



CHILD AND YOUTH CARE EDUCATIONAL ACCREDITATION BOARD OF CANADA

Reviewer's Manual

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Overview of Accreditation

Accreditation in Child and Youth Care (CYC) is intended to help post-secondary CYC diploma and degree programs focus attention on accountability to children, youth, and families. It is also intended to focus attention on accountability to students and accountability to each other; that is, to the community of CYC professionals and educators. Accreditation activities are a supplement to typical institutional program review processes, which usually focus on university and college expectations and interests. The focus of accreditation is on expectations in CYC professional education.

For the Child and Youth Care Educational Accreditation Board of Canada (CYCEAB), the intent of the data gathering process is to help the institution or program meet a standard of excellence. The CYCEAB acknowledges that because there are multiple standards of excellence, it is difficult for accreditation standards, written as criteria, to keep up with this diversity. Additionally, there are multiple ways to measure excellence, and we want to encourage a variety of ways of doing so. Child and Youth Care programs serve communities with a wide variety of interests, practices, and professional opportunities; and it is likely better to tailor evaluation expectations to particular settings.

CYC curricula across diploma and degree programs have some common language, pedagogies, and content. In recent years, CYC educators have responded to increasing and varied professional opportunities and interdisciplinary content. Many CYC programs are increasingly differentiating themselves from each other. There are substantive differences between Canadian programs and comparisons with programs around the world reflect common practices and some important differences.

The CYCEAB wants to encourage both responsiveness to common interests and curricular/practice innovation. We do have a standard, or rather a question in service to a standard: Does the program educate practitioners who serve children,

youth, and families well? The accreditation activities -- and the site visit -- are part of the process of answering this question.

As institutions look to gathering information about the accreditation process, they likely have questions and desire more information. The CYCEAB has FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) posted on the website that will address much of this. Further, as the institution or program examines its readiness to proceed in the accreditation process, there is a checklist as part of the application form that encourages the examination of various components of the process prior to proceeding with the accreditation application. Once an institution has applied and the application is accepted for accreditation, the institution is then referred to as “Applicant” in the details of the accreditation process.

The CYCEAB has created a flowchart to illustrate the process for accreditation of post-secondary programs from start to finish. This flowchart can be found on the [CYCEAB website](#) under the “Accreditation” tab. It is used by the Accreditation Coordinator for all advisement and support to programs undergoing accreditation and by programs directly as they move through the accreditation process.

Role of the Reviewer

The process in which you are about to engage is based on an Outcomes Assessment Model. This means that the accreditation process for CYC in Canada is intentionally non-prescriptive and does not endorse absolute standards for all programs. The process is founded on respect for regional variation and CYC as a multidisciplinary field in which a range of theoretical orientations and competency models exist.

The criteria for accreditation includes a program's ability to demonstrate:

- Alignment with established models from the CYC literature;
- Educational standards that are consistent with the theoretical orientation of the program and address competencies that are articulated and measurable; and
- Engagement in educational practices that provide graduates with the knowledge and skills they need to respond to the needs of children, youth, and families in their local context.

The main tool of the site visit is your judgment. You have been selected as a Reviewer because of your relevant background and your ability to judge whether a program aligns with recognized approaches to CYC and is coherent in its program delivery. This is why the focus of your site visit and report is on identifying evidence that confirms adequate articulation of educational practices in the context of the discipline as well as program outputs that confirm the successful adoption of these practices. An accredited program also must demonstrate ongoing assessment of outcomes, therefore active engagement in quality enhancement activities.

A. Recruitment of Reviewers

The recruitment of Reviewers for CYCEAB is an ongoing process with specific targeting as necessary occurring through postings on the CYCEAB website and in CYC publications as well as messaging from board members to their contacts

at the national, provincial, and local levels. All applications must be forwarded to the CYCEAB office as identified on the website.

The Reviewer is responsible for providing oversight and review of accreditation applicant programs on behalf of the CYCEAB. The Reviewer will fulfil a portion of the accreditation process through visiting the assigned applicant's institution and will provide a written report to the CYCEAB and its Recommendation Committee following completion of the site visit.

The CYCEAB Reviewer's primary responsibilities include:

- Reviewing evidence submitted by the CYC program in the Self-Study Report explaining each accreditation process input.
- Reviewing accreditation output data gathered by the institution.
- Reviewing the CYC program's Quality Enhancement Plan to ensure congruence between program mission statement, goals, program inputs, and program outputs.
- Visiting the CYC program seeking accreditation.
- Interviewing program faculty, students, and community stakeholders invested in the CYC program.
- Producing a written summative report to the CYCEAB for consideration in the final accreditation decision.

