



Journalism Program Standard

*The approved program standard for
Journalism program of instruction leading to
an Ontario College Diploma delivered by
Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and
Technology (MTCU funding code 52006)*

Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
July 2008

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psu@ontario.ca

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I. Introduction

This document is the Program Standard for the Journalism program of instruction leading to an Ontario College Diploma delivered by Ontario colleges of applied arts and technology (MTCU funding code 52006).

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 and Evaluation Unit of the Ministry of Training, 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 of 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 Training, Colleges and Universities will undertake regular reviews of the vocational learning outcomes for this program to ensure that the Journalism 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, contact the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities at the address or telephone number noted on the inside cover page.

II. Vocational Standard

All graduates of the Journalism program of instruction must have achieved the 9 vocational learning outcomes listed in the following pages, in addition to achieving the essential employability skills learning outcomes and meeting the general education requirement.

Preamble

Journalists are members of a profession who create verbal, auditory, and visual reflections and interpretations of society. Their workplace is driven by demanding and stressful deadlines. Journalists have a strong sense of justice where all members of a society are entitled to equal opportunities; have a commitment to a free media in a democratic society; and are curious and passionate about current events and public affairs. They are also persistent and effective news gatherers, reporters, and storytellers. Strong writing, research, and critical thinking skills and the ability to capture and use sound and visual images are some of the essential tools of their craft.

Journalism at the diploma level provides an opportunity for students to develop the essential skills, knowledge, and behaviours required to work in this field. Graduates have received hands-on training with some of the following media vehicles: newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and online equipment and devices. Colleges may elect to focus their programs on a designated number of media platforms (e.g., print, and/or broadcast, and/or online). Although the focus of a program may be limited to one or more media platforms, all graduates develop skills in: reporting, editing, writing, publishing and/or producing, developing teams, and computing.

Graduates have knowledge of applicable legislation, standards and professional ethics, and recognize the importance of continuous learning. They also have knowledge of the impact of digital technology on the journalism field and are able to respond to technological changes.

Journalists are employed by radio and television networks and stations, newspapers and magazines and other organizations that distribute information. Journalists may also work on a freelance basis.

Graduates may be hired in entry-level positions in both small and large organizations. Some of the functions that a graduate may perform at an entry-level could include collecting local, national and international news through interviews, investigating and observing; writing news stories for publication and/or broadcast; receiving, analyzing and verifying news and others' copy for accuracy; and researching, arranging for and conducting interviews as part of research for radio, television and online programs.¹ As it takes years to hone one's journalism skills, graduates should be prepared for incremental advances in their responsibilities, as their skill and knowledge base develop.

There are opportunities for graduates to pursue further educational qualifications through articulation agreements between colleges, universities, and professional organizations. Graduates should contact individual colleges for further details of a college's articulation agreements with other institutions or professional associations.

¹ Some of the occupational information in this section was found at the National Occupational Classification (NOC) website <<http://www5.hrsdc.gc.ca/NOC-CNP/app/checkversion.aspx?lc=E&level=6&nooccode=5123&code=5>> (Viewed May 7, 2008)

Synopsis of the Vocational Learning Outcomes Journalism (Ontario College Diploma)

The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to

- 1. report on stories in an accurate, detailed, balanced, professional, and timely manner.**
- 2. apply computer and technical skills to designated production and research functions in journalism.**
- 3. function both independently and as a member of editorial and/or production teams.**
- 4. analyze knowledge from communities, current events and public affairs, and history to interpret and express the context for designated journalism publications and/or productions.**
- 5. develop strategies for personal and professional development.**
- 6. comply with relevant Canadian legislation, standards, and the principles and practices of journalism.**
- 7. write and edit content for the designated media platforms.**
- 8. publish and/or broadcast content for the designated media platforms.**
- 9. apply production skills and use production equipment in the preparation and distribution of content for the designated media platforms.**

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*

report on stories in an accurate, detailed, balanced, professional, and timely manner.

Elements of the Performance

- research relevant background information using a variety of reporting tools and techniques (e.g., Freedom of Information requests and computer-assisted reporting);
- investigate various opinions, biases, connections, and conflicts involved in the development of a story;
- conduct interviews effectively and efficiently, and assess critically the compiled information for truth, accuracy, and completeness;
- manage time effectively to meet deadlines;
- verify all relevant information before reporting it;
- develop and maintain credible sources that are reflective of the community, and do so in a professional and confidential manner;
- distinguish between reliable and unreliable information sources including Internet sources;
- conduct sufficient investigative research to ensure effective and thorough reports;
- use initiative and an understanding of the audience and the role of journalists in society to discern story ideas, develop story angles and treatments;
- develop effective information gathering skills;
- communicate with others in a sensitive manner particularly during stressful situations;
- generate and present story ideas for further investigation appropriate to the mandate of the organization.

