

Multi-Year Business Plan

2018-2019 to 2020-2021



Maritime Provinces Higher
Education Commission

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INTRODUCTION

We are pleased to present the MPHEC's 2018-2019 to 2020-2021 Business Plan. The purpose of the plan is to define and communicate the Commission's roadmap to success. It is made-up of four parts:

1. **About the MPHEC** – Provides an overview of the Commission's governance framework and core functions.
2. **Strategic Plan** – Presents the Commission's three-year improvement objectives and the activities it will undertake to meet these.
3. **Operational Plan** – Outlines the objectives and activities to be undertaken by the Commission in order deliver on its operational mandate.
4. **Accountability Framework** – Presents the process to report on progress in executing the Business Plan.

ABOUT THE MPHEC

The Commission is an arm's-length organization accountable to the Ministers responsible for postsecondary education (PSE) in the Maritimes, through the Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training (CAMET) and its Board of Directors.

The Commission operates with 12 permanent staff as well as contractual employees. The work of the Commission is guided by a board, made up of 19 members and the CEO (ex-officio, non-voting). The board membership includes representation, across the three Maritime Provinces, from the Commission's key stakeholder groups:

1. Universities
2. Government & Non-Government Leaders
3. Students
4. Public-at-large

The core functions of the Commission are:

1. Quality assurance
2. Data and information
3. Administration of interprovincial agreements
4. Cooperative action
5. Provision of services to the provinces

In carrying out its duties, the Commission must give first consideration to improving and maintaining the best possible service to students as lifelong learners.



Quality Assurance

The Commission's quality assurance (QA) framework brings together two major tools:

1. Program assessment prior to implementation and
2. Quality assurance monitoring.

Program Assessment

The program assessment process includes two stages.

A **Stage I** (SI) (expedited) Assessment is a staff-led analysis based on established assessment standards.

A **Stage II** (SII) Assessment is an iterative process with institutions and the joint QA Committee of the Atlantic Universities Association (AAU) and the MPHEC. The Committee works collaboratively with institutions to address proposals that do not readily meet the established criteria.

The Commission sees on average 40-50 proposals/year

~70 % of these approved through SI Assessment

SI decision takes 8-10 weeks

SII decision takes on average 4 to 7 months

Quality Assurance Monitoring

The Commission follows-up with institutions after program implementation to monitor that institutions are meeting conditions to approval, and are internally assessing their existing programs and activities with a focus on students and learning.

New Brunswick & Nova Scotia Degree Granting Acts

Under the New Brunswick and Nova Scotia Degree Granting Acts, the Commission, at the Ministers' request and on a cost-recovery basis, carries out assessments of private institutions and their programs to ensure they meet agreed-upon standards of quality.



Data & Information

The Commission is the region's source of data and information on postsecondary education. It collects data through two key data sources:

1. Postsecondary Student Information System (PSIS) and
2. Graduate Outcome (GO) Survey Program.

It also uses third party data (e.g. Statistics Canada) to add value to its existing data sources and avoid duplication of effort.

Postsecondary Student Information System

Each year, the Commission collects, through PSIS, data on institutions' program and course offerings, student demographics, program and course registration, and credit transfer to fulfill many information needs for the Commission, provincial governments, institutions and others invested in PSE.

- Full implementation 2001
- 15 Maritime universities
- Student records linked across institutions and over time

Graduate Outcome Survey

The GO Survey Program provides information on financing education, employment outcomes, graduate mobility, and further education. It focuses solely on Maritime university bachelor's degree graduates and follows a six-year cycle, which includes two graduating cohorts (both interviewed two years after graduation, with one of those two cohorts also interviewed six years after graduation).

- 22-year history
- 7 graduating classes

Statistical Research Products

From these sources of data, the Commission makes available to governments, institutions, students and the public-at-large value-added statistical and research products in support of evidence-based decision-making and to increase awareness of, and dialogue on, Maritime PSE issues and opportunities.

The focus of the Commission's research products is identifying the characteristics of educational pathways and other factors that impact student progression, credential completion and graduate outcomes.



