# Event Planning Program Standard

**The approved program standard for Event Planning programs of instruction leading to an Ontario College Diploma delivered by Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (MTCU funding code 52205).**

## Acknowledgements

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# Contents

# Introduction

This document is the Program Standard for the Event Planning programs of instruction leading to an Ontario College Diploma delivered by Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (MTCU funding code 52205).

# Development of system-wide program standards

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

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

# Program standards

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

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

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

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

# The expression of program standards as vocational learning outcomes

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

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

## The presentation of the vocational learning outcomes

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

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

## The development of a program standard

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

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

## Updating the program standard

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

# Vocational standard

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

## Preamble

The **event**\* industry is a rapidly growing segment in virtually every sector of society. Events are part of public, not-for-profit, charitable, private, and corporate sectors.

This two year, a four-semester program is designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills to plan and implement special events to meet organizational or client objectives. Within the field of hospitality, tourism and culinary services, events contribute to sustainable economic growth. This program will recognize local, national and global opportunities for creating events with the inherent characteristics that linked to the effectiveness of the operations, economic contribution in terms of revenues and job creation, positive reputation, safety and security, and intercultural awareness and inclusion. The diverse and dynamic market segmentation opportunities for events will be examined. The motivation for clients to attend events may be for knowledge, pleasure, and supporting causes, and provide learning, entertainment, adventure, celebration, or support and can be local or global in nature.

Graduates of Event Planning programs will be able to plan, develop and implement events. They will to determine feasibility, recognize considerations in the external environment impacting the operation of successful events, and the requirements of organizations or clients related to events. They will plan events that meet the needs of diverse populations with intercultural awareness and inclusion. they will identify and mitigate **risk**\* and determine **liability\*** associated with events to ensure safety and security for all participants.

Graduates will integrate the best business practices in the areas of financial management, human resources, marketing and communications, and the use of technology platforms, systems, tools and interactive and social media in the planning and execution of events. They will communicate persuasively and effectively and will employ strategies to ensure adherence to professional standards, engage in ongoing learning and development, and use intra/entrepreneurial strategies to conduct the

business of planning and executing events, and to securing and maintaining employment in the field.

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

[*See Glossary](#)

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

# Synopsis of the vocational learning outcomes

## Event Planning (Ontario College Diploma)

The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to:

1. Plan and design events to meet organizational and client objectives.

2. Select **food and beverage**\* catering services, **site**\* location, and décor, according to the theme and needs of an **event**\*.

3. Develop **marketing plans**\* and related promotional plans for events that will meet the needs of the organization and/or client.

4. **Coordinate**\* and/or supervise staff, contractors and volunteers in order to achieve the desired performance.

5. Employ best practices for financial management in the planning of events.

6. Manage the business transactions of **event**\* projects to meet organization and/or client needs.

7. Develop strategies to mitigate **risk**\* and **liability**\* to ensure the safety and security of participants during an **event**\*.

8. Maintain ethical practices and professionalism in the events field to create positive relationships and experiences.

9. Apply strategies that support intercultural awareness and inclusion in **event**\* offerings that meet the needs of diverse populations.

10. Use industry standard technology platforms, systems, tools and applications to support the operations of events.

11. Secure monies through **sponsorships**\*, funds, or **grants**\* to support **event**\* objectives.

12. Engage in ongoing learning for professional and career growth.

13. Identify and respond to new career opportunities that may include contract work and entrepreneurship, to secure employment.

14. Communicate information persuasively and accurately in written, verbal and interactive formats.

[*See Glossary](#)

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

# The vocational learning outcomes

1. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: plan and design events to meet organizational and client objectives.

