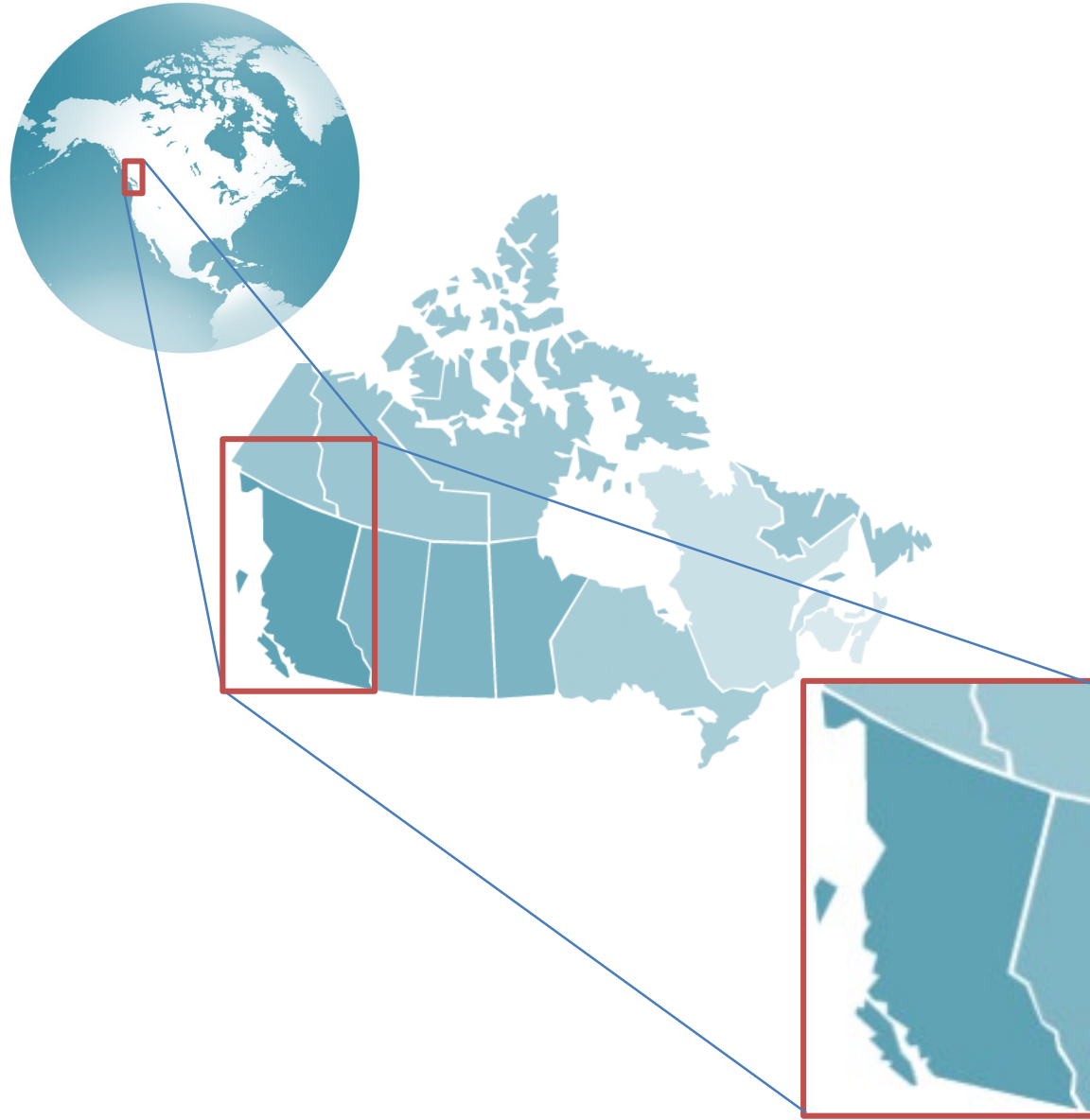# Quality Assurance
in British Columbia's
Public Post-Secondary System

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Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training

36.7 million people in Canada

4.8 million people in B.C.

428,000 students enrolled in 25 B.C. public post-secondary institutions:

- 11 Colleges
- 3 Institutes
- 11 Universities

All are participants in a transfer system, administered by **BCCAT**

85.5% of former students said the knowledge and skills they acquired were useful for their job

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- In Canada, there is no national accreditation of post-secondary **organizations.**

- Post-secondary education is a provincial responsibility.