The CYCEAB Reviewer's general responsibilities include:

- Maintaining confidentiality of any and all information associated with the accreditation site visit.
- Compiling a detailed report as directed by the CYCEAB on the readiness of the CYC program to become accredited.
- Being available to the CYCEAB to clarify any issues that may arise in the process or provide information as required.

Interested applicants are required to submit a CV and cover letter to the CYCEAB office for consideration. The following items must be clearly articulated within the submission:

- A statement outlining the applicant's reason for applying to become a CYCEAB Reviewer.
- Demonstrated familiarity with issues relevant to post-secondary education quality assurance or program review.
- A CV must articulate an educational background with a clear relationship to a recognized tradition of child and youth care.

As there are a range of credentials (e.g., Diploma, Degree, Master's degree, Doctorate) that post-secondary programs provide, Reviewers must have the minimal level of education that would be required by the applicant institution for faculty teaching in their program. This would include typically the following:

Diploma Program - Bachelor's degree, Master's degree preferred
Bachelor's Degree Program - Master's degree
Master's Degree Program - PhD
Doctoral Degree Program - PhD

B. Ethics and Confidentiality

The policy manual includes material about the accreditation process. Please refer to the material on confidentiality, conflict of interest, as well as read and sign the CYCEAB's Acknowledgement of Ethical Standards.

C. Selection Process of Reviewers for the Site Visit

When the applicant has completed the Self-Study Report which includes the Quality Enhancement Plan, the applicant institution will look to securing Reviewer(s) for the site visit. The CYCEAB requires one Reviewer, although an institution may require additional external Reviewers as part of their institutional policies. In such cases, choosing the Reviewer(s) will be coordinated with the CYCEAB. The Accreditation Coordinator will provide the applicant with the list of approved Reviewers with the appropriate credential. The applicant is directed to choose a Reviewer from outside of the program's geographical area (as defined by the CYCEAB). The applicant then selects the Reviewer(s) and schedules the date of the site visit at a time convenient to both the applicant and Reviewer. The applicant then notifies the CYCEAB office the name of the Reviewer chosen and the dates of the site visit.

Travel arrangements are to be coordinated directly with the applicant as the applicant is responsible for all costs associated with the Reviewer's travel (including flights, vehicle rental or mileage reimbursement, accommodations, meals, etc.). In some cases, the Reviewer may wish to make their own travel arrangements (e.g., to get the most convenient flight times or connections) and be reimbursed by the institution. In other cases, the applicant is able to make all arrangements including those with local hotels for the Reviewer to charge all expenses to their room and then to the institution directly.

D. Recommendation Committee

As part of the accreditation process, a Recommendation Committee comprised of three individual Reviewers examines the Reviewer Report submitted following a site visit. In some cases, the committee will also request access to the institution's Self-Study Report. These three individuals will have applied to be Reviewers and have been selected by the CYCEAB board to be a part of this Recommendation Committee for a period of two years. Where there may be a conflict for an individual with an institution's application for accreditation, the individual will not participate as a member of the Recommendation Committee and will be replaced with another member.

The Recommendation Committee meets "virtually" to review the reports submitted and discuss the reports. The committee, as a group, makes a recommendation to the board regarding accreditation of the applicant institution and completes the Recommendation Committee Report Form (refer to Appendix A).

E. The Site Visit

The site visit helps the applicant and the CYCEAB board consider issues that might be difficult to assess in other ways. Other accreditation bodies describe these as the "intellectual atmosphere, the morale of the faculty and students, the caliber of the staff and student body... and the character of the work that is performed" in the program. (Reference: Abet.org)

It is important to look for confirming and disconfirming evidence of your observations and insights; and you can ask faculty, staff, and students to help you with this. Some questions to keep in mind include the following:

- Compare the program to common practices in CYC higher education. How does the program differentiate itself from others, and what are the reasons for this?
- Can faculty and staff explain the relationship between their program mission, program implementation, and a theoretical or research tradition? Is there evidence for the internal validity of these components? Can faculty and staff provide evidence for the external validity of these components?
- Are you able to discern some explicit and implicit standards of excellence for a) service to children, youth, and families, and b) quality of the education? What are those standards? How are they measured/evaluated in the program?

Once the Self-Study Report is completed, the applicant submits it in digital format to the Accreditation Coordinator for a quality control check. Following the quality control check (and the completion of any revisions that may be needed), the Reviewer will receive these documents directly from the applicant. It is the Reviewer's responsibility to thoroughly review these documents prior to the site visit. This will include noting the components you wish to further explore during the site visit, questions you have about the reports, questions you want to ask during the site review with each group you will be meeting with, etc.