**Elements of the performance**

a. Create programs suitable for target audiences.
b. Plan programs and activities, identifying purposes, goals, objectives, and time lines.
c. Plan for all source, facility, equipment, inventory, and supply requirements.
d. Plan and direct set-up and take-down of event settings.
e. Create event theming, and decor elements.
f. Plan, set up, implement, and negotiate concession activities.
g. Encourage stakeholder involvement in the delivery of programs and activities.
h. Liaise with sponsors.
i. Employ technology to perform programming tasks.
j. Ensure a customer-service orientation.
k. Observe the requirements of legislation, standards, policies, regulations, copyrights, and other intellectual properties which may affect the implementation of programs.
l. Design and implement qualitative and quantitative evaluation techniques that relate to the specific objectives identified for the event.
m. Collaborate with key suppliers and contractors.
n. Develop event **logistics**\* and operations plans to meet client and organizational needs.
o. Identify all required approvals for events.
p. Prepare and monitor activity space, schedules, and facility allocations.
q. Administer contracts and purchase of service agreements.
r. Prepare necessary documents relating to facility and **site\*** operations (e.g., proposals, tenders, agreements, contracts, **site\*** plans, maps).
s. Collaborate in determining stage, sound, power, multimedia, seating, and lighting requirements.
t. Ensure appropriate **site\*** signage, adequate **site\*** parking, transportation, and accessibility provisions.
u. Identify the various functions involved in the operation and maintenance of indoor and outdoor facilities.
v. Determine equipment needs (e.g., audio visual, computers, heavy equipment).
w. Apply knowledge of environmentally sound practices including waste management.
x. Apply sustainable business practices.

*See Glossary

2. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: select **food and beverage\***
   catering services, **site\*** location, and décor, according to the theme and needs of an
   **event\***.

**Elements of the performance**

a. Select **event\*** design elements to suit the needs of stakeholders, themes of event
   etc.
b. Utilize theming and decor elements.
c. Select food and beverage services appropriate to the event.
d. Obtain all required approvals for events.
e. Plan activity space, schedules, and facility locations.
f. Collaborate with clients, suppliers and contractors to determine themes, menus,
   courses, options, seating, within cost parameters and meeting specific dietary
   requirements and accommodations.
g. Ensure appropriate site menu descriptions, and ingredients.
h. Plan events with various staff, suppliers and contractors various involved in the
   operation and service of food and beverage components of an event.
i. Prepare and negotiate necessary documents relating to event operations (e.g.,
   agreements, contracts, site plans, staffing).
j. Plan for special food and beverage considerations appropriate to event or target
   market.

[*See Glossary](#)

3. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: develop **marketing plans**\*
   and related promotional plans for events that will meet the needs of the organization
   and/or client.

**Elements of the performance**

a. Apply the principles of tourism marketing where appropriate.
b. Develop effective media relations.
c. Identify target market(s) for event.
d. Collaborate with marketing-related professionals, agencies, and others.
e. Utilize appropriate promotional activities.
f. Design news releases, media kits, fliers, posters, and brochures and assist in the development of a distribution plan.
g. Identify, create, and manage marketing databases.
h. Apply client relationship strategies.
i. Utilize appropriate promotional activities.
j. Facilitate media conferences effectively.
k. Design press releases, media kits, fliers, posters, and brochures and assist in the development of a distribution plan.

*See Glossary

4.  The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: **coordinate\*** and/or supervise staff, contractors and volunteers in order to achieve the desired performance.

**Elements of the performance**

a.  Use a process for recruiting, selecting, orienting, training, managing, appraising, recognizing, and retaining staff and/or volunteers.
b.  Write volunteer and staff position descriptions.
c.  Utilize appropriate techniques to communicate with staff and volunteers.
d.  Work within organizational structures.
e.   Assess event staffing needs.
f.  Utilize employment/community volunteer programs.
g.  Prepare and monitor personnel schedules.
h.  Apply techniques for managing and resolving conflict.
i.  Maintain accurate and confidential paper-based and electronic human resource records.
j.  Contribute to strategies for effective staffing in a union/management environment.
k.  Comply with current employment, health and safety, and human rights legislation.
l.  Apply the principles of team building.
m. Identify and facilitate the stages of group development.

[*See Glossary](*See Glossary)

5. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: employ best practices for financial management in the planning of events.

