Ontario ⬤

Interior Design Program Standard

The approved program standard for Interior Design programs of instruction leading to an Ontario College Advanced Diploma delivered by Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (MTCU funding code 61833)

Ministry of Colleges and Universities
January 2021

Acknowledgements

The Ministry of Colleges and Universities acknowledges with thanks the significant contribution of the many individuals and organizations which participated in the development of this program standard. In particular, the Ministry of Colleges and Universities would like to acknowledge the important roles of

- all individuals and organizations which participated in the consultations
- the faculty, coordinators and deans of the Interior Design (Ontario College Advanced Diploma) programs for their assistance throughout the project
- Kristi Harrison, the Project Officer who led the development of the English vocational learning outcomes.

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Introduction

This document is the Program Standard for the Interior Design programs of instruction leading to an Ontario College Advanced Diploma delivered by Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (MTCU funding code 61833).

Development of system-wide program standards

In 1993, the Government of Ontario initiated program standards development with the objectives of bringing a greater degree of consistency to college programming offered across the province, broadening the focus of college programs to ensure graduates have the skills to be flexible and to continue to learn and adapt, and providing public accountability for the quality and relevance of college programs.

The Program Standards Unit of the Ministry of Colleges and Universities has responsibility for the development, review and approval of system-wide standards for programs of instruction at Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology.

Program standards

Program standards apply to all similar programs of instruction offered by colleges across the province. Each program standard for a postsecondary program includes the following elements:

- **Vocational standard** (the vocationally specific learning outcomes which apply to the program of instruction in question),
- **Essential employability skills** (the essential employability skills learning outcomes which apply to all programs of instruction); and
- **General education requirement** (the requirement for general education in postsecondary programs of instruction).

Collectively, these elements outline the essential skills and knowledge that a student must reliably demonstrate in order to graduate from the program.

Individual Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology offering the program of instruction determine the specific program structure, delivery methods and other curriculum matters to be used in assisting students to achieve the outcomes articulated in the standard. Individual colleges also determine whether additional local learning outcomes will be required to reflect specific local needs and/or interests.

The expression of program standards as vocational learning outcomes

Vocational learning outcomes represent culminating demonstrations of learning and achievement. They are not simply a listing of discrete skills, nor broad statements of knowledge and comprehension. In addition, vocational learning outcomes are interrelated and cannot be viewed in isolation from one another. As such, they should be viewed as a comprehensive whole. They describe performances that demonstrate that significant integrated learning by graduates of the program has been achieved and verified.

Expressing standards as vocational learning outcomes ensures consistency in the outcomes for program graduates, while leaving to the discretion of individual colleges, curriculum matters such as the specific program structure and delivery methods.

The presentation of the vocational learning outcomes

The **vocational learning outcome** statements set out the culminating demonstration of learning and achievement that the student must reliably demonstrate before graduation.

The **elements of the performance** for each outcome define and clarify the level and quality of performance necessary to meet the requirements of the vocational learning outcome. However, it is the performance of the vocational learning outcome itself on which students are evaluated. The elements of performance are indicators of the means by which the student may proceed to satisfactory performance of the vocational learning outcome. The elements of performance do not stand alone but rather in reference to the vocational learning outcome of which they form a part.

The development of a program standard

In establishing the standards development initiative, the Government determined that all postsecondary programs of instruction should include vocational skills coupled with a broader set of essential skills. This combination is considered critical to ensuring that college graduates have the skills required to be successful both upon graduation from the college program and throughout their working and personal lives.

A program standard is developed through a broad consultation process involving a range of stakeholders with a direct interest in the program area, including employers, professional associations, universities, secondary schools and program graduates working in the field, in addition to students, faculty and administrators at the colleges themselves. It represents a consensus of participating stakeholders on the essential learning that all program graduates should have achieved.

Updating the program standard

The Ministry of Colleges and Universities will undertake regular reviews of the vocational learning outcomes for this program to ensure that the Interior Design Program Standard remains appropriate and relevant to the needs of students and employers across the Province of Ontario. To confirm that this document is the most up-to-date release, please contact the Ministry of Colleges and Universities.

Vocational standard

All graduates of Interior Design programs have achieved the [twelve vocational learning outcomes (VLOs)](#), in addition to achieving the essential employability outcomes and meeting the general education (GE) requirement.