- Quality assurance processes and standards are established and administered by each province independently.

- Primary responsibility and accountability for educational program quality assurance rests with post-secondary institutions themselves.

- In B.C., all public institutions operate under the authority of and are accountable to the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training (AEST).
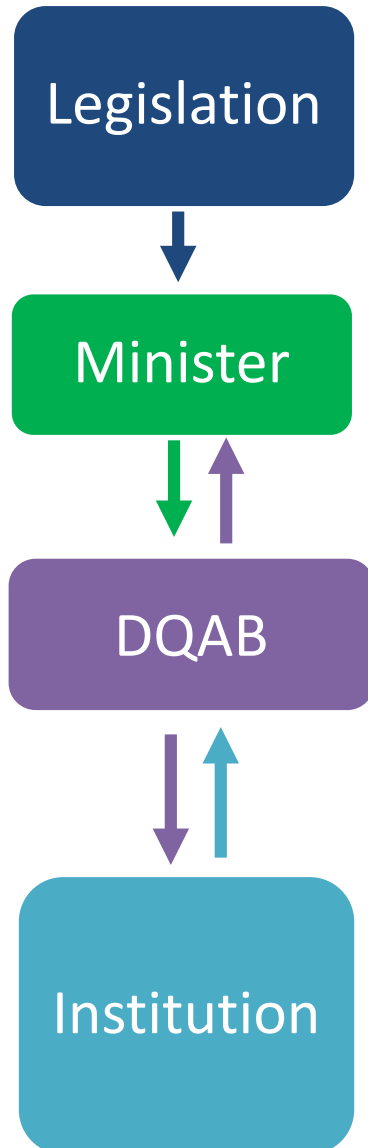
The Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training oversees quality assurance in the public post-secondary system.

Three important elements of B.C.'s Quality Assurance system are:

1. Degree Authorization

2. Quality Assurance Process Audits

3. Education Quality Assurance (EQA) Brand

Legislation

- Governing laws for Universities, Colleges and Institutes in B.C.:
- *Universities Act* & *College and Institutes Act*

Minister

- Minister of AEST establishes quality assurance criteria and grants approval for:
  - New degrees
  - Use of the word "university"

DQAB

- Degree Quality Assessment Board (DQAB):
  - Assesses need for new degree programs
  - Verifies program and institution quality
  - Makes recommendations to Minister

Institution

- Internal processes that ensure ongoing quality assurance and relevance of programs

Ministry of
Advanced Education,
Skills and Training

BRITISH
COLUMBIA

An independent advisory board that ensures legislative quality assurance requirements are met.

Consists of 13 members appointed by the Minister of AEST:

- 5 from public post-secondary institutions
- 2 from private post-secondary institutions
- 2 from the business community
- 2 from the general public
- 2 (non-voting) from government
- Supported by Secretariat (i.e., Ministry staff)