**Elements of the performance**

a. Apply cash-flow management principles.
b. Perform on-site cash management (e.g., prepare point of sale reports, prepare cash reports, reconcile cash, process smart card and credit card transactions).
c. Recognize legislation governing payroll deduction, remittance of taxes, and other government fees.
d. Prepare, rationalize, evaluate, adhere to, and monitor event budgets.
e. Apply strategies of cost control to event operations.
f. Use routine financial statements and accounting terminology.
g. Collaborate with financial institutions and financial personnel such as bookkeepers, accountants, and auditors.
h. Implement programming tools for measuring the economic impact (e.g., job creation, tourism, revenue generation) of events.

*See Glossary

6.  The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: manage the business transactions of events projects to meet organization and/or client needs.

**Elements of the performance**

a.  Apply knowledge of planning and scheduling.
b.  Apply knowledge of the structure, development, and operation of organizations.
c.  Incorporate entrepreneurial principles in business management.
d.  Prepare and deliver presentations.
e.  Conduct meetings and record meeting minutes.
f.  Communicate effectively internally and externally to all levels of organizations.
g.  Write, communicate, and implement policy and procedure.
h.  Apply knowledge of business correspondence and reports using appropriate formats.
i.  Develop and maintain a system for event preservation and archiving.
j.  Prepare and administer tenders, contracts, purchase of service agreements, and request for proposals (RFP's) related to event management.
k.  Assess the need for information services (e.g., onsite, offsite, web, phone).
l.  Understand importance of managing client lists and information.
m.  Ensure a high level of customer service.
n.  Apply registration procedures appropriate to events.
o.  Use appropriate business etiquette and protocol (e.g., phone, email, correspondence).
p.  Solicit post-event feedback from sponsors, suppliers, and others.
q.  Prepare post-event documentation and correspondence.
r.  Use technology to perform management and administration tasks.

[*See Glossary](#)

7. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: develop strategies to mitigate **risk\*** and **liability\*** to ensure the safety and security of participants during an **event**\*.

**Elements of the performance**

a. Apply financial **risk\*** management techniques.
b. Involve stakeholders in the plans for delivery of programs and activities.
c. Collaborate with **site\*** specific personnel.
d. Develop a **risk\*** management/contingency plan including appropriate insurance/**liability\*** coverage.
e. Apply legislative requirements (e.g., public health and safety, **SOCAN\*** municipal bylaws).
f. Determine appropriate insurance needs.
g. **Coordinate\*** onsite security and safety.

[*See Glossary](#)

8. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: maintain ethical practices and professionalism in the events field to create positive relationships and experiences.

**Elements of the performance**

a. Identify the purpose and value of events and related professional organizations at the regional, provincial, and national levels.
b. Adhere to organization and professional association codes of conduct, core values, and professional codes of ethics.
c. Access professional development resources and activities which promote professional growth.
d. Utilize and enhance event terminology.
e. Develop personal organization and time management skills.
f. Apply effective networking techniques.
g. Present oneself professionally using a format that best identifies skills, knowledge, attributes, and experience (e.g., resume, portfolio, interview, web page).
h. Recognize the purpose and value of professional designations.
i. Develop strategies for ongoing personal and professional growth and development.

[*See Glossary](#)

9. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: apply strategies that support intercultural awareness and inclusion in **event**\* offerings that meet the needs of diverse populations.

**Elements of the performance**

a. Recognize the impact of cultural differences, political environments, technological developments, population demographics, and economic environments on event initiatives and decisions.
b. Assess **consumer**\*, **customer**\*, and client needs and listen effectively to respond to opportunities.
c. Listen effectively to clients and consumers.
d. Respond to concerns or problems expressed by customers, clients and members of the public, and take actions to resolve issues.
e. Apply the principles of accepted business etiquette (e.g. cultural, regional, global).
f. Apply the practices of protocol for event participants where required.
g. Employ Universal Instructional Design (UID) guidelines to meet the needs of event participants and comply with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).
h. Identify and accommodate cultural and individual diversity as it relates.

