the changing requirements of business, industry and society continue to be met;
- Participating in site visits as part of the consent renewal process (for degree programs only).

Work Integrated Learning

- Offering advice regarding clinical/field experience, co-op and work experience, placement opportunities, and internships;
- As appropriate, enabling site visits at their places of employment;
- Assisting in securing student work integrated learning opportunities;

Promotion of Program(s)

- Serving as ambassadors for the program by disseminating information to the community about programs, scholarships and bursaries;
- Participating in recruitment activities for students;
- Participating in Faculty open houses.

Student Support

- Helping to establish scholarships and bursaries for students;
- Aiding in identification of sources of donations and in-kind contributions.

PAC Administration

- Recommending new members as needed to ensure optimum effectiveness.

Other

- Assist in forecasting occupational trends;
- Advising on current and potential future certification requirements;
- Providing information about the competence and job-readiness of graduates;
- Participating in professional development activities for faculty and staff as jointly identified with the Dean or Associate Dean as useful;
- Acting as guest speakers in the program;
- Connecting the workplace to applied research opportunities;
- Serving as peer reviewers for undergraduate research and creative activities.

1.3 Membership

Professional Advisory Council (PAC) members are external experts who provide an ongoing exchange of information between the workplace community and Sheridan. Membership is comprised of representatives from the public and private sector including employers, professional and trade organizations, social agencies, government agencies, and Sheridan graduates.

Each PAC should include a cross-section of employers, potential employers and other members of the community who have a direct interest, and expertise, in the particular program area. It is important that membership of each PAC, to the extent possible, reflects the diversity of experience and expertise as well as the demographics of the industry.

Academics from other educational institutions may be invited to join PACs as members, or as guests, as deemed appropriate by the Dean/Associate Dean and PAC Chair. The Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB) requirements indicate this is recommended for degree program PACs.

Sheridan employees (full-time, part-time, or contract) and current students may only act as resource persons to a PAC. As a result, PAC members who take on teaching assignments at Sheridan must step down from the Council in compliance with Sheridan's Conflict of Interest Policy.

2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SHERIDAN

Sheridan is responsible for the establishment, operation and record keeping related to the PACs. Within Sheridan, responsibility for successful PAC operation is delegated to various bodies.

2.1 Board of Governors

- Pursuant to the Minister's Binding Policy Directive "Framework for Programs of Instruction" and Sheridan's Operating By-law, the Board is to ensure that an advisory council for each program of instruction or cluster of related programs offered at the college is established;
- Reviews an annual Compliance Report.

2.2 Office of the President

- Acts as the intermediary between the Board of Governors and the PAC.

2.3 Office of the Provost and Vice President Academic

- Annually, prepares a Compliance Report for presentation to the Board of Governors. This is shared with the Board in the fall of each academic year;
- Maintains a master database of all PAC members.

2.4 Academic Faculty

The Dean of the Faculty has overall responsibility for the establishment of PACs for programs within the Faculty, and for their successful operation. The Dean may delegate specific responsibilities as required. While the assignment of specific roles and responsibilities may vary across Faculties, the Dean must ensure that the following tasks and responsibilities are met.

The Dean of the Faculty is responsible for:

- Ensuring appropriate resources are made available to the PACs;
- Confirming new members as recommended by the PAC;
- Identifying future vacancies to ensure that the Council membership remains at capacity;
- Ensuring that a representative of the academic administration of the Faculty attends all meetings;
- Planning the agenda with the PAC Chair;
- Facilitating the booking of meeting dates;
- Providing meeting notices and agenda packages to the PAC members;
- Reporting back to the PAC on the outcome of recommendations;
- Ensuring appropriate communication and clerical support is available before, during, and after PAC meetings;
- Maintaining up-to-date historical records of all PAC activity, including membership, minutes and non-meeting activity reports and archiving this information in the central PAC repository on an ongoing basis;
- Preparing all letters of appointment, reappointment, retirement and acknowledgement of resignation for the signature of the Dean, and distributing the signed letters;
- Including the PAC in the Comprehensive Program Review Process at Sheridan and in applications for accreditation, where applicable;
- Inviting students, faculty or other Sheridan staff to PAC meetings when appropriate and at the request of the PAC.

Notwithstanding the above duties of the Dean, the following duties are generally delegated to the Associate Dean:

- Attending all PAC meetings;
- Ensuring that PAC requirements are met including PAC membership composition and meeting frequency;

- Planning the agenda and meeting schedule with the PAC Chair;
- Working with the PAC Chair to ensure that PAC activity is appropriate and meaningful to the program;
- Working with Program Coordinators to determine follow-up required on action items from PAC meetings;
- Reviewing PAC membership in consultation with the Program Coordinator, Chair and Faculty Dean;
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the PAC in collaboration with the Program Coordinator.