Preamble

The knowledge and skills of the Interior Design graduate, expressed in the vocational learning outcomes, is aligned with the profession's accepted definition of the interior designer's role. This role is defined as using education, experience, and recognized skills to identify, research, and creatively solve problems pertaining to the function and quality of the interior environment, in order to enhance the quality of life and protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public.

The nature of the role expressed in the learning outcomes will provide a graduate with the foundation required for professional growth in the interior **design** environment and with the ability to function in a wide variety of employment settings.

The graduate will be capable of contributing to each of the phases of the **design** process, to execute all phases including implementation of a **design** project, and the evaluation of a completed **design** solution. The graduate of this three-year Ontario College Advanced Diploma program will be equipped to function within **design** environments and to carry out role performance at a relatively complex level. All entry-level interior designers in industry should initially expect to work under the supervision of senior designers, and through experience and career progression will also be able to work independently on many projects of reasonable complexity.

There are opportunities for graduates to pursue further educational qualifications and degree completion. Graduates should contact individual colleges for further information.

[See Glossary](#)

Note: The [Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer](#) (ONCAT) maintains the provincial postsecondary credit transfer portal, [ONTransfer](#).

Synopsis of the vocational learning outcomes

Interior Design (Ontario College Advanced Diploma)

The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to:

1. Adhere to building and **accessibility** codes, regulations, standards and practices that protect the health, safety and welfare of the public.

2. Produce accurate construction and detailed drawings with accompanying specifications to fully convey the **design proposal**.

3. Employ principles of **sustainability** in the specification of new and conventional **materials**, equipment and technologies to create objects, interiors and assemblies.

4. Develop **design** solutions considering the use of space, the physical environment, **accessibility** needs, and preferences to meet **client** needs.

5. Employ the principles and **elements** of **design**, and the relationship between form and function to create the **design** solution.

6. Communicate **design** ideas, **concepts** and trends for various projects, reflecting the use of theory and contemporary practice in the **design** solution.

7. Develop plans for **design** objects and space using appropriate **volumetric** manipulation conventions and technologies to create **design** solutions.

8. Effectively manage time, budgets and workloads to achieve the desired **design** solution.

9. Employ business ethics and professional practices in all **design** work for establishing and maintaining organizational and practitioner reputation.

10. Employ verbal, written, visual and digital communication skills to formally present well-articulated **design proposals** and solutions to a **client**, and/or other involved parties.

11. Employ professional communication practices in interaction, negotiation and collaboration with coworkers, consultants, contractors, **clients**, end-users and others.

12. Evaluate **designs** on the basis of **concept**, appropriateness, effectiveness, **sustainability**, codes and regulations, **accessibility**, user experience, and cost for the development of **design** solutions that will meet **client** needs.

See Glossary

Note: The learning outcomes have been numbered as a point of reference; numbering does not imply prioritization, sequencing, nor weighting of significance.

The vocational learning outcomes

1. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: adhere to building and **accessibility** codes, regulations, standards and practices that protect the health, safety and welfare of the public.

Elements of the performance

a. Assess **design** solutions against the standards of the public welfare.
b. Verify that the **design** conforms to current industry standards, by-laws, and applicable codes including local building codes and local fire codes to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of the public.
c. Assess the final documents to ensure that the **design** project complies with all applicable codes and bylaws.
d. Assess the project as it relates to the building code, zoning by-laws, fire code, health regulations, environmental issues, and special needs concerns (i.e. physically challenged).
e. Determine the building construction system, the building occupancy, and the building classification.

See Glossary

2. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: produce accurate construction and detailed drawings with accompanying specifications to fully convey the **design proposal**.

Elements of the performance

a. Specify appropriate furniture, furnishing, and equipment to fulfil functional, aesthetic, health and safety, resource conservation and cost requirements (e.g., determine appropriate furniture whether system, modular, knockdown, custom) to meet its necessary function.
b. Select appropriate historical, contemporary, or custom furniture.
c. Select products for appropriate construction and finish.
d. Select art, accessories, and signage (e.g., logos, directional signs).
e. Select appropriate furniture to meet power, data, and communication needs.
f. Apply the principles of **structure** and current industry standard methods of construction and detailing.