[*See Glossary](#)

10. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: use industry standard technology platforms, systems, tools and applications to support the operations of events.

**Elements of the performance**

a.  Recognize the impact of emerging technologies on event initiatives.
b.  Use electronic communications technology such as email, voice mail, and text messaging appropriately to communicate effectively.
c.  Use social media tools for professional application to meet organizational needs.
d.  Use professional and industry specific terminology effectively.
e.  Apply computer skills to support a variety of functions in the events environment.
f.  Prepare correspondence, reports, presentations, and other print and electronic documents for events using appropriate software (e.g., spread sheets, word processing, database, presentation, desktop publishing, web design, analytics, databases etc.).
g.  Monitor evolving technology and usage trends for application to events.
h.  Recognize the impact of technological changes on **customer**\* and **consumer**\* needs and demands.

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11. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: secure monies through **sponsorships**\*, funds, or **grants\*** to support **event\*** objectives.

**Elements of the performance**

a. Prepare **sponsorship\***/partnership appeal packages.
b. Apply client relationship strategies for cultivating and retaining clients.
c. Identify appropriate **fundraising\*** techniques for specific event outcomes.
d. Prepare proposals for **grants\***, pricing strategies, fee structures, cost/benefit analysis, break-even analysis, revenue generation, and return-on-investment analysis.
e. Prepare post event fulfilment reports for sustainable client relationships and follow up.

*See Glossary

12. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: engage in ongoing learning for professional and career growth.

**Elements of the performance**

a. Identify the purpose and value of events-related professional organizations at the regional, provincial, and national levels.
b. Access professional development resources and activities which promote professional growth.
c. Utilize and enhance event terminology.
d. Develop personal organization and time management skills.
e. Implement creative problem-solving, decision-making, conflict-resolution, diplomacy, negotiation, and team-building skills.
f. Apply effective networking techniques.
g. Apply strategies for adapting to stress and a variety of challenges.
h. Recognize the scope and variety of employment opportunities related to event management (e.g., **sponsorship**\*, communication, marketing, public relations, tourism, **fundraising**\*).
i. Present oneself using a format that best identifies skills, knowledge, attributes, and experience (e.g., resume, portfolio, interview, web page).
j. Recognize the purpose and value of professional designations.
k. Develop strategies for ongoing personal and professional growth and development.

\*See Glossary

13. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: identify and respond to new career opportunities that might include contract work and entrepreneurship to secure employment.

**Elements of the performance**

a. Apply effective networking techniques.
b. Apply strategies for adapting to stress and a variety of challenges.
c. Apply knowledge and skills to gain employment.
d. Recognize the scope and variety of employment opportunities related to event planning (e.g., **sponsorship**\*, communication, marketing, public relations, tourism, **fundraising**\*).
e. Use best practices for developing business plans, documentation and record keeping, assessing feasibility of projects and events, complying with tax regulations and remittances etc.

[*See Glossary](#)

14. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: communicate information persuasively and accurately in written, verbal, and **interactive media\*** formats.

**Elements of the performance**

a. Use presentation software, where appropriate, to provide clarity and increase the impact of a presentation.
b. Speak and write clearly, concisely, persuasively, and logically.
c. Review accuracy of content, spelling and grammar in documents, and electronic messages before sending to the target audience.
d. Apply the principles of accepted business etiquette (e.g. cultural, regional, global).
e. Use electronic communications technology such as email, voice mail, and text messaging appropriately to communicate effectively.
f. Use social media tools for professional application to meet organizational needs.
g. Determine the appropriate source and type of data required and develop appropriate strategies for data collection.
h. Prepare and present written and oral formal and informal reports to enhance the quality of service.
i. Participate in the development of graphics, such as storyboards, desktop publishing, illustrations, art work, clip art, and web sites.
j. Use professional and industry specific terminology effectively.
k. Recognize the role of the **marketing**\* communications department and marketing communications within an organization.
l. Participate efficiently and effectively in meetings using professional protocols.
m. Apply computer skills to support a variety of functions in the marketing environment.
n. Prepare correspondence, reports, presentations, and other print and electronic documents for marketing using appropriate software (e.g., spread sheets, word processing, database, presentation, desktop publishing, web design, analytics, etc.).