The site visit will be scheduled by the applicant in collaboration with the Reviewer. In some cases, it is possible that the site visit will be scheduled at the same time as the program review site visit. If so, the Accreditation Coordinator may assist with the details of the review and the reporting formats.

The site visit is the culmination of many months of work on the part of the applicant; participants may be nervous, even anxious, that the site visit go well. It will be important to convey a spirit of support for their hard work. In the CYCEAB accreditation model, the site visit is not an inspection, trial, or examination. In this spirit, applicants are asked to share with the Reviewer their program strengths and shortcomings and a plan for improving these shortcomings. This may be information that is not publicly available and for most, not known outside the program.

- During the site visit, remember that not everyone with whom you visit will have access to all of the information. If you are unclear about who knows what and who has seen which documents, check with the applicant directly.
- You may find it useful to have "front-stage" and "back-stage" conversations; that is, conversations about issues that are identified within the materials and about which you will review and report, as well as conversations that everyone agrees will be limited to the room you are in. Pay attention to the audience.
- Cultivate a conversation in the spirit of inquiry. You want to be able to ask hard questions in a spirit of collaboration with the applicant rather than a spirit of examination.
- Issues may arise about which you have strong opinions. If you are opposed to some practices, you will have to quickly decide whether these issues are relevant and important to the accreditation. If you think they are, it is important that the applicant hear about them while you are there rather than being surprised to see it later in your report.

The site visit is to include meetings with specific groups who have a vested interest in the accreditation process, a tour of the facilities, and a review of supporting resources provided by the applicant. It usually takes two full days and

it must be scheduled during a regular academic term, not during the summer months. Separate meetings are to be scheduled for the Reviewer by the applicant with students, faculty/staff, the chair/department head(s), community representatives (employers and/or practicum sites), and possibly with the Dean and Provost/VP Academic and/or President. Additional meetings with graduates or other groups may be added. You may want to participate in planning the schedule and in helping the applicant identify participants who will be most informative. This is particularly worthwhile with students and community representatives.

Meetings can be complicated to organize because it is easy to avoid substantive issues in conversation. Usually participants will look to you to set the tone and agenda of the meeting. You are welcome to ask for conditions important to you and to the board; e.g., it may be important that no faculty/staff participate in the meeting with students. You will have your own ideas about how to create more open conversations. There will also be some pressure on participants to say nice things to you. There is nothing wrong with this, of course, and the alternative to “nice things” is not “bad things.” The alternative is “substantive.” Your facilitation and consultation skills will be tested.

At the conclusion of the visit, the Reviewer is to facilitate a meeting with the applicant faculty (and administration where appropriate and feasible) that summarizes your collective conversations. This conversation can be very concrete: the immediate goal of the visit is to provide the applicant with a summary of your interpretations and solicit their reactions/comments/corrections, and the accreditation goal is to solidify commitment to participating in program improvement activities outlined in the Quality Enhancement Plan section of the Self-Study Report. It would be a good idea to have a visual for this activity. The items to be included are:

- *Introduction*
Review the characteristics of the program that make it unique, interesting, and anything else that may help the Recommendation Committee better understand the applicant and your report. Describe emphasis/specialist areas, if any. Finally, please initiate a conversation with them about their operationalization of CYC; that is, what is their working understanding of CYC practice and values?
- *Program Strengths*
Of course, program strengths will be described in the program review or self study; those elements do not need to be repeated here. Add in this section, additional elements that you have observed or obtained from review participants.

- *Program Shortcomings*
Again, there is no need to repeat material that is already described in the documents provided by the applicant. It will be helpful for you to discuss program shortcomings with everyone so that you leave them with your interpretation of them, and you share your ideas for helping them improve. Also, be clear and straightforward with them about any additional items you have identified.
- *Program Needs and Challenges*
Examples of these that typically arise may have to do with resources, staffing needs, student recruiting, and administrative support. Sometimes these issues are identified in reviews to help the applicant advocate for themselves.
- *Plan for Continuous Improvement*
The plan for continuous improvement will be a conversation about what the program has already been doing and what they intend to do next to improve educational services. The program will have identified goals for their program review. We have asked programs to work on quality enhancement activities related more specifically to the goals of serving children, youth, and families, and this discussion will be more productive if focused on the latter. This will include your suggestions about how to efficiently and effectively do this.

A sample schedule for a two-day site visit follows on the next page.