See Glossary

3.   The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: employ principles of
     sustainability in the specification of new and conventional **materials**, equipment
     and technologies to create objects, interiors, and assemblies.

Elements of the performance

a.   Select colours, **materials**, **finishes**, and lighting that are produced using sustainable
     materials and practices.
b.   Apply ethical standards to a **design concept** (e.g., conserving **material** resources,
     respecting human resources and individuals with special needs).

See Glossary

4. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: develop **design** solutions considering the use of space, the physical environment, **accessibility** needs, and preferences to meet **client** needs.

Elements of the performance

a. Determine the appropriate use of **materials** to meet the functional and aesthetic requirements of a **design** project.
b. Research product information to select appropriate **materials**.
c. Analyze **materials** for their performance, durability, cost, applications, environmental impact, building code and standards classifications.
d. Determine surface treatment and finish appropriate to the **design**; integrate **finishes** for joint and millwork, for floors, walls, ceilings, doors, and windows.
e. Determine the appropriate hardware for the **design**; apply energy and resource conservation principles to a **design** by specifying those **materials**, methods, and systems which will ensure that the **design** is environmentally friendly.

See Glossary

5. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: employ the principles and elements of **design**, and the relationship between form and function to create the **design** solution.

Elements of the performance

a. Generate and assess various **design** ideas.
b. Apply **design** principles and **elements**.
c. Apply historical interior **design**, art history, and architectural knowledge and **concepts** in the context of current social, cultural, environmental, and economic circumstances.
d. Apply current **design** information by reviewing industry journals; attending **design** symposia and trade shows; participating in professional **design** associations and visiting current, significant **design** projects during and/or after completion.
e. Record information collected during field trips (e.g., trade shows, project visits, etc.).
f. Use research to determine the major trends in interior **design**.
g. Prepare furniture and equipment inventory and incorporate that information into a **space plan**.

See Glossary

6. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: communicate **design** ideas, **concepts** and trends for various projects, reflecting the use of theory and contemporary practice in the **design** solution.

Elements of the performance

a. Prepare a statement and preliminary drawings to describe the **concept** and rationale used in the development of a **design** solution.
b. Define the **design** problem.
c. Determine spatial adjacency requirements.
d. Determine space, furniture, and equipment requirements.
e. Determine space standards through the use of the principles of ergonomics, anthropometrics, and proxemics.
f. Determine an appropriate **design** image for the **client**.
g. Assess **site** and building parameters which may impact on the interior **design**.
h. Produce an accurate drawing which reflects the building and **site** conditions.
i. Construct precise, accurate two- and three-dimensional **design** drawings by applying principles of orthographic projection and para-line drawing techniques and by utilizing two- and three-dimensional CADD capabilities.
j. Finalize (to scale using Imperial and Metric) a **space plan concept** (e.g., resolve problems in furniture, lighting **concepts**, architectural **elements** and related **design** details).
k. Construct perspectives and render using tone, texture, shade, and colour.

See Glossary

7. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: develop plans for **design** objects and space using **volumetric** manipulation conventions and technologies to create **design** solutions.

Elements of the performance

a. Prepare furniture, **fixture**, and equipment specifications to obtain manufacturers' fixed quotes for costs.
b. Determine the role of the designer in the bidding and tendering process for a **design** project, including preparing tender documentation; preparing a qualified bidders list; preparing instructions to bidders; preparing the addenda; analyzing open bids and making recommendations; reviewing lists of sub-contractors; assisting **clients** in the preparation of contractor/owner contracts; and reviewing shop drawings.
c. Prepare a timetable that coordinates the activities required by all participants to complete a given **design** project on time.
d. Determine the need for and the role of all participants (including users, **clients**, building trades, and other professionals).

See Glossary

8. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: effectively manage time, budgets and workloads to achieve the desired **design** solution.

Elements of the performance

a. Prepare a cost estimate to meet a **design** project budget.
b. Prepare project plans and schedules.
c. Schedule the sequencing and completion of the drawings required for the **design** project.
d. Coordinate information between working drawings and other documents (e.g., specifications); and adapting to changes, when necessary, in drawing formats and/or scheduling.
e. Monitor schedules and workloads, making any necessary adjustments and informing the **client** and other contract service providers.
f. Monitor costs of the project and advise the **client** of any changes to the original project plan and obtain commitment.
g. Monitor resources allocated to the **design** project and make adjustments if delays or availability issues occur.

