

Strategic Mandate Agreement (2014-2017)

Between:

The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities

&

Algonquin College of Applied Arts and Technology

ONTARIO'S VISION FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Ontario's colleges and universities will drive creativity, innovation, knowledge, and community engagement through teaching and research. They will put students first by providing the best possible learning experience for all qualified learners in an affordable and financially sustainable way, ensuring high quality and globally competitive outcomes for students and Ontario's creative economy.

ALGONQUIN COLLEGE'S MISSION AND VISION

Mission

To transform hopes and dreams into skills and knowledge, leading to lifelong career success.

Vision

To be a global leader in digitally connected applied education and training.

PREAMBLE

This Strategic Mandate Agreement between the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (the Ministry) and Algonquin College of Applied Arts and Technology (the College) outlines the role the College currently performs in the postsecondary education system and how it will build on its current strengths to achieve its vision and help drive system-wide objectives articulated by the Ministry's Differentiation Policy Framework.

The Strategic Mandate Agreement (SMA):

- Identifies the College's existing institutional strengths;
- Supports the current vision, mission, and mandate of the College within the context of the *Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Act, 2002*, and outlines how the College's priorities align with Ontario's vision and Differentiation Policy Framework; and
- Informs Ministry decision making through greater alignment of Ministry policies and processes to further support and guide the College's areas of strength.

The term of the SMA is from April 1, 2014, to March 31, 2017. The SMA proposal submitted by the College to the Ministry has been used to inform the SMA and is appended to the agreement.

The agreement may be amended in the event of substantive policy or program changes that would significantly affect commitments made in the SMA. Any such amendment would be mutually agreed to in writing, dated, and signed by both signatories.

ALGONQUIN COLLEGE KEY AREAS OF DIFFERENTIATION

Algonquin College delivers a comprehensive range of applied education and training experiences to serve the diverse learner choices and the breadth of employer labour demands across Eastern Ontario and the province.

Algonquin College works with industry partners to:

- Develop labour-market informed programs and services;
- Provide opportunities for work-integrated learning, and experience inside and outside the classroom; and
- Engage in applied research and commercialization activities that support student success, employee growth, and social and economic development in the region and beyond.

Algonquin College employees are engaged in the strategic direction of the College to:

- Lead the transformation of Ontario’s postsecondary system;
- Deliver high-quality teaching methods and modalities that leverage technology to enhance the educational experience; and
- Improve student learning outcomes for career and life success.

Algonquin College broadens learner access to applied postsecondary education and training in Ontario, demonstrating leadership through:

- Alternative learning modalities and options to suit multiple learning styles and learner preferences;
- New, targeted approaches to programs and services that improve pathways for learners of diverse demographic characteristics; and
- Smart investments in technology that enhance the Algonquin learner experience.

ALIGNMENT WITH THE DIFFERENTIATION POLICY FRAMEWORK

The following outlines areas of strength agreed upon by the College and the Ministry, and the alignment of these areas of strength with the Ministry’s Differentiation Policy Framework.

1. JOBS, INNOVATION, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

This component highlights institutions’ collaborative work with employers, community partners, and regions, or at a global level, to establish their role in fostering social and economic development, and serving the needs of the economy and labour market.

1.1 Areas of Institutional Strength

Algonquin College focuses on jobs, innovation, and economic development in the areas of:

- Faculty and staff participate on program, education, and industry regulatory boards and advisory groups at the provincial and national levels.
- Algonquin College leverages strategic business partnerships to develop programs and authentic work experiences that produce industry-ready graduates. Work-integrated learning (WIL) is an essential component of program delivery at the College and produces graduates ready to contribute to the region's social and economic well-being.
- Algonquin College Cooperative Education offered employers 3,578 students from 33 different programs in 2013-2014.
- Students are invited to create a Co-curricular Record (CCR), which chronicles their volunteer and leadership activities throughout the academic year. The CCR complements students' academic transcripts, and records this experience for employers. More than 1,000 activities that benefit local and international communities have been documented in student CCRs in 2013-14.
- The College's Office of Applied Research and Innovation (ARI) collaborates with industry and community partners (over 115 in 2013-14) to engage students (754) and faculty and staff (71) in developing products, processes, and services for implementation or commercialization. This has helped many local start-ups, small and medium enterprises, and large enterprises create jobs and achieve success locally and internationally. For example:
 - Fluidware created 60 positions in more than five years;
 - Impakt Protective hired at least four Algonquin graduates;
 - HousAll hired two College graduates; and
 - Experimental Simulation created seven positions within two years.
- Students have the opportunity to display their research to diverse audiences, with over 1,800 attendees at the College's four Applied Research Days in 2013-14.
- Students and faculty link with local organizations, business, and industry through the following centres: Health and Wellness Research Centre, Design Centre, Construction Research Centre, Full Spectra Centre (wave-based technologies, such as wireless, photonics, etc.), and Rural Economic Research and Development Centre (joint initiative between the College's Pembroke and Perth campuses).
- The College offers a number of graduate certificates and applied bachelor degrees to help address the needs of students and employers in the region.

1.2 Additional Comments

- 2012-13 Ministry data confirms a strong employment rate for graduates of 84.9%, which is above the sector average (83.1%); a full-time employment rate in a related field of 44.3%, which is slightly below the sector average (45.1%); and a strong employer satisfaction rate of 93.7%.

Institutional Strategies

- Algonquin believes that WIL provides the greatest opportunities for students to put theory into practice and enter the marketplace. The College is committed to ensuring that authentic, real-world work experiences will be available to all eligible full-time students by 2017.
- The College has developed the first phases of its sector strategy plans to address the talent needs of employers in Eastern Ontario. Programs are under development, including graduate certificates and applied bachelor degrees, to help meet employer demand in significant sectors of the National Capital Region, and to transition graduates to employment.
- The College plans to continue to grow international partnerships to support greater opportunities for students and linkages for Ontario industry seeking to expand globally into new markets (e.g., China, India, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait).
- Algonquin College endeavours to ensure that all students have opportunities to learn entrepreneurial skills. The Entrepreneurship Working Group, a joint collaboration with the Students' Association, supports students in Youth-Led-Enterprises, including start-ups, product development, business case development, and industry-focused events.
- The College aims to grow its applied research program to engage 950 students, 90 faculty and staff and 140 clients by the end of 2016-17. Two new research centres are planned to support more companies and organizations, and provide growth opportunities for students, faculty, and staff.

1.3 Metrics

Institutional Metrics	System-Wide Metrics ¹
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of programs with a work-integrated learning (WIL) experience • Number of research contracts/projects conducted with industry and community partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduate employment rates • Employer satisfaction rates • Number of graduates employed full-time in a related job

¹ Additional system-wide metrics focused on applied research, commercialization, entrepreneurial activity, and community impact will be developed in consultation with the sector.

2. TEACHING AND LEARNING

This component captures institutional strengths in program delivery methods that expand learning options for students, and improve their learning experience and career preparedness. This may include, but is not limited to, experiential learning, online learning, entrepreneurial learning, work-integrated learning, and international exchange opportunities.

2.1 Areas of Institutional Strength

Algonquin College offers a number of different program delivery methods to increase the career-preparedness of students:

- Algonquin offers many work-integrated learning opportunities, including cooperative education, short-term contract placements, clinical and field placements, job-shadowing opportunities, internships, applied research projects, learning enterprise openings, and volunteer ventures.
- Students have the opportunity to run businesses in learning enterprises that serve students, employees, and the public under the guidance of faculty, including the Dental Hygiene Clinic, Restaurant International, and the Algonquin Times.
- Inter-professional education settings, including the Simulation Health Centre, the Algonquin Centre for Construction Excellence, and the Police and Public Safety Living Lab, help prepare students for employment in their field.

Algonquin College has strengths in delivering quality education through the effective utilization of physical and digital assets:

- The College offers three delivery modalities – face-to-face, hybrid (blended), and online – across Perth, Pembroke, Ottawa, and online campuses.
- Electronic textbooks have been introduced into 34 programs for use by 3,500 students, allowing each student to access all required course-level resources and resulting in a cost-saving over traditional print-based textbooks.
- The College offers a number of mobile learning initiatives, such as Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) programs, and has converted space into BYOD-ready classrooms to increase flexibility for students (140 of the College's 300 electronic classrooms have been updated and converted).
- The College optimizes the use of space during the day, in the evenings, and on weekends across all campuses, offering flexible learning options for students with extended delivery of College programming.