2.5 Alumni Office

- At the request of the Faculty Dean or Associate Dean, the Alumni Office may assist in soliciting alumni members for PACs.

3. PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY COUNCILS / MEETINGS

3.1 Structure of Professional Advisory Councils

3.1.1 All **full-time postsecondary programs** leading to a Ministry approved credential (Ontario College Certificates, Ontario College Diplomas, Ontario College Advanced Diplomas, Ontario College Graduate Certificates and Baccalaureate/Bachelor's Degrees) must have a PAC. PACs may be established for an individual program or a cluster of related programs.

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate to appoint one PAC for a group of related programs, subject to the following criteria:

- The programs have related program competencies;
- The programs have related curricula;
- The programs have related outcomes;
- The programs produce graduates for related industries.

3.1.2 Membership

- PACs are composed of **no less than 7 members external to Sheridan** who have a direct interest in, and a diversity of experience and expertise related to, the occupational area(s) associated with the program(s). The size of the PAC is influenced by factors such as the range of employment areas, number of

- programs within a cluster, and variety of external stakeholders.
- Members are comprised of representatives from the public and private sector including employers, professional and trade organizations, social agencies, government agencies, academics from other educational institutions, and Sheridan graduates (alumni).
 - No more than one member on any one PAC will be from the same company unless the members represent distinctly separate departments within a large corporation.
 - Maximum 3 alumni members are permitted per PAC, except in exceptional circumstances. In these exceptional cases, written permission must be granted by the Provost and Vice-President, Academic. Record of the exception must be kept on file and reported as part of the annual PAC compliance reporting process. In all cases, alumni must have no less than 5 years working experience in the field, post-graduation.

3.1.3 Length of Appointment

The PAC members shall be appointed for a term not to exceed three years, which will normally commence on September 1st of the year in which they were appointed and expire on the August 31st following their three-year term. These members may be recommended for reappointment for one additional term. Membership is reviewed annually by both the Dean and Associate Dean to ensure the vitality and representative nature of the Council.

3.1.4 New Members and Reappointments

The PAC recommends new members and reappointments as required to the Faculty Dean and/or Associate Dean. A typical appointment for a PAC member is three years, however on a reappointment the Council member may serve one additional 3-year term.

3.1.5 Vacancies/Retirement/Resignation of Professional Advisory Council Members

Vacancies will be filled on recommendation of the PAC to the Faculty Dean and/or Associate Dean. A typical appointment for a PAC member is three years. However, if the Council member is replacing another member mid-way through their term, the replacement member completes the remainder of the year and at that time is eligible for reappointment(s) for a full term through the usual procedure.

3.1.6 **Sheridan Representation**

Sheridan representatives may attend meetings to provide administrative and clerical support, to provide context to specific agenda items, to answer PAC questions, to observe or as invited guests.

One representative of Faculty administration, typically the Associate Dean, shall be in attendance at each PAC meeting. The program will arrange for staff to support the PAC by setting up meetings, booking times and spaces, taking minutes, etc. Faculty administration reserves the right to limit the number of observers/invited guests if necessary to facilitate the participation of PAC voting members.

3.1.7 **PAC Chair**

The PAC Chair is elected from the voting members of the Council. Only external members of the PAC may serve as Chair of the Council. The Chair serves a three-year term.

The Chair will be a proactive leader with strong communications skills and the ability to lead and motivate the membership and encourage members to consider issues from a variety of perspectives. The Faculty will determine the necessary context for the PAC Chair, so that they may lead the meeting.

Duties of the PAC Chair will include, but not be limited to:

- Chairing all meetings;
- Calling for declaration of conflicts of interest at the beginning of each meeting, and ruling on such declarations as to the members' participation in discussion of specific agenda items, voting etc.;
- Determining meeting schedules and agendas in consultation with the Faculty Dean and/or Associate Dean;
- Reviewing and approving meeting minutes for distribution;
- Monitoring follow-up on action items;
- Appointing ad hoc or standing subcommittees to assist the PAC in its work;
- Preparing an annual report for the Faculty Dean, that includes key recommendations and activities.

The Chair may occasionally be asked to represent the PAC, or to act as its spokesperson, in Sheridan discussions or communications.

3.1.8 Remuneration

Membership on a PAC is voluntary and no remuneration is paid to the members save reimbursement for reasonable expenses incurred by the member in the performance of Council duties. Such expenses must be approved in advance by the Faculty Dean.