See Glossary

9. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: employ business ethics and professional practices in all **design** work for establishing and maintaining organizational and practitioner reputation.

Elements of the performance

a. Communicate to the **client** the results of the completed **design** project analysis.
b. Prepare preliminary budgets.
c. Communicate the proposed **design** process.
d. Prepare contracts toward the establishment of a legal agreement between the designer and a **client**.
e. Determine stages in the **decorating** process where the **client's** approval is needed and who will engage with them.
f. Prepare a deficiencies list (that is, damaged **materials** and/or missing products and **finishes**).
g. Prepare a post-occupancy evaluation to assess how well the project has met the **client's** needs.

See Glossary

10. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: employ verbal, written, visual and digital communication skills to formally present well-articulated **design proposals** and solutions to a **client**, and/or other involved parties.

Elements of the performance

a. Use **design** sector terminology to communicate with designers, architects, and other consultants, and security and building and trades contractors.
b. Conduct meetings in a professional manner to encourage individual preferences to be heard, leading and negotiating consensus.
c. Communicate respectfully with all stakeholders.
d. Coordinate information between the designer and other consultants.
e. Use a variety of **media** and **rendering** techniques to effectively communicate the **design proposal/concept** intent.
f. Apply two- and three-dimensional CADD presentation skills.
g. Respond to **client** questions and comments.

See Glossary

11. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: employ professional communication practices in interaction, negotiation and collaboration with coworkers, consultants, contractors, **clients**, end-users and others.

Elements of the performance

a. Use technical terminology to communicate with electrical, mechanical and structural engineers; architects; acoustical, security, lighting, and other consultants; and building and trade contractors.
b. Conduct meetings and prepare a set of minutes to record information from a project meeting.
c. Conduct **design** business in a professional manner.
d. Lead group discussion when appropriate and negotiate consensus in group discussions.
e. Determine where in the **design** process a **client's** approval is needed.
f. Determine when to conduct **site** visits and inspections.
g. Recognize possible legal ramifications such as legal responsibility and liability.

See Glossary

12. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: evaluate **design** solutions on the basis of **concept**, appropriateness, effectiveness, **sustainability**, codes and regulations, **accessibility**, user experience, and the cost for development of **design** solutions that will meet **client** needs.

Elements of the performance

a. Determine the role of the designer, as the **client's** agent, in the evaluation process.
b. Present persuasively the **design concept** to secure the **client's** approval.
c. Use clear, concise language to explain the **design concept**.
d. Use a variety of visual presentation aids (which may include perspectives, models, etc.) to communicate the **design concept**.
e. Display openness and adaptability to comments and suggestions.
f. Incorporate principles of universal **design** and **accessibility** in **design** solutions.

See Glossary

Glossary

Accessibility: The degree to which a product, device, service or environment is available to as many people as possible for their use.

Client: The recipient of the decorating or design service.

Concept: The idea or creative solution that is produced by a decorator or designer about the look and feel of a finished project.

Decorating: The art and science of making an interior space functionally useful and aesthetically pleasing.

Design: The art and science of enhancing the interior of a building to achieve a functional and esthetically pleasing environment for those using the space.

Elements: The objects that are included in a decorating or design solution to produce the overall effect of the completed project.

Finishes: The qualities of the surface of objects used in decorating or design projects (e.g., matte, shiny, flat, textured, smooth).

Fixture: Built- in elements in décor or design projects, or those which are fastened to the structure, such as cabinets, appliances, counters, railings, dividers etc.

Materials: The physical substances or mixtures formed into objects that are used in the décor or design project (e.g., wood, glass, plastic, fabric, metal, tile, stone etc.).

Media: Electronic media used for presentation and communication of information that supports the objectives of an event and allows the participants to actively respond.

Proposal: A written and visual décor or design plan and solution put forward for consideration by the client.

Rendering: The automatic process of generating an image from a two- or three-dimensional model by means of computer programs.

Space Planning: Plans that convey how the space is to be decorated or designed will appear, and how the available space will be utilized, by creating to-scale drawings and placement of the décor or design elements.

