GUIDELINES ON NAMING OF DEGREES

April 2004

I. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

The following guidelines have been adopted by the Degree Quality Assessment Board (the "Board") to assist institutions in determining the name of the credential they will offer when they are proposing new degree programs. Institutions proposing new degree names should provide an indication on what basis a degree name has been selected. This should be determined within the institution's overall approach to degree nomenclature and reflect historical practice in British Columbia and, where necessary, within the broader Canadian and international context. It should be noted that the guidelines apply only to new degrees; existing degree names are not affected.

II. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE NAMING OF DEGREES

1) Credentials for new academic programs should ordinarily be selected from degree names that are widely used and generally understood. The list of degrees currently offered by British Columbia post-secondary institutions is already very comprehensive and normally should be able to accommodate most proposals for new academic programs.

2) A generic degree name that already incorporates a broad range of academic disciplines or subject areas is preferable to a multitude of specific degree names. Obvious examples include the Bachelor of Arts at the undergraduate level and the Master of Science at the graduate level. In the case of some of the newer and more specialized institutions, such as the technical institutes, the standard credential awarded should be reflective of the overall mission of the institution (e.g., technology, thus leading to a Bachelor of Technology).

3) The name should be descriptive of the general area of study which usually corresponds to a particular faculty or school. While degrees are conferred by a particular post-secondary institution, the degree designation is normally identified with a particular academic unit, ordinarily a faculty or school. The emergence of interdisciplinary studies has led to a number of departures from this practice.

4) The name should be appropriate for adoption by other British Columbia post-secondary institutions that develop similar programs. Comparable6rTJ0.0006(a)(ae)Tj0.0001 Tc -0.0001 T

5) In British Columbia, the use of associate degrees is restricted to the Associate of Arts and the Associate of Science degree. Institutions proposing to offer the associate degree must ensure that the degree is consistent with the British Columbia system-wide definition. (The British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer provides a definition of associate degree on its website: http://www.bccat.bc.ca/pubs/assoc05-00.htm.)

6) The above principles apply to both undergraduate and graduate programs.

III. HOW TO INDICATE SPECIALIZATION IN THE DEGREE NAME

The Board assumes that the principal reason for proposing a distinct degree is to indicate an academic area of specialization. The question then becomes how to achieve this objective, while adhering to the five general principles outlined above. Where appropriate the subject of specialization could be included as part of the degree name leading to a new genus of degrees. Institutions, as a matter of routine, already identify majors and areas of concentration on the transcript. In some instances, honours are shown as part of the degree. In addition, the subject area, or major, is sometimes shown on the parchment as a matter of institutional preference, but that does not mean that that information is incorporated into the name of the degree.

Increasing specialization is the main reason for the existing diversity and continuing expansion of degree names. While there does not appear to be any uniform practice, over time certain models have evolved. One is to include the specialization in the degree name itself (e.g., Bachelor of Science in Agriculture). Another is to indicate the specialization in parentheses after the degree name (e.g., Bachelor of Education (Elementary)). A third is the creation of new generic forms (e.g., Bachelor of Administrative Studies). New degrees, which identify an area of specialization, should fit into one of the following categories:

a) Bachelor of Science in _____. This has become a widely accepted method of indicating specialization. There is a clearly identified and specialized field of study which finds its roots in science, but which derives its distinctiveness from being located in a separate academic unit. Examples include: agriculture, dietetics, forestry, kinesiology, nursing and pharmacy. From the examples given, it is clear that there is a strong link to a particular profession. What should be noted is that, while the degree names follow a standard pattern, the degree initials do not. Ex

required in the field of specialization should exceed that required for a major. There should also be some demonstrated link with a particular profession or occupation.

d) Bachelor of Education (Elementary). This approach to indicating specialization is achieved by showing the specialty in parentheses after the generic degree. In British Columbia it has been used primarily to distinguish various kinds of education degrees. Unlike the previous examples, these degrees are offered by a single faculty. The Education degree is also a professional degree and the designated distinction has obvious implications for employment. Other faculties wishing to develop specialized professional programs should consider this option. An example is the Bachelor of Arts (Criminal Justice).

e) Bachelor of _____ Studies. There are an increasing number of degrees with an interdisciplinary focus. As a result there is greater usage of degree names which incorporate the word "studies." This trend is found at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. The word "studies" appears to be used in instances where there is a well-defined academic program but where the course offerings are provided by a number of academic units, often including units from more than one faculty. There is often a tension between choosing a more generic degree (e.g., B.A. (Canadian Studies)) versus Bachelor of Canadian Studies (B.C.S.). The former is more widely recognized and is the recommended approach.

f) Bachelor of Technology (_____). With the expansion of the post-secondary system to include a greater variety of academic institutions, generic degrees which reflect the academic orientation of these newer institutions are rapidly emerging. In the case of technological institutes, the academic programs are grounded in the study of the practical application of science in a variety of subject areas. It is recommended that Institutes of Technology adopt the generic form of degree, Bachelor of Technology. The field of specialization, if necessary, can be shown in parentheses following the general degree, similar to the practice in the field of education. Normally this degree designation will be confined to Institutes of Technology.

g) Bachelor of Applied _____. Given that the province has encouraged the development of more applied degrees, there has been a gradual increase in requests to use the word "applied" in the title of the credential offered. The dictionary definition of applied is "used in actual practice or to work out practical problems."

With respect to new degree programs which are "applied" in nature, sponsoring institutions should give serious consideration to using a generic degree name such as Bachelor of Applied Arts (name of specialization) or Bachelor of Applied Design (name of specialization) (e.g., Bachelor of Applied Design (Interior Design)). Each designation is sufficiently broad to allow a number of specific programs under a single umbrella. Because the degree, Bachelor of Applied Science, is already identified with engineering, its use should be limited to such programs to avoid confusion. Since engineering programs are accredited by the profession, this additional requirement should be a condition of approval for degrees using the phrase Applied Science.