[*See Glossary](#)

# Glossary

**Coordinate -** To bring into action in a smooth, concerted way.

**Event -** An activity that takes place for the purpose of social, educational, entertainment or fundraising objectives.

**Execute -** To carry out fully or put into effect.

**Food and Beverage -** The process of preparing, presenting and serving of food and beverages to the participants at an event.

**Fundraising -** Obtaining a sum of money or intangible resources to support the costs of carrying out an activity or event.

**Grants -** Money provided by an organization for the purpose of providing financial support for an activity or event that may require the completion of a proposal or application to be completed to support the request for funds.

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

**Liability -** Being in a position of responsibility for the financial outcomes, and success of an event, as well as the personal safety of participants and staff.

**Logistics -** The handling of the details of the operations of an activity or events, such as procurement of resources, materials and staff, the site, the staging and dismantling upon completion.

**Marketing Plans -** Plans that address the development of the event product, pricing, place and promotion of an event.

**Risk -** The possibility of loss or injury.

**Sponsorship -** A person or organizational that pays for the costs of a project, activity or event.

**Site -** The spatial location of an actual or planned event.

# Essential employability skills

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

## Context

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

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

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

## Skill categories

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

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

# Application and implementation

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

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

| Skill category | Defining skills:<br><br>Skill areas to be demonstrated by graduates: | Learning outcomes: The levels of achievement required by graduates.<br><br>The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: |
|---|---|---|
| Communication | • Reading<br>• Writing<br>• Speaking<br>• Listening<br>• Presenting<br>• Visual literacy | 1. communicate clearly, concisely and correctly in the written, spoken and visual form that fulfills the purpose and meets the needs of the audience.<br>2. respond to written, spoken or visual messages in a manner that ensures effective communication. |
| Numeracy | • Understanding and applying mathematical concepts and reasoning<br>• Analyzing and using numerical data<br>• Conceptualizing | 1. execute mathematical operations accurately. |
| Critical Thinking & Problem Solving | • Analyzing<br>• Synthesizing<br>• Evaluating<br>• Decision making<br>• Creative and innovative thinking | 1. apply a systematic approach to solve problems.<br>2. use a variety of thinking skills to anticipate and solve problems. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Information Management | • Gathering and managing information<br>• Selecting and using appropriate tools and technology for a task or a project<br>• Computer literacy<br>• Internet skills | 1. locate, select, organize and document information using appropriate technology and information systems.<br>2. analyze, evaluate and apply relevant information from a variety of sources. |
| Interpersonal | • Teamwork<br>• Relationship management<br>• Conflict resolution<br>• Leadership<br>• Networking | 1. show respect for the diverse opinions, values, belief systems and contributions of others.<br>2. interact with others in groups or teams in ways that contribute to effective working relationships and the achievement of goals. |
| Personal | • Managing self<br>• Managing change and being flexible and adaptable<br>• Engaging in reflective practices<br>• Demonstrating personal responsibility | 1. manage the use of time and other resources to complete projects.<br>2. take responsibility for one's own actions, decisions and their consequences. |

# General education requirement

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

## Requirement

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

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

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

## Purpose

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

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

## Themes

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

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

goals of General Education.

**Arts in society:**

Rationale:

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

Content:

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

**Civic Life:**

Rationale:

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

Content:

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

**Social and cultural understanding:**

Rationale:

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

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

Content:

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

**Personal Understanding:**

Rationale:

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

Content:

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

**Science and technology:**

Rationale:

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

Similarly, the various applications and developments in the area of technology have an increasing impact on all aspects of human endeavour and have numerous social, economic and philosophical implications. For example, the operation of computers to process data at high speed has invoked an interaction between machines and the

human mind that is unique in human history. This and other technological developments have a powerful impact on how we deal with many of the complex questions in our society.

Content:

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

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