Site: The spatial location of a decorating or design project.

Sustainability: A sustainable solution in terms of décor or design avoids the depletion of natural resources, the avoidance of waste or the creation of harmful by-products from the use of materials.

Volumetric: A drawing method using shading, value gradations, highlights, mid-tones, shadows and cast shadows to create an illusion of three-dimensional forms and space.

Essential employability skills

All graduates of the Interior Design program of instruction must have reliably demonstrated the essential employability skills learning outcomes listed below, in addition to achieving the vocational learning outcomes and meeting the general education requirement

Context

Essential Employability Skills (EES) are skills that, regardless of a student's program or discipline, are critical for success in the workplace, in day-to-day living and for lifelong learning.

The teaching and attainment of these EES for students in, and graduates from, Ontario's Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology are anchored in a set of three fundamental assumptions:

- these skills are important for every adult to function successfully in society today;
- our colleges are well equipped and well positioned to prepare graduates with these skills;
- these skills are equally valuable for all graduates, regardless of the level of their credential, whether they pursue a career path, or they pursue further education.

Skill categories

To capture these skills, the following six categories define the essential areas where graduates must demonstrate skills and knowledge.

- Communication
- Numeracy
- Critical Thinking & Problem Solving
- Information Management
- Interpersonal
- Personal

Application and implementation

In each of the six skill categories, there are a number of defining skills, or sub skills, identified to further articulate the requisite skills identified in the main skill categories. The following chart illustrates the relationship between the skill categories, the defining skills within the categories and learning outcomes to be achieved by graduates from all postsecondary programs of instruction that lead to an Ontario College credential.

EES may be embedded in General Education or vocational courses, or developed through discrete courses. However these skills are developed, all graduates with Ontario College credentials must be able to reliably demonstrate the essential skills required in each of the six categories.

Skill category	Defining skills: Skill areas to be demonstrated by graduates:	Learning outcomes: The levels of achievement required by graduates. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to:
Communication	• Reading • Writing • Speaking • Listening • Presenting • Visual literacy	1. communicate clearly, concisely and correctly in the written, spoken and visual form that fulfills the purpose and meets the needs of the audience. 2. respond to written, spoken or visual messages in a manner that ensures effective communication.
Numeracy	• Understanding and applying mathematical concepts and reasoning • Analyzing and using numerical data • Conceptualizing	1. execute mathematical operations accurately.
Critical Thinking & Problem Solving	• Analyzing • Synthesizing • Evaluating • Decision making • Creative and innovative thinking	1. apply a systematic approach to solve problems. 2. use a variety of thinking skills to anticipate and solve problems.
Information Management	• Gathering and managing information • Selecting and using appropriate tools and technology for a task or a project • Computer literacy • Internet skills	1. locate, select, organize and document information using appropriate technology and information systems. 2. analyze, evaluate and apply relevant information from a variety of sources.

Interpersonal	• Teamwork • Relationship management • Conflict resolution • Leadership • Networking	1. show respect for the diverse opinions, values, belief systems and contributions of others. 2. interact with others in groups or teams in ways that contribute to effective working relationships and the achievement of goals.
Personal	• Managing self • Managing change and being flexible and adaptable • Engaging in reflective practices • Demonstrating personal responsibility	1. manage the use of time and other resources to complete projects. 2. take responsibility for one's own actions, decisions and their consequences.

General education requirement

All graduates of the Interior Design program must have met the [general education requirement](#) described below, in addition to achieving the [vocational](#) and [essential employability skills](#) learning outcomes.

Requirement

The General Education Requirement for programs of instruction is stipulated in the [Credentials Framework](#) (Appendix A in the Minister's Binding Policy Directive Framework for Programs of Instruction).

In programs of instruction leading to either an Ontario College Diploma or an Ontario College Advanced Diploma, it is required that graduates have been engaged in learning that exposes them to at least one discipline outside their main field of study and increases their awareness of the society and culture in which they live and work. This will typically be accomplished by students taking 3 to 5 courses (or the equivalent) designed discretely and separately from vocational learning opportunities.

This general education learning would normally be delivered using a combination of required and elective processes.