Algonquin supports faculty and staff to improve the learning experience for students:

- The Centre for Organizational Learning, Curriculum Services, and Educational Technologies support employees in the development and delivery of hybrid or online courses, and the incorporation of innovative technology practices.

- In 2012-2013, 74 employees completed Algonquin Leadership in Education Institute (ALEI) programs that build knowledge and skills related to leadership in higher education.
- In collaboration with St. Francis Xavier University, the College offers opportunities for staff to participate in a cohort-based Master of Education (M.Ed.) program focused on leadership and administration in higher education.
- International partnerships provide College employees with professional development opportunities to bring a global outlook and international learning outcomes into Ontario classrooms.

2.2 Additional Comments

- 2012-2013 data confirms that Algonquin offers a high number of online learning programs and courses, with 32,707 eLearning, online, and general education registrations. The College has also indicated that it has an additional 72,012 registrations in hybrid courses.
- Ministry data also indicates a high number of students (3,578) enrolled in 33 co-operative education programs.

Institutional Strategies

- Algonquin Connects will promote and coordinate the College's experiential learning activities, providing a central location, both physically and online, for linking community and business partners with the College. Social networking approaches will link students, industry, alumni, and employees.
- Part of Algonquin's Digital Strategy includes the creation of the Institute for Digital Education, which will focus on the research, analysis, advocacy, knowledge exchange, community building, and professional development that leads to new efficiencies, cost-savings, and process transformation in the delivery of a high-quality education.
- As the first phase of the Healthy Living Education initiative, the College will be renovating the Ottawa campus to create new student learning enterprises in the health sector, including dental, hair styling, esthetician, and massage therapy programs.
- A pilot project is exploring the expansion and use of learning units, Algonquin's competency-based model of learning. The pilot will introduce a custom platform to deliver adaptive, self-directed, competency-based learning units. The Ministry has expressed interest in the outcomes of the pilot.
- Algonquin will continue to invest in employee development with ALEI program registrants, and by expanding management training to academic Chairs and non-academic managers through the Algonquin College Management Academy. The Academy will provide an opportunity for new and developing managers to gain the knowledge, skills, and tools necessary to move the College's operations and strategic initiatives forward.

- The College will further adopt digital technologies and tools to enhance program delivery and the student experience.
- About 16,000 students are expected to participate in BYOD programs by fall 2015.
- The College plans to expand the use of eTextbooks to all students and has a goal of providing these resources at 50% of the current suggested print-based price, for an estimated savings for students of \$5M annually.

2.3 Metrics

Institutional Metrics	System-Wide Metrics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of courses delivered in hybrid format 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Satisfaction Survey results • Graduation rates • Retention rates • Number of students enrolled in a co-op program at institution • Number of online course registrants, programs, and courses at institution

3. STUDENT POPULATION

This component recognizes the unique institutional missions that improve access, retention, and success for underrepresented groups (Aboriginal, first generation, students with disabilities) and francophones. This component also highlights other important student groups that institutions serve that link to their institutional strength. This may include, but is not limited to, international students, mature students, or indirect entrants.

3.1 Areas of Institutional Strength

Algonquin College focuses on improving access and success for underrepresented groups in the areas of:

- Algonquin College serves the applied education and training needs of a number of student populations, in communities representing a broad range of demographics, industry profiles, and economic conditions.
- The College's wide range of program delivery, across a variety of in-person, hybrid, and online modalities, suits a diversity of students and a variety of learning styles.
- The College reports that in 2013:
 - 4,861 or 45.3% of students enrolled in the first term of their program were non-direct registrants (adults who had no previous postsecondary experience).
 - 2,785 or 26% of new students had previous postsecondary experience and were seeking to improve their employability.

