



Advertising and Marketing Communications Program Standard

*The approved program standard for the
Advertising and Marketing Communications
program of instruction leading to an Ontario
College Diploma delivered by Ontario
Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology
(MTCU funding code 52100)*

**Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
April 2011**

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I. Introduction

This document is the Program Standard for the Advertising and Marketing Communications program of instruction leading to an Ontario College Diploma delivered by Ontario colleges of applied arts and technology (MTCU funding code 52100).

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 have 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 Advertising and Marketing Communications 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 Training, Colleges and Universities at the address or telephone number noted on the inside cover page.

II. Vocational Standard

All graduates of the Advertising and Marketing Communications program of instruction must have achieved the eight 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

Graduates of the Advertising and Marketing Communications program from an Ontario College of Applied Arts and Technology are awarded an Ontario College Diploma. They are prepared to enter the ever growing industry of advertising and marketing communications*.

Organizations use advertising and marketing communications* to promote ideas, services and products. Therefore, the achievement of the vocational learning outcomes prepares graduates of the Advertising and Marketing Communications program to apply principles of advertising and marketing and communications to determine clients' advertising and marketing communications* objectives. They are also able to: apply research skills, innovative methods, as well as creative strategies and tactics to contribute to the development of advertising and marketing communications* plans; present and defend the plans persuasively; and collaborate in the production of creative advertising and marketing communications* material using effective oral and written communication skills and industry-standard technologies. In addition, graduates are able to contribute to evaluating the effectiveness of advertising and marketing communications* initiatives. They are able to participate in the monitoring of projects, as well as to meet deadlines and budgets. Finally, graduates complete work applying current Canadian legislation, industry standards and business practices.

Because of the growing and diverse nature of marketing communications*, graduates may work in a wide variety of public and private sector organizations, including healthcare, education, financial institutions, manufacturing industries, support groups and not-for-profit associations within the advertising and marketing communications* industry. They can also find employment opportunities with advertisers (clients) and integrated or specialist advertising and marketing communications* agencies, as well as media organizations in the areas of creative services, media planning and buying, sales, account management, marketing, production, public relations, Internet communications and sales promotion.

Graduates of the Advertising and Marketing Communications program are encouraged to continue their lifelong learning and professional development. Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (CAAT) and professional associations offer many professional development opportunities within the advertising and marketing communications* field.

Graduates may, through articulation agreements between colleges and universities, be awarded credits towards relevant degrees and certificates. Students should contact individual colleges for further details of a college's articulation agreements with other institutions or professional associations.

**See Glossary*

Synopsis of the Vocational Learning Outcomes Advertising and Marketing Communications (Ontario College Diploma)

The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to

- 1. identify and respond to clients' advertising and marketing communications* objectives by applying principles of marketing and communications.**
- 2. perform a market segmentation* analysis, identify the organization's target market/audience* and define the consumer behaviour of each segment.**
- 3. develop an advertising plan and present and defend it persuasively.**
- 4. contribute to evaluating the effectiveness of advertising and marketing communications* initiatives.**
- 5. collaborate in the development of advertising and marketing communications* material, in compliance with current Canadian legislation, industry standards and business practices.**
- 6. participate in the development of creative solutions to address advertising and marketing communications* challenges.**
- 7. contribute to planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating projects by applying the principles of project management.**
- 8. complete all work in a professional, ethical and timely manner**

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*

identify and respond to clients' advertising and marketing communications* objectives by applying principles of marketing and communications.

Elements of the Performance

- discuss how advertising and marketing communications* support a strategic business decision
- integrate all aspects of the marketing mix
- define the role of advertising and marketing communications* with respect to the achievement of specific communications objectives in both profit-making and not-for-profit organizations
- define brand/product positioning
- describe business practices that help advertising agencies function effectively
- apply advertising and marketing communications* processes and techniques to address clients' communication needs

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

perform a market segmentation* analysis, identify the organization's target market/audience* and define the consumer behaviour of each segment.