Interprovincial Agreements, Cooperative Action, Services to Provinces

In addition to quality assurance and data and information (which make up the bulk of the Commission's work), the Commission is also responsible for:

1. Administering interprovincial agreements;
2. Stimulating cooperative action; and,
3. Providing services to provinces by request.

Interprovincial Agreements

The Commission administers a number of agreements with other provinces to provide places for Maritime students in programs of study that are not available in their home province. This includes the Regional Transfer Arrangement and several other agreements with other provinces.

Cooperative Action

Under its cooperative action function, the Commission facilitates cooperation within the Maritimes, with other provinces and with external partners in order to develop cost-effective and collaborative approaches to postsecondary education administration, programs, and policies.

Services to Provinces

The MPHEC Act allows the Commission to provide services to the provinces and to institutions. Services are generally provided through cost-recovery agreements and have been provided primarily to the provinces.



STRATEGIC PLAN

The Commission's strategic plan outlines the Commission's three-year improvement objectives and the activities it will undertake to meet these. It was developed by starting with the end in mind, by answering the question, what is the Commission's greater purpose?¹ After much discussion, the Commission concluded that its purpose is ultimately to support the creation of a prosperous Maritime region (the Why). It does this by assisting institutions and governments in enhancing the postsecondary learning environment (the How), the result of which is a quality postsecondary education that prepares students to be contributing members of society (the What).

To further frame its strategy and guide its improvement efforts, the Commission defined its relationship with its key stakeholders as follows:

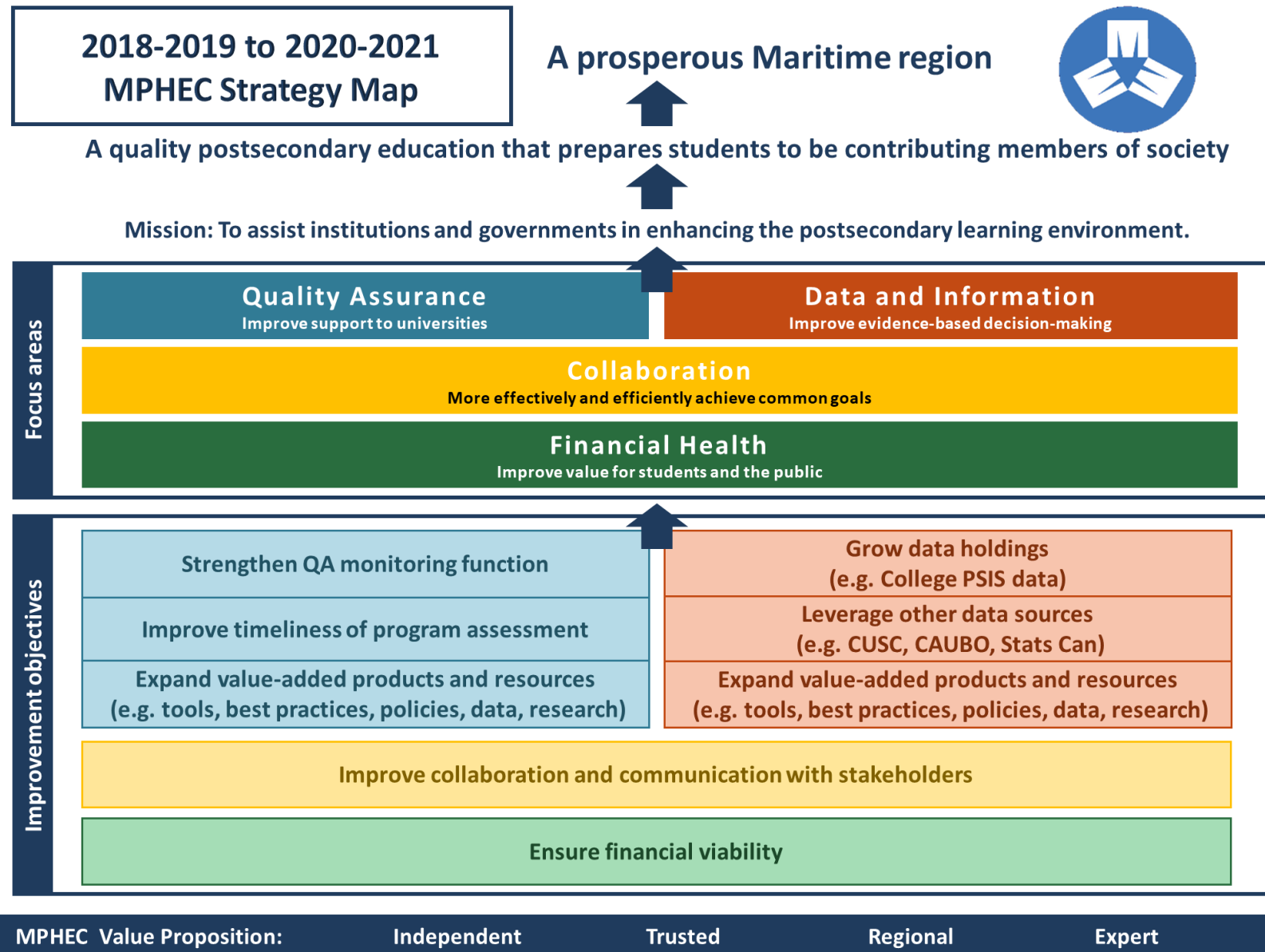
- Students and the public are **beneficiaries** of the Commission's work.
- Provincial governments and institutions are **partners** as well as the **primary consumers** of the Commission's products and services; and students and their families are **secondary consumers**.
- Provincial governments and CAMET are **investors** to whom the Commission is accountable.