SAMPLE Accreditation Site Visit Schedule			
One day pre-site visit			
Times			Locations
	Applicant transports	Pick up Reviewer from airport and take to hotel.	
Day #1 of site visit			
	Applicant transports	Pick up Reviewer at the hotel and take to College/University.	
	Applicant and Reviewer	Tour of the College/University.	
	Reviewer and Faculty	Reviewer meets with faculty team.	
	Reviewer and other departments	Applicant host to do welcome then leaves. Reviewer meets with support services/other departments.	
	Reviewer	Preparation/documentation time.	
	Applicant hosts lunch	Lunch	
	Reviewer and agency/external stakeholder representatives	Applicant host to do welcome then leaves. Reviewer meets with Advisory Committee members/agency representatives/external stakeholders.	
	Reviewer	Preparation/documentation time.	
	Applicant transports	Reviewer to the hotel – supper on own.	
Day #2 of site visit			
	Applicant transports	Pick up Reviewer at the hotel and take to College/University.	
	Reviewer and students	Applicant host to do welcome then leaves. Reviewer meets with students.	
	Reviewer and alumni	Applicant host to do welcome then leaves. Reviewer meets with alumni.	
	Reviewer	Preparation/documentation time.	
	Applicant hosts lunch	Lunch	
	Reviewer and Administration	Applicant host to do welcome then leaves. Reviewer meets with College/University administration.	
	Reviewer	Preparation/documentation time	
	All invited	Summary discussion/presentation by Reviewer.	
	Applicant transports	Supper with faculty and administration where able.	
One day post- site visit			
	Applicant transports	Take Reviewer to airport for return flight.	

Reviewer Report Following Site Visit

Within four weeks of the site visit, the Reviewer submits the Reviewer Report (template found in Appendix B) to the Accreditation Coordinator for a quality check to ensure all components of the report are included. Once quality check is complete, the Reviewer then submits the report to the CYCEAB office along with an invoice for payment.

Remember, the Reviewer is NOT the accreditation decision-maker. The Reviewer:

- Clarifies interpretations of information provided by the applicant in the Self-Study Report for the benefit of the Recommendation Committee.
- Cultivates the spirit of program improvement in program faculty and staff.
- Applies one's own experience to the interpretation of program activities, mission statement, and goals, and provides guidance from that experience.
- Observes and listens for characteristics of the program that are not easily captured in program documents.
- Provides to the applicant and within the Reviewer Report, additional interpretations of the program that were not included elsewhere.
- Represents CYCEAB and the field of professional CYC education, reflecting back to the program and their comparison with other higher education programs.

While the Reviewer is not involved in the accreditation process beyond this point, it is important to know that the applicant is required to provide a written response/report to the Reviewer Report within four weeks of receiving the Reviewer Report. The applicant's written response is then forwarded along with the Reviewer Report by the CYCEAB office to the Recommendation Committee. The Recommendation Committee meets and then makes a recommendation regarding accreditation to the CYCEAB board within eight

weeks of receiving all of the documentation/reports. The CYCEAB board makes the final decision regarding accreditation and that decision is relayed by the CYCEAB board president to the Applicant.

Invoicing for Reviewer Stipend

The CYCEAB pays a stipend to all Reviewers. This cost must be invoiced by the Reviewer directly to the CYCEAB office once the Reviewer Report has been approved for submission by the Accreditation Coordinator. An invoice template can be found in Appendix C.

At this time, the Reviewer is required to securely destroy all documentation linked to the applicant's accreditation process including the applicant Self-Study Report, all notes taken to prepare for the site review, all notes from the site visits, and any other documentation needed to complete the accreditation review.



APPENDICES

Appendix A: Recommendation Committee Memo and Decision Form

Appendix B: Template for Reviewer Report

Appendix C: Sample Invoice Form for Reviewer to Use in Claiming Stipend

**APPENDIX A
RECOMMENDATION COMMITTEE
MEMO AND REPORT FORM**



MEMO

To: The Recommendation Committee

From: Tina Kroll-Neary, President
Child and Youth Care Educational Accreditation Board of Canada

Re: Instructions for Submitting Your Recommendation

Attached you will find a one-page form which we are asking you to use in submitting your final recommendation for accreditation.

The intent of this phase of the accreditation process is not that your committee evaluates or restates the findings of the site reviewer report. It is rather that, as recognized experts in our field, you consider the site reviewer's descriptions of the program and the data collected for the program review, and make a recommendation as to whether or not the program should be accredited at this time.

The two major criteria for your decision should be the degree to which the program demonstrates alignment with current CYC principles and practices, and the level of rigor of the pre-service program provided for students. We hope you will spend the bulk of your time discussing these two principles and how they apply to the program under review at this time. We, therefore, are not asking for a lengthy report, rather a few key comments that summarize your deliberations and support your final recommendation.