Elements of the Performance

- gather and interpret information of a market segmentation* analysis and discuss consumer behaviour for each segment
- compile, compare, present and apply the results of qualitative/quantitative research findings relative to a specific advertising and marketing communications* challenge
- discuss the use of primary and secondary research findings* in the context of a specific advertising and marketing communications* challenge
- discuss the selection of sampling techniques and factors that affect the determination of a sample size for a specific advertising and marketing communications* challenge
- gather qualitative and quantitative data in a variety of ways relative to a specific advertising and marketing communications* challenge (e.g., conduct interviews, use survey software)

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

develop an advertising plan and present and defend it persuasively.

Elements of the Performance

- perform an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) of the organization presenting a specific advertising and marketing communications* challenge
- define the target market/audience* for a specific advertising and marketing communications* challenge
- use relevant consumer profiles developed from market research, such as demographics*, psychographics*, geodemographics*, as well as consumer values and attitudes
- analyze product and brand information (e.g., differentiation, positioning, brand equity, brand loyalty, product life cycle, competition)
- determine measurable objectives, strategies and tactics
- develop creative media strategies by using traditional and emerging technologies to determine the optimal fit for the target market/audience*
- evaluate and select the appropriate advertising and marketing communications* techniques, such as media advertising, sales promotion, direct response advertising*, event marketing, Web marketing communications* tools and public relations to support advertising and marketing communications* objectives
- prepare and present a creative brief*
- develop a media plan*, and present and defend it persuasively
- contribute to the development of a budget and a timeline for all components of the advertising and marketing communications* plan
- identify issues that could impact the implementation of the media plan*, the budget and the projected outcomes
- develop an evaluation component, including measurement
- ensure that the advertising and marketing communications* plan supports the organization's promotional objectives and the overall strategic plan

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

contribute to evaluating the effectiveness of advertising and marketing communications* initiatives.

Elements of the Performance

- apply established criteria to evaluate advertising and marketing communications* initiatives
- use appropriate tools to measure the effectiveness of advertising and marketing communications* initiatives
- participate in analyzing qualitative and quantitative data collected and determining the effectiveness of specific advertising and marketing communications* initiatives
- identify alternatives for future advertising and marketing communications* initiatives
- contribute to the preparation of a written report or a presentation describing the evaluation process, targeted and actual outcomes, as well as recommended alternatives for future advertising and marketing communications* initiatives

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

collaborate in the development of advertising and marketing communications* material, in compliance with current Canadian legislation, industry standards and business practices.

Elements of the Performance

- generate ideas for the development of the advertising marketing communications* material based on client's briefing documents or a creative brief*
- seek and incorporate constructive feedback during concept and product development
- participate in the creation of advertising and marketing communications* material using industry-standard technologies efficiently and effectively
- contribute to determining the production requirements for the development of advertising and marketing communications* material
- participate in the development and implementation of a production plan
- write creative and persuasive copy
- use persuasive visual and audio communications techniques (e.g., basic graphic design, visual fundamentals, layout, sound effects)
- work effectively in a team environment in the development of the advertising and marketing communications* material
- identify relevant issues in Canadian advertising and marketing communications*, such as ethics, fair practice, censorship, access to information and right to privacy
- adhere to current Canadian legislation and regulations, as well as current advertising and marketing communications* industry standards
- identify challenges in advertising and marketing communications* when competing with international businesses

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

participate in the development of creative solutions to address advertising and marketing communications* challenges.

Elements of the Performance

- generate innovative alternatives, taking into consideration all aspects of the advertising and marketing communications* process (e.g., the role of each element of the marketing mix, concept development, execution and implementation)
- identify alternatives and participate in the selection of the most relevant option to address specific advertising and marketing communications* challenges
- present a logical rationale for the selected option
- participate in the implementation of an effective advertising and marketing communications* strategy through a variety of media
- participate in the evaluation of outcomes of actual advertising and marketing communications* initiatives
- contribute to recommendations of creative alternatives for future advertising and marketing communications* initiatives

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

contribute to planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating projects by applying the principles of project management.