3.1.9 Conflict of Interest

Postsecondary educational institutions, as part of the broader public sector, must be subject to a significant level of public scrutiny. The public's perception is important and its trust and confidence in postsecondary educational institutions can only be sustained if all actual, perceived, or potential conflict of interest situations are proactively identified, disclosed, and managed, as per Sheridan's Conflict of Interest Policy. Sheridan strives to resolve any conflicts of interest in reference to, and in favour of, the public interest.

Careful consideration should be given well in advance as to whether personal pursuits, external positions, personal affairs, dealings with external entities or persons, interests of family members or friends, monetary and non-monetary benefits, and/or any other situation places a member in an actual, perceived, or potential conflict of interest. This is especially necessary because there may be matters before the PAC, which affect other organizations in which the member holds an interest or a position of influence.

PAC members are expected to declare any potential conflict of interest at the beginning of each meeting due to an agenda item or other matter. It is preferred that the Chair be advised in advance of the meeting, if possible. The Chair of the PAC would then, in his/her sole discretion, rule on the declaration as to the member's participation in discussion of specific agenda items, voting etc. The Chair's decision will be final.

Members of the PAC are permitted to carry out business with Sheridan that is controlled by Sheridan policies and procedures to ensure openness, competitive opportunity and equal access to information. If there is any doubt as to the actual, potential and/or perceived conflict of interest, an overabundance of caution should prevail and the matter should be raised to the Chair, the Faculty Dean and/or the Director of Procurement, as appropriate.

These Standards and Practices are provided to protect, in a preventative fashion, both Sheridan and members of PACs. It will also ensure that Sheridan is able to attract qualified Council members to assist in providing input to academic programs.

3.2 Structure of Professional Advisory Council Meetings

3.2.1 Parliamentary Procedure

PACs will be guided by “A Guide to Basic Meeting Rules” which can be found in Appendix 2.

3.2.2 Meeting Frequency

Each PAC is expected to meet **at least once** per academic year. The Faculty may establish informal means of interacting with the PAC between meetings.

3.2.3 Participation

Meetings are structured to promote maximum participation of and consultation with PAC members.

3.2.4 Quorum

A quorum at any PAC meeting shall be a majority of the voting members of that Council (50% plus 1).

3.2.5 Absences

In the absence of the Chair, the voting members present at any meeting shall choose one of the external members to serve as Chair at that meeting.

Members who miss two consecutive meetings without the approval of the Chair, may be replaced on the Council at the discretion of the Chair. The Faculty Dean and/or the Associate Dean is responsible for replacing members who have resigned or completed their term, based on the recommendation of current PAC members.

If, because of absences or lack of participation, it is determined that a term should be terminated, the Council Chair and Faculty Dean and/or Associate Dean will communicate directly with the Council Member. Members who do not respond to communications from the PAC Chair or Sheridan administration after a reasonable number of attempts are deemed to have resigned.

Designates **may not attend** meetings on behalf of a Professional Advisory Council member.

3.2.6 **Minutes**

The Faculty is responsible for the minutes of PAC meetings. The Faculty Dean will delegate responsibility for minutes and reports (see Section 2.4 for Academic Faculty Responsibilities). The Faculty is required to maintain records in association with all PAC meetings. All meeting minutes are to be uploaded to the central PAC repository following the meeting to demonstrate compliance with these guidelines.

3.3 **Non-meeting PAC Activity**

While the primary responsibility of PAC members is to attend the annual PAC meeting and to review and make recommendations concerning curriculum, it is recognized that PAC members often contribute to programs and the student experience in ways that exceed these primary responsibilities.

In order to provide a fulsome representation to the Board of non-meeting PAC contributions, the Academic Faculty (Dean or designate) is required to keep a record of these endeavours by PAC members. This information is housed in the central repository of PAC information, and included in the annual Compliance Report to the Board of Governors.

See Section 1.2 for examples of non-meeting PAC activity.

3.4 **Resources**

Resources to support PAC administration are available to Sheridan employees through a central resource site.

APPENDIX 1: AD HOC PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY COUNCILS

New Program Development

New program development is extremely important in keeping curriculum current, relevant and responsive to students, employers, employees and the community. The input of industry experts, through ad hoc advisory councils, ensures new programs will meet emerging needs of the field. The ad hoc advisory council is created on a temporary basis to help guide the development of a new program, after which the council is dissolved.

Ad hoc PACs are not subject to the Professional Advisory Council Terms of Reference for existing programs, and instead should follow the guidelines contained in this appendix.