If further details are needed that outline our philosophy and our criteria, please consult the attached Reviewer's Manual.

We so appreciate your willingness to serve on the Recommendation Committee. Your contributions are vital to this process, and will contribute significantly to promotion of excellence in CYC education in Canada.

Attachment



REPORT OF THE RECOMMENDATION COMMITTEE

Program Under Review:

Dates of Committee Meetings:

Members for the Current Review:

Representative Completing This Form:

1) Please comment briefly on the following findings:

- Alignment with the field
- Rigor of the quality of CYC education
- Adequacy of the Continuous Improvement Plan

2) Indicate the overall recommendation of the committee:

- Accredited
- Accredited with Recommendations for Improvement
Specify:
- Grant Conditional Accreditation with a Timeline for Changes
Specify:
- Deny Accreditation
Specify:

Signature:

Date:

APPENDIX B

TEMPLATE FOR REVIEWER REPORT

Please use the following format for the Reviewer Report that will be sent to the applicant. Ensure you include responses to each of the following sections. In all sections, refer to evidence/documentation provided within the Self-Study Report; information gathered at the site visits; and data from surveys of students, graduates and employers. You are required to report on the following two components for each section:

- a. Innovations/Strengths
- b. Recommendations

1. In what ways does the program enculturate students in the practice values of the CYC profession?

Consider the following:

- Is the program title, definition, and mission compatible with provincial and national descriptions/context?
- Does the program subscribe to a credible and recognized CYC Competency Framework? What is the decision behind the framework chosen?
- How well aligned are the program-wide learning outcomes, individual course objectives, and competency model?
- How do the teaching methodologies and assessment practices demonstrate/address the CYC competencies within the classroom and practicum/internship?
- How are professionalism and ethics modelled and addressed?
- How does the program integrate professional and academic goals for their students?
- In what ways do faculty and students practice professional discourse?

2. In what ways does the program structure and course sequencing demonstrate that it is accomplishing the purposes of pre-service education, clinical experiences, engaging in professional development, promoting and conducting inquiry, and providing exemplary education for CYC students?

Consider the following:

- How is the program unique in incorporating the foundational content into their curriculum?
- What electives are provided in the program that enhance and support CYC education?
- What is the program's process for securing practicum/internship placements?
- How are professional and academic goals of practica supported, distinguished, and evaluated during practica experience?
- How does the program ensure quality supervision is in place?

- What is the overall structure of the practicum experience and how are the CYC program competencies identified and assessed?
 - What is the rationale of the program's sequencing of courses and designation of pre-requisite and co-requisite courses?
 - What are the policies, procedures, and process for curricular revision?
 - What program and institutional support services are in place to assist in student success (e.g., student association, loans, international education, library, financial aid, etc.)?
3. What evidence is there that rigour and innovation are combined in the instruction and curriculum of the program?

Consider the following:

- Is there clear evidence of faculty professional experience/development, participation and membership in applicable professional organizations, and scholarly activities that promote the field of CYC?
 - How do faculty ensure high quality instruction and academic rigour?
 - How is time made available to support instructors functioning as a learning community?
 - What are examples of instructors exhibiting caring and high expectations?
 - How is student suitability determined? How is problematic student behaviour addressed?
 - Does the program have policies and procedures in place to ensure prior learning is accurately assessed?
 - What educational pathways/opportunities are available for students to continue their studies through transfer agreements? How does the program maintain these agreements and seek out potential new agreements?
4. What evidence is there of ongoing assessment of the efficacy of the program?

Consider the following:

- What evidence is there that sufficient resources are available to support the ongoing work of the program?
- How does the program conduct ongoing quality enhancement?
- How does the assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation of program goals occur?
- How are stakeholders identified and involved in the process?
- How does the program address the needs of the students, the community, the program, and the profession?
- How does the program utilize the findings from student, graduate, and stakeholder surveys (feedback) in developing continuous quality enhancement for program improvement?
- What is the program's advisory council structure, role, and process in program improvement?

You may have additional sections to add based on the uniqueness of the program. Feel free to do so as needed, ensuring that you report on the “Innovations/Strengths” and “Recommendations” as well in these sections.

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE INVOICE FORM FOR REVIEWER TO USE IN CLAIMING STIPEND

Insert name

INVOICE

Street Address
Town, Province and Postal Code
Phone Number

DATE:
INVOICE #
FOR:

Bill To:
CYC Educational Accreditation Board
c/o Lethbridge College
3000 College Drive South
Lethbridge, AB T1K 1L6
403-393-5409

DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
TOTAL	\$ -

Provide email address for direct deposit.