- The Language Institute provides English language training to recent immigrants and international students.
- Algonquin offers a range of services, activities, and programming to support access for underrepresented groups (including first generation students) and students who require extra support to achieve success in postsecondary education.
- Algonquin’s Aboriginal Education Council is representative of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis in the region, and supports the needs of a large self-identified Aboriginal population at the College.
- The Algonquin College Mamidosewin Centre for Aboriginal Youth welcomes an average of 50 students per day.

3.1 Additional Comments

- In 2012-2013, Algonquin had a student satisfaction rate of 81.5%.
- 2012-13 Ministry data indicates that Algonquin has a high number of full-time Aboriginal students (900 or 6% of total enrolment), above the sector average of 4.2%.
- In 2012-2013, first generation students self-identified as 26.3% of the Algonquin College student population.
- Students with disabilities accounted for 13.3% of College enrolment (below the sector average of 15.2%).
- System-wide metrics indicate that international students represented 5.3% of total enrolment or 789 students, lower than the average for the sector (11.3%). The College indicates that, as of January 2014, 1,080 international students were enrolled across its three Ontario campuses.

Institutional Strategies

- Digital materials in eTextbooks transition easily to audio, supporting *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* compliance, and are more affordable for students.
- The College, in partnership with the Leacross Foundation, developed programs to create educational pathways for women in the electrical skilled trades, and to fast track women into careers in the construction and technology sectors.
- Academic Upgrading helps applicants attain the qualifications and preparation for postsecondary education.
- The Centre for Students with Disabilities introduced the position of Learning Strategist for Apprentices with Disabilities in 2013.
- Algonquin’s recently approved International Education Strategic Plan will see the College increase its recruitment of international students as well as increase its international outreach efforts.
- In collaboration with York University, Algonquin will pilot services aimed at setting the province-wide standard for the transition of learners with autism spectrum disorder from high school to postsecondary education.

- Algonquin College is embracing a Healthy Living Education initiative. Educational programming, services, environment, and culture will be designed around support for healthy lifestyles, including the mind, body, and spirit. The College is creating a healthy community where students make healthy food choices, and engage in fitness and health promotion activities that lead to student success.

3.3 Metrics

Institutional Metrics	System-Wide Metrics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of students enrolled at the College who are non-direct entrants • Number of unique students participating in Academic Upgrading • Number of unique Academic Upgrading students registered in a post-secondary program at Algonquin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and proportion of Aboriginal, first generation, students with disabilities, and francophone students at an institution • Number and proportion of international students enrolled in Ontario (as reported in annual institutional enrolment reporting) • Proportion of an institution's enrolment that receives OSAP

4. PROGRAM OFFERINGS

This component articulates the breadth of programming, enrolment, and credentials offered, along with program areas of institutional strength/specialization, including any vocationally oriented mandates. This component also recognizes institutions that provide bilingual and/or French-language programming for students.

4.1 Areas of Institutional Strength

Current program areas of strength include:

1. Health and Wellness
2. Digital Technologies and Design
3. Hospitality and Tourism
4. Management, Administration, and Leadership
5. Communications, Creative Media, and Entertainment
6. Public Safety, Security, and Law
7. Engineering, Technology, and Trades
8. Community Services
9. Environment and Natural Resources
10. Access

Proposed program areas for growth include:

1. Health and Wellness
2. Digital Technologies and Design
3. Management, Administration, and Leadership
4. Engineering, Technology, and Trades

4.2 Additional Comments

Algonquin College's planned expansion of its credential offerings in existing areas of program strength by over 50 programs is generally supported by strong student outcomes, industry demand, and program infrastructure.

In fall 2012, Algonquin College completed a labour market analysis to identify industry trends, and project new growth opportunities and proposed programs.

The Ministry notes that, in the event that the College wishes to expand its Public Safety, Security, or Law programming, additional information about steps taken to improve student outcomes will be required during program approvals.

Algonquin College is exploring accreditation with Engineers Canada. The Ministry notes that a large number of new or expanded engineering programs are proposed province-wide, which will have an impact on the Ministry's review of engineering program proposals.

Institutional Strategies

- Algonquin offers a number of Ontario College Graduate Certificates and applied bachelor degrees. The College