Elements of the Performance

- apply budget, costing and pricing concepts
- apply business practices, such as billing, invoicing and preparing estimates and dockets
- contribute to establishing and monitoring a project's budget and a timeline
- participate in planning, monitoring and assessing workflow using current industry software
- communicate effectively with team members and external stakeholders (e.g., creative brief*, status report and negotiation with suppliers)
- function effectively in a variety of team roles
- meet deadlines by applying time management techniques

8. *The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to*
- complete all work in a professional, ethical and timely manner.**

Elements of the Performance

- engage in ongoing self-evaluation to identify personal and professional strengths and areas requiring improvement
- adapt to ongoing changes in the advertising and marketing communications* industry
- contribute to the completion of an advertising and marketing communications* plan, from planning through execution
- apply professional standards (e. g., the Canadian Code of Advertising Standards) and organizational policies to day-to-day work
- apply entrepreneurial principles to the advertising and marketing communications* environment
- develop and maintain a professional portfolio (e.g., work samples, a current résumé)
- identify and incorporate cultural sensitivity in the development and presentation of advertising and marketing communications* strategies
- incorporate concepts of social, environmental and economic sustainability* in the development of advertising and marketing communications* strategies and day-to-day work

Glossary

Creative Brief – a document designed to establish the advertising and marketing communications strategy that is given to a creative team to use as the basis for developing creative ideas and material to meet clients' advertising and marketing communications objectives. It includes the advertising and marketing communications issues, the description of the target market/audience, the results of any research, the benefits of the product or service provided, the reason why the organization needs an advertising and marketing communications plan and the brand characteristics.

Demographics – the statistical representation of various social and economic characteristics of a group of people, including age, sex, income, occupation, education, race, religion and family size. Demographic segmentation is the most popular basis for dividing groups, primarily because consumer usage and needs match demographic categories.

Direct Response Advertising – the delivery of an advertising and marketing communications message through various media (e.g., mail, radio, television, telephone, Internet, email, website or fax) designed to generate a measurable response.

Geodemographics – a division of a market on the assumption that people with similar economic and cultural backgrounds and perspectives tend to live in certain geographic regions, areas or neighbourhoods.

Market Segmentation – the process of dividing a large market into smaller homogeneous markets (segments) according to common attributes, needs and/or similar lifestyles.

Marketing Communications – all messages that an organization directs to its target market/audience, (e.g., advertising, public relations, sales promotion, direct response advertising, digital marketing and personal selling).

Media Plan – a document which describes the strengths, limitations, cost and communication potential of various media and contains recommendations for media to be used to meet the specific organization's communication objectives.

Primary and Secondary Research Findings – primary research findings refer to data observed, recorded and collected on a first-time basis with a view to solve a specific problem. Secondary research findings refer to data compiled and published by impartial sources.

Psychographics – studies based on psychological variables, which determine the inherent properties of each human being. Variables may include activities, interests, opinions, needs, values, beliefs, perceptions, attitudes, personal characteristics, decision-making processes and consumer behaviour. These studies show a segmentation of individuals as a function of their psychographic characteristics.

Sustainability – sustainability encompasses the ethical ideal that calls for optimizing the long-term carrying capacity and vitality of three interdependent systems—environmental, social and economic. Sustainability aims to improve the quality of human life, while protecting nature, by engaging in manufacturing processes that are non-polluting, conserve energy and resources and protect ecosystems; benefit employees, consumers and communities; and strengthen enterprises that foster economic growth and prosperity.

Target Market/Audience – a specific segment of the overall potential market or audience that has been analyzed and selected and to whom a marketing message is directed.

III. Essential Employability Skills

All graduates of the Advertising and Marketing Communications 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"> • Analyzing • 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"> • Teamwork • 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 their consequences.</i></p>

IV. General Education Requirement

All graduates of the Advertising and Marketing Communications 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 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 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, 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.

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 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.