Purpose

The purpose of General Education in the Ontario college system is to contribute to the development of citizens who are conscious of the diversity, complexity and richness of the human experience; who are able to establish meaning through this consciousness; and who, as a result, are able to contribute thoughtfully, creatively and positively to the society in which they live and work.

General Education strengthens students' essential employability skills, such as critical analysis, problem solving and communication, in the context of an exploration of topics with broad-based personal and/or societal importance.

Themes

The themes listed below will be used to provide direction to Ontario Colleges in the development and identification of courses that are designed to fulfil the General Education Requirement for programs of instructions.

Each theme provides a statement of Rationale and offers suggestions related to more specific topic areas that could be explored within each area. These suggestions are neither prescriptive nor exhaustive. They are included to provide guidance regarding the nature and scope of content that would be judged as meeting the intent and overall

goals of General Education.

Arts in society:

Rationale:

The capacity of a person to recognize and evaluate artistic and creative achievements is useful in many aspects of his/her life. Since artistic expression is a fundamentally human activity, which both reflects and anticipates developments in the larger culture, its study will enhance the student's cultural and self-awareness.

Content:

Courses in this area should provide students with an understanding of the importance of visual and creative arts in human affairs, of the artist's and writer's perceptions of the world and the means by which those perceptions are translated into the language of literature and artistic expression. They will also provide an appreciation of the aesthetic values used in examining works of art and possibly, a direct experience in expressing perceptions in an artistic medium.

Civic Life:

Rationale:

In order for individuals to live responsibly and to reach their potential as individuals and as citizens of society, they need to understand the patterns of human relationships that underlie the orderly interactions of a society's various structural units. Informed people will have knowledge of the meaning of civic life in relation to diverse communities at the local, national and global level and an awareness of international issues and the effects of these on Canada, as well as Canada's place in the international community.

Content:

Courses in this area should provide students with an understanding of the meaning of freedoms, rights and participation in community and public life, in addition to a working knowledge of the structure and function of various levels of government (municipal, provincial, national) in a Canadian and/or in an international context. They may also provide an historical understanding of major political issues affecting relations between the various levels of government in Canada and their constituents.

Social and cultural understanding:

Rationale:

Knowledge of the patterns and precedents of the past provide the means for a person to gain an awareness of his or her place in contemporary culture and society. In

addition to this awareness, students will acquire a sense of the main currents of their culture and that of other cultures over an extended period of time in order to link personal history to the broader study of culture.

Content:

Courses in this area are those that deal broadly with major social and cultural themes. These courses may also stress the nature and validity of historical evidence and the variety of historical interpretation of events. Courses will provide the students with a view and understanding of the impact of cultural, social, ethnic or linguistic characteristics.

Personal Understanding:

Rationale:

Educated people are equipped for life-long understanding and development of themselves as integrated physiological and psychological entities. They are aware of the ideal need to be fully functioning persons: mentally, physically, emotionally, socially, spiritually and vocationally.

Content:

Courses in this area will focus on understanding the individual: his or her evolution; situation; relationship with others; place in the environment and universe; achievements and problems; and his or her meaning and purpose. They will also allow students the opportunity to study institutionalized human social behaviour in a systematic way. Courses fulfilling this requirement may be oriented to the study of the individual within a variety of contexts.

Science and technology:

Rationale:

Matter and energy are universal concepts in science, forming a basis for understanding the interactions that occur in living and non-living systems in our universe. Study in this area provides an understanding of the behaviour of matter that provides a foundation for further scientific study and the creation of broader understanding about natural phenomena.

Similarly, the various applications and developments in the area of technology have an increasing impact on all aspects of human endeavour and have numerous social, economic and philosophical implications. For example, the operation of computers to process data at high speed has invoked an interaction between machines and the human mind that is unique in human history. This and other technological developments have a powerful impact on how we deal with many of the complex questions in our

society.

Content:

Courses in this area should stress scientific inquiry and deal with basic or fundamental questions of science rather than applied ones. They may be formulated from traditional basic courses in such areas of study as biology, chemistry, physics, astronomy, geology or agriculture. As well, courses related to understanding the role and functions of computers (e.g., data management and information processing) and assorted computer-related technologies should be offered in a non-applied manner to provide students with an opportunity to explore the impact of these concepts and practices on their lives.

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