2. *The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to*

apply computer and technical skills to designated production and research functions in journalism.

Elements of the Performance

- select and use the appropriate software (e.g., image editing, desktop publishing, video/audio editing, spreadsheet and file transmission) for the assignment;
- select and use computer based research resources effectively, and evaluate the credibility of the information obtained;
- select and use current and emerging software to complete production and research functions;
- select and use appropriate hardware and software to create content and/or customize content for the designated media platforms;
- utilize current and emerging research tools such as online communities and database searches;
- select and use digital equipment effectively to support storytelling.

3. *The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to*

function both independently and as a member of editorial and/or production teams.

Elements of the Performance

- exhibit professional attitudes and behaviours independently and in relation to team involvement, work ethics and acceptance of journalism standards;
- accept and carry out assigned responsibilities in an efficient and organized manner;
- use skills to both lead and to defer to leadership, as required;
- use effective interpersonal communication skills with co-workers and the public;
- analyze and solve problems that support the effective functioning of teams by applying conflict resolution skills;
- meet required deadlines of editorial and/or production teams and perform tasks reliably;
- receive feedback on one's work from members of editorial and/or production teams;
- make suggestions and show initiative in the development and delivery of journalism content, independently or with other members of editorial and/or production teams;
- use collaborative structures and contacts to develop and deliver journalism content;
- support the operations in editorial and/or production teams by contributing to organizational tasks;
- function within an online environment both independently and collaboratively by submitting materials remotely and collaborating through online resources.

4. *The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to*

analyze knowledge from communities, current events and public affairs, and history to interpret and express the context for designated journalism publications and/or productions.

Elements of the Performance

- assess the credibility and relevance of background information for designated journalism publications and/or productions;
- identify the personal biases and opinions inherent to any group membership or identity in society, including one's own, and acknowledge the potential for these biases to influence the content, frame, structure and overall message conveyed by the information and its subsequent use in a story;
- identify and apply the relationship and relevance of past events to current developments for designated journalism publications and/or productions;
- analyze critically political, economic, business, social, and cultural trends, and explain their impact on current events, where relevant;
- review and assess local, national and international events and issues to create journalistic coverage in context;
- assess critically overall coverage to encourage the most thorough representation of views possible for designated journalism publications and/or productions;
- gather information from geographic and shared interest communities to assist in the development of the context.

5. *The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to*
develop strategies for personal and professional development.

Elements of the Performance

- identify personal strengths and challenges when developing career goals;
- implement strategies to enhance work performance, and maximize professional opportunities;
- research relevant courses, seminars, workshops and appropriate professional associations that would maintain one's currency in the field;
- examine critically a wide range of workplace settings for journalism practice (e.g., alternative media settings), when developing career goals;
- solicit and apply constructive and critical feedback to enhance job performance;
- create and maintain a professional portfolio;
- develop strategies to manage stress and adapt to job pressures due to the unpredictable nature of journalism;
- develop skills including writing query letters and pitching ideas to news and information organizations for freelance purposes;
- develop and maintain strategies that support a healthy work-life balance;
- identify and engage in mentoring opportunities with experienced journalists;
- develop continuous learning strategies to respond effectively to the changes occurring within the profession;
- develop strategies to enhance English language and writing skills;
- reflect upon the role of journalists to inform, interpret, educate and enlighten, and revise one's practices accordingly.

6. *The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to*

comply with relevant Canadian legislation, standards, and the principles and practices of journalism.

Elements of the Performance

- apply knowledge of media related national and international legal guidelines, rules and interpretations to one's work;
- adhere to professional ethics;
- adhere to the legal restrictions that apply to journalism (e.g., Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act);
- recognize the degree of independence the journalist can have in the political and business context of the media while honoring the principles of the profession;
- apply practices that reflect competence, cultural diversity, and equality;
- implement practices that support media literacy;
- adhere to relevant national, provincial, and professional association standards, where applicable;
- apply knowledge of evolving legal and ethical practices to the coverage of sensitive issues;
- identify legally sensitive material and any potential legal issues, and deal with these situations in compliance with relevant laws;
- apply knowledge of standards and protocols as they relate to new and emerging social communications technology;
- identify and establish safe professional practices;
- apply knowledge of emerging standards and protocols as they relate to audience participation in the news through user-generated content and social media;
- comply with the basic legalities of release forms (e.g., personal, adult and minor, theatrical, and medium releases) and the requirements for use of footage from visual libraries.

7. *The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to*

write and edit content for the designated media platforms.