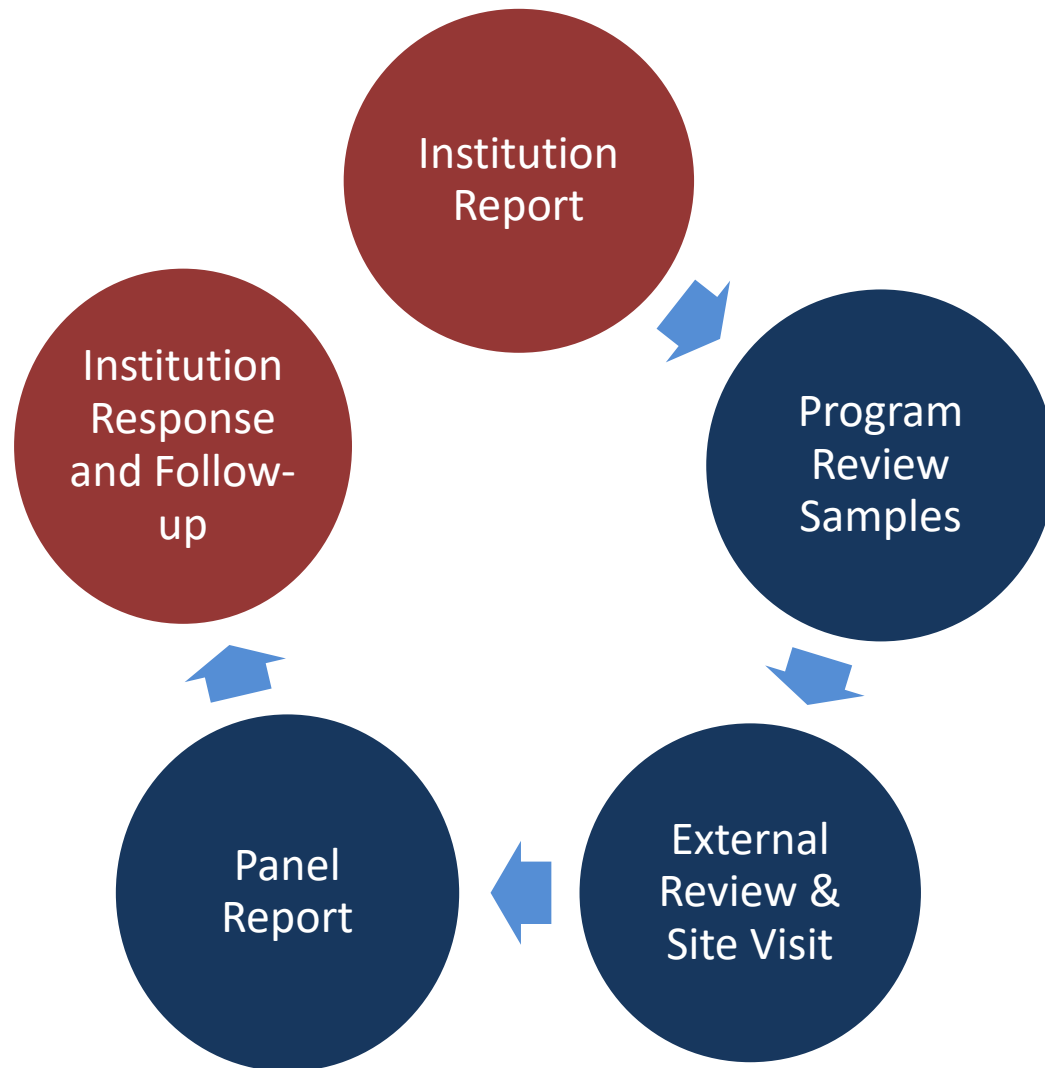Guided by government priorities and public policy objectives:

- High quality education in degree programs
- Coherent and integrated post-secondary system
- Post-secondary system that responds to labour market needs
- Protection of the interests of students

Public institutions undergo a two-stage review process by the DQAB before the Minister authorizes a new degree program:

- **Stage 1** review considers:
    - ✓ institutional mandate/capacity
    - ✓ social and economic benefit
    - ✓ system coordination/program duplication
    - ✓ student demand/outcomes

- Stage 1 is required for <u>all</u> new degrees (Bachelor's, Master's, Doctorate)
- Ministerial approval required to advance to Stage 2

- **Stage 2** review process:
    - ✓ a panel of experts in the discipline is appointed by the DQAB
    - ✓ the panel conducts a site visit,
    - ✓ evaluates program quality using established criteria and standards,
    - ✓ submits a report to DQAB

Quality Assurance Process Audits

- All B.C. public institutions participate in a Quality Assurance Process Audit every seven years.

- Expert panel assesses internal quality assurance processes

- Ensures that rigorous, ongoing program and institutional quality assessment processes have been implemented.

- Goal is to ensure programs are current, relevant, and high quality.

- Process oversight provided by Quality Assurance Audit Committee, a DQAB standing committee

- Education Quality Assurance (EQA) designation is the provincial seal of quality in post-secondary education in B.C.

- Post-secondary institutions hosting international students with study permits must hold EQA.

- Institutions must meet and maintain EQA requirements.
  - → Hold good standing with quality assurance body/government.
  - → Be financially stable.
  - → Provide clear and transparent information to current and prospective students.
  - → Operate with integrity toward students and the public.

- Institutions apply for EQA each year. Both public and private institutions are eligible.

- All BC public institutions have EQA.

- 230 of about 500 private post-secondary institutions have EQA.