1. Purpose and Role

The purposes of the ad hoc Professional Advisory Council (PAC) include:

- confirming and clarifying the need for the program (e.g. Are there sufficient employment opportunities for graduates? Can existing programs, with some modifications, meet that need?);
- providing information on the scope and nature of potential employment for graduates;
- providing feedback on the proposed program (e.g. level of credential required, length of program, and general approaches to the program design);
- providing input related to the curriculum (desired graduate attributes, 'key' job knowledge and skills, competencies) required to prepare graduates for entry level positions;
- provide advice on proposed program names.

When the ad hoc PAC is satisfied with the relevancy and currency of the new program proposal curriculum, members provide a formal motion of support, recommending that the proposed program continue through the next phase of the approval process.

Once a program has been approved and launched, the ad hoc PAC will have achieved its mandate and will be dissolved with the gratitude of the college. A standing PAC will be constituted according to the PAC Standards and Practice Guidelines.

2. Membership

The ad hoc PAC is comprised of approximately 9-15 members representing an appropriate cross-section of:

- employers (representing the range of employment possible)
- practicing professionals (alumni may participate but should not dominate the council membership; limit of 1 – 3 with discretion, as with standing PACs)
- representatives from standing PACs, related professional associations, government agencies etc.
representatives of other educational institutions (publicly funded and private) when appropriate (this is recommended for degree programs)

All members of Ad Hoc PACs are asked to sign a non-disclosure form as a condition of membership.

2.2 Ex-Officio Members

A participant from the Centre for Teaching and Learning will serve as a non-voting ex-officio member of ad-hoc PACs.

College faculty and staff are non-voting ex-officio members. Sheridan representatives may attend meetings to provide administrative and clerical support, to provide context to agenda items, to answer PAC questions, to observe or as invited guests.

One representative of Faculty administration, the Associate Dean, shall be in attendance at each ad-hoc PAC meeting. The Faculty will arrange for staff to support the ad-hoc PAC by setting up meetings, booking times and spaces, taking minutes, etc. Faculty administration reserves the right to limit the number of observers/invited guests if necessary to facilitate the participation of PAC voting members. If input is desired from current Sheridan students, a student focus group can be formed at the request of the ad hoc PAC.

3. Ad Hoc PAC Structure

The Associate Dean chairs the meetings.

The minute recorder will be assigned by the Faculty.

4. Time Commitment

Generally, this process requires three to six ad hoc PAC meetings that take a total of about 6 to 12 hours over a four-to-18-month period (degree development may take longer).

APPENDIX 2: GUIDE TO BASIC MEETING RULES

A Guide to Basic Meeting Rules – based on *Robert's Rules of Order*

Robert's Rules of Order is about conducting good meetings with enough rules to help the group get through the business at hand, keeping things orderly and ensuring that everyone has a fair chance to be heard.

It is expected that PAC members make suggestions/motions, participate in debate/discussion and vote when necessary at meetings. When an item goes to a vote, the decision goes to the majority.

The following guidelines will help Professional Advisory Councils and Sheridan representatives schedule and hold effective and productive PAC meetings. Many of these suggestions are also prescribed by Standards and Practices for Professional Advisory Councils.

- Set meeting dates and send notice out to all members well in advance.
- Have the Chair leading the meeting and a recording secretary taking the minutes in order to have a record of what was done.
- Set an agenda for the meeting that lays out the plan for what is going to be discussed, and distribute to members in advance of the meeting.
- Confirm that quorum has been met at the outset of the meeting. If quorum is not met the group can decide if general discussion may still take place; however, no decisions can be made without the majority of the group in attendance.
- It is usually helpful to have a regular order of business for each meeting which could include:
 - review/approval of the agenda including any additions requested from the group (or the agenda can simply be used as a guide without the need for formal approval or adoption of the agenda),
 - approval of the minutes of the previous meeting, meaning the membership has reviewed the minutes and either accepts them as is or makes suggestions for change in order to better reflect what actually occurred,
 - business arising from minutes
 - new business
 - potentially decisions to be made, and

- new business (for the group to consider which may be introduced by any member).
- Adjourn the meeting.
- The Chair manages the meeting when necessary by recognizing those who want to contribute to the meeting, keeping track of who wants to speak, and ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to speak. The Chair refers to the agenda and keeps the meeting moving in order to have time to address all of the business included on the agenda.

References

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Robert, H.M. (2004). *Robert's rules of order newly revised in brief. (2nd edition)*. Philadelphia, PH: Da Capo Press