The Commission then identified the key areas to focus its improvement efforts on as: Quality assurance (to improve support to universities), Data and information (to improve evidence-based decision-making), Collaboration (to more effectively and efficiently achieve common goals), and Financial health (to improve value for the public and students). And finally, it identified one to three improvement objectives per focus area.

The following Strategy Map is a visual depiction of the Commission's three-year improvement strategy to help the Commission more effectively communicate its strategy to its stakeholders. It identifies the improvement objectives, aligned to the key focus areas, the Commission will pursue in order to more effectively achieve its mission and ultimately contribute to the larger societal goal of a prosperous Maritime region. Following the Strategy map is a table outlining the specific activities (and timelines) the Commission will undertake to meet its improvement objectives.

¹ This exercise was inspired by Habit 2 of Dr. Stephen Covey's *7 habits of highly effective people* and Simon Sinek's book *Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action*.





Overview of Improvement Objectives and Activities

Objective	Activity	Timeline
Quality Assurance		
1. Strengthen the QA monitoring function	Carry-out second cycle of the monitoring of institutional QA frameworks at each Maritime university (i.e. site visit, external report, follow-up to report)	Start 2018-2019
	Report on best practices for institutional QA frameworks	At the end of 2 nd cycle
2. Improve timeliness of the program assessment process	Update Policy on Program Assessment	2018-2019
	Review program assessment process to identify ways to reduce time to decision	2019-2020
3. Expand value-added products and resources	Develop Certificate and Diploma Framework	2018-2019
	Update the Maritime Degree Level Qualifications Framework	TBD
	Update policies under the NB and NS Degree Granting Acts (program and institutional assessment)	TBD
Data and Information		
4. Grow data holdings	Integrate community college data into PSIS	2018-2020
5. Leverage other data sources	Explore having maritime universities participate in the Canadian University Survey Consortium to enhance interpretation of GO survey data	2018-19
6. Expand value-added products and resources	Develop student course load measure	TBD
	Support CAMET's vision for an Atlantic Student Tracking System	By request
Collaboration (Quality Assurance and Data and Information)		
7. Improve communication and collaboration with stakeholders	Establish process to better understand stakeholder needs	2018-2019
	Develop communication tools related to QA (e.g. infographics, one-pagers, website).	TBD
	Host Forum on Learning Outcomes	TBD
	Provide data and support to the NB Experiential Learning Initiative and share learnings with NS and PEI	2018-2019
Financial Health		
8. Ensure financial viability	Explore revenue opportunities	Ongoing
	Explore opportunities for operational efficiencies	Ongoing



OPERATIONAL PLAN

The Commission's operational plan outlines the day-to-day activities carried out by the Commission in order to fulfil its operational mandate. It is organized along the Commission's core functions.

