



Business – Accounting Program Standard

**The approved program standard for Business –
Accounting program of instruction leading to an
Ontario College Diploma delivered by Ontario
Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology
(MTCU funding code 50100)**

**Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
September 2009**

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I. Introduction

This document is the Program Standard for the Business – Accounting program of instruction leading to an Ontario College Diploma delivered by Ontario colleges of applied arts and technology (MTCU funding code 50100).

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 Business – Accounting 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 Business – Accounting 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 Business – Accounting programs carry out accounting functions within the broader context of the Canadian business environment. Graduates have therefore demonstrated achievement of vocational learning outcomes which relate to business in general and accounting in particular.

Graduates of Business – Accounting programs are able to apply computer, communication and mathematical skills, and employ fundamental management accounting techniques to support accounting activities, including the maintenance of accounting records as well as the preparation of financial statements and individual tax returns.

Graduates of Business – Accounting programs, work in a broad range of employment settings in all sectors of business, including banks and other financial institutions, governments and agencies, public accounting firms, small businesses, tax preparation firms and financial planning firms.

There are opportunities for graduates to pursue further educational qualifications. Graduates may pursue a more advanced credential at the college level to achieve the Ontario College Advanced Diploma in Business Administration – Accounting. The colleges also work closely with professional accounting bodies who may grant transfer credits towards professional accounting designations for successful completion of a number of courses in college accounting programs. In addition, through articulation agreements between the colleges and universities, graduates may be granted credits towards a degree. Students should contact individual colleges for further details of a college's agreements.

Synopsis of the Vocational Learning Outcomes Business – Accounting (Ontario College Diploma)

The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to

- 1. record financial transactions in compliance with Canadian Generally Accepted Accounting Principles for sole proprietorships, partnerships, private enterprises, publicly accountable enterprises and non-profit organizations.**
- 2. prepare and present financial statements, reports and other documents in compliance with Canadian Generally Accepted Accounting Principles for sole proprietorships, partnerships and private enterprises.**
- 3. contribute to recurring decision-making by applying fundamental management accounting concepts.**
- 4. prepare individuals' income tax returns and basic tax planning in compliance with relevant legislation and regulations.**
- 5. analyze organizational structures, the interdependence of functional areas, and the impact those relationships can have on financial performance.**
- 6. analyze, within a Canadian context, the impact of economic variables, legislation, ethics, technological advances and the environment on an organization's operations.**
- 7. outline the elements of an organization's internal control system and risk management.**
- 8. contribute to recurring decision-making by applying fundamental financial management concepts.**

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*

record financial transactions in compliance with Canadian Generally Accepted Accounting Principles for sole proprietorships, partnerships, private enterprises, publicly accountable enterprises and non-profit organizations.

Elements of the Performance

- define, assess and record assets, liabilities, revenues, gains, expenses, losses, capital and equity
- define and record work in progress
- calculate cost of acquisition and disposal
- differentiate private enterprises and publicly accountable enterprises (PAEs)
- explain the application of Canadian Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP)
- analyze and record leases
- analyze and record translation in foreign exchange rates
- record extraordinary items
- record retirement benefit plans
- record contingent liabilities and subsequent events
- use general ledger, general journal and special journals
- calculate and record applicable provincial and federal taxes on goods and services
- utilize the appropriate software to record financial transactions and store financial information

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

prepare and present financial statements, reports and other documents in compliance with Canadian Generally Accepted Accounting Principles for sole proprietorships, partnerships and private enterprises.

Elements of the Performance

- describe and select significant accounting policies
- classify current and long-term assets and liabilities
- classify revenues, gains, expenses and losses
- apply the Canadian Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP)
- calculate and present amortization
- calculate and present the disclosure of guarantees
- adjust accounts for the preparation of financial statements in compliance with the Canadian GAAP
- prepare and present income statement or statement of comprehensive income
- prepare and present statement of financial position
- prepare and present statement of changes in equity
- prepare and present cash flow statement
- prepare and present explanatory notes
- utilize the appropriate software to produce financial statements, reports and other documents

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

contribute to recurring decision-making by applying fundamental management accounting concepts.

Elements of the Performance

- use management accounting terminology
- calculate production costs using diverse approaches
- prepare cost-benefit analyses
- prepare various types of budgets
- calculate material, direct labour and overhead manufacturing costs
- prepare variance analyses
- calculate product and services pricing using diverse approaches
- identify and apply relevant costs and benefits
- explain inventory strategies, including but not limited to Just In Time (JIT)
- apply transfer pricing concept
- explain activity-based accounting principles
- explain Total Quality Management (TQM) approach
- utilize the appropriate software to collect data and produce relevant reports

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

prepare individuals' income tax returns and basic tax planning in compliance with relevant legislation and regulations.

Elements of the Performance

- identify individuals' sources of income
- identify individuals' deductions and tax credits
- calculate individuals' taxable income and taxes payable
- calculate individuals' capital gains and losses
- identify resources for current income tax legislation and updates
- analyze individuals' tax returns to prepare basic tax planning
- utilize the appropriate software to prepare individuals' income tax returns and basic tax planning

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

analyze organizational structures, the interdependence of functional areas and the impact those relationships can have on financial performance.

Elements of the Performance

- differentiate the organizational structures of a variety of organizations
- explain the interdependence of marketing, research and development, production, management, information technologies, and finance functions of an organization
- analyze the impact of marketing strategies on an organization's financial performance
- analyze the impact of human resources management on an organization's financial performance

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

analyze, within a Canadian context, the impact of economic variables, legislation, ethics, technological advances and the environment on an organization's operations.

Elements of the Performance

- outline the structure, functions and organization of business activity in Canada
- outline the Provincial and Federal Government structures and discuss the impact of regulations and political decisions on business operations
- analyze the impact of economic factors, such as labour, inflation, interest rates, government policy and taxation on an organization's operations
- identify macro-economic models, the measurements of economic activity, and fiscal and monetary policies
- analyze the impact of a number of legal issues, including but not limited to business ownership, intellectual property and contracts on an organization's operations
- analyze the impact of environmental and ethical issues, including but not limited to confidentiality, social responsibility, diversity and working environment on an organization's operations
- discuss technology-based strategies and their potential impact on an organization's operations

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

outline the elements of an organization's internal control system and risk management.

Elements of the Performance

- explain the essential elements of an internal control system
- describe risk management and risk factors
- define internal and external auditing
- illustrate compliance and substantive tests, and their applications

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

contribute to recurring decision-making by applying fundamental financial management concepts.

Elements of the Performance

- calculate and interpret financial ratios
- calculate past and present data to prepare estimates and forecast trends
- evaluate various sources of financing such as leasing, debt and equity
- collect and organize statistical data related to an organization's operations
- utilize the appropriate software to produce reports, financial plans, budgets and other documents related to financial management

III. Essential Employability Skills

All graduates of the Business – Accounting 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"> • 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 Business – Accounting 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 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.