Elements of the Performance

- identify the essential characteristics necessary for a story and the basic elements of story structure and apply to one's writing;
- write and edit headlines, captions and other content for the designated media platforms;
- write and edit quality copy that is clear, correct, concise, comprehensible, and consistent;
- write and edit copy that is in compliance with libel, slander, and contempt of court laws;
- develop proficiency in writing for a variety of purposes (e.g., hard news, sports, features, opinion, analysis, and community information and promotion);
- distinguish writing requirements for broadcast, and/or print, and/or online media, and effectively adapt one's writing style to the designated medium;
- select and apply the most appropriate writing style for the content and the audience;
- adapt and convert reports, including audio and visual images, from one media platform to another (e.g., from print to online and/or broadcast to online);
- create and select appropriate content including audio and visual images;
- apply critical news judgment skills, social awareness, and social responsibility to assist in the determination of story selection and prioritizing;
- adhere to a rigorous editing process to produce quality copy;
- undertake copy editing, line editing, and proofreading, where applicable, based on a proficiency in style, grammar and spelling;
- edit content for taste, tone, and length;
- identify and correct factual errors in content.

8. *The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to*
publish and/or broadcast content for the designated media platforms.²

Elements of the Performance

- write quality copy to be presented by self or others;
- publish and/or broadcast quality news, sports, weather, traffic, and other information;
- provide live and/or recorded content that may include the skill to ad lib;
- apply and practice voice development and maintenance techniques;
- employ presentation skills to work within the roles of a journalist (e.g., anchor, host, and field reporter);
- provide live reporting in the designated contexts (e.g., on location live reporting, in studio reporting, and remote interviews);
- provide news stories, current affairs programming, shows, and web content;
- develop appropriate delivery techniques (e.g., audio-visual) for designated content delivery and/or programming requirements;
- publish quality content for designated media vehicles (e.g., magazines, community or daily newspapers; local, regional or national publications; websites).

² Some elements of the performance of this vocational learning outcome are related only to broadcast functions and other elements of the performance are related only to print functions. Some colleges may elect to focus exclusively on print publishing or broadcasting, and will not cover all of the listed elements of the performance within their programs. However, all graduates are required to reliably demonstrate their ability to achieve the vocational learning outcome.

9. *The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to*

apply production skills and use production equipment in the preparation and distribution of content for the designated media platforms.³

Elements of the Performance

- select, prepare, and edit a variety of image types;
- operate audio and video equipment (e.g., relevant photographic equipment) and basic transmission equipment, where appropriate;
- lay out and/or present content for the designated media platform (e.g., print, broadcast or online);
- use alternate media treatments including web-based presentations;
- provide and maintain the technical quality of the product for the designated media platform;
- use a variety of audio and video editing equipment and techniques (e.g., microphone types and placement for recording);
- utilize a variety of software (e.g., content management systems, photo editing and video editing software) and pagination tools to prepare and distribute content.

³ Idem

III. Essential Employability Skills

All graduates of the Journalism program of instruction must have reliably demonstrated the essential employability skills learning outcomes listed on the following pages, 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading • Writing • Speaking • Listening • Presenting • Visual literacy 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>communicate clearly, concisely and correctly in the written, spoken, and visual form that fulfills the purpose and meets the needs of the audience.</i> 2. <i>respond to written, spoken, or visual messages in a manner that ensures effective communication.</i>
NUMERACY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding and applying mathematical concepts and reasoning • Analyzing and using numerical data • Conceptualizing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. <i>execute mathematical operations accurately.</i>
CRITICAL THINKING & PROBLEM SOLVING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysing • Synthesizing • Evaluating • Decision making • Creative and innovative thinking 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. <i>apply a systematic approach to solve problems.</i> 5. <i>use a variety of thinking skills to anticipate and solve problems.</i>

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:
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gathering and managing information • Selecting and using appropriate tools and technology for a task or a project • Computer literacy • Internet skills 	<p>6. <i>locate, select, organize, and document information using appropriate technology and information systems.</i></p> <p>7. <i>analyze, evaluate, and apply relevant information from a variety of sources.</i></p>
INTERPERSONAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team work • Relationship management • Conflict resolution • Leadership • Networking 	<p>8. <i>show respect for the diverse opinions, values, belief systems, and contributions of others.</i></p> <p>9. <i>interact with others in groups or teams in ways that contribute to effective working relationships and the achievement of goals.</i></p>
PERSONAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing self • Managing change and being flexible and adaptable • Engaging in reflective practices • Demonstrating personal responsibility 	<p>10. <i>manage the use of time and other resources to complete projects.</i></p> <p>11. <i>take responsibility for one's own actions, decisions, and consequences.</i></p>

IV. General Education Requirement

All graduates of the Journalism program must have met the general education requirement described on the following pages, 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 student's 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 colleges in the development and identification of courses that are designed to fulfill 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.

1. 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.

2. 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, and 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 Canada 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.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. 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 development 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.