Quality Assurance

Objective	Activity	Timeline
1. Provide assurances that programs offered by universities within the MPHEC's scope meet established standards of quality	Assess new and modified programs prior to implementation	Ongoing
	Validate that all programs with enrolments have been approved by the Commission	Annual
	Confirm that universities are conducting reviews of approved programs after one to two cohorts have graduated	2019-2020 Every two years
	Follow-up that conditions to approvals have been met	Ongoing
2. Provide assurances that universities within the MPHEC's scope have an appropriate QA framework to ensure the on-going quality of their programs and services offered to students	Confirm that universities are conducting cyclical reviews as per their QA frameworks	2019-2020 Every two years
3. Provide assurances, under the NB and NS Degree Granting Acts, that private institutions and their programs meet established standards of quality	Undertake institutional reviews and program evaluations for private degree-granting institutions in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia	By request of the Minister

Data and Information

Objective	Activity	Timeline
1. Support decision-making by the region's governments and institutions 2. Make available to students and their families information on cost, pathways to success and likely outcomes	Publish in-depth analytical products on: - student financing of university education, debt repayment - pursuing further study after the first degree - representation of first-generation students in university - employment outcomes six years after graduation - extent of alignment of experiences of recent university graduates with the expectations of grade 12 students for employment outcomes	2018-2020
	Update measures of student progress and outcomes: persistence and graduation rates, time to degree and rates of switching institutions and programs	2018 updated every 3-4 years



Objective	Activity	Timeline
3. Inform public debate and dialogue about important trends and emerging issues in the Maritime postsecondary sector	Publish the 10 standard enrolment statistical tables and 2 downloadable databases	Annual (November)
	Publish the 8 standard credential granted statistical tables and 2 downloadable databases	Annual (November)
4. Disseminate evidence and analysis in relevant/usable formats	Publish funding administration tables (Weighted FTE and FTE)	Annual (November)
	Publish tuition fees, ancillary and residence fees statistical tables	Annual (August)
	Publish Digest on university enrolment	Annual (January)
	Provide custom-generated statistics to stakeholders	By request
	Provide advice and support to government and institutions	Ongoing
5. Collect, store and maintain quality, comprehensive, and relevant student and graduate data	Maintain PSIS	Ongoing
	Process PSIS submissions	Annual
	Carry-out the 6-year out survey of the Class 2012 graduates	2018-2019
	Review GO survey program prior to establishing next cycle	2019-2020
	Develop comprehensive privacy framework, policies and procedures	2018-2020

Interprovincial Agreements

Objective	Activity	Timeline
1. Facilitate additional educational opportunities for Maritime students	Support the following agreements: 1. Nursing 2. Dalhousie University Medical Education Program in New Brunswick 3. Entente Nouveau-Brunswick/Québec 4. Formation médicale (délocalisée) 5. Memorial University 6. Waterloo optometry 7. Rehabilitation disciplines	Annual
	Administer the Regional Transfer Arrangement	Annual



Cooperative Action

Objective	Activity	Timeline
1. Foster collaboration, communication and cooperation	Support the NB/PEI Educational Computer Network	Ongoing
	Participate on various national, regional, and provincial committees and working groups	Ongoing
	Host Forum on Data Collection and Research	Annual (March)

Services to Provinces

Objective	Activity	Timeline
1. Provide services to the Provinces as requested	Support the university education budget process in NB	Ongoing
	Support the postsecondary budget in PEI	Ongoing
	Provide NS with required data to run its funding formula	Ongoing
	Undertake institutional reviews and program evaluations for private institutions in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia (For more details see description under quality assurance function above)	By request of the Minister

ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK

The operational and improvement/strategic objectives and activities identified in this plan cover the planning period 2018-2019 to 2020-2021. The plan will be reviewed annually to monitor progress and to update, as appropriate, as new insight and knowledge is gathered. In addition, the Commission, through its annual budget submission to CAMET, reports on its performance during the past year and deliverables for the next year.

The Commission believes that its accountability framework could be further strengthened by identifying a selection of key performance indicators to allow it to better understand, manage and improve its programs and services. Work to identify these measures will begin in 2018-2019. We look forward to sharing our first measures in our 2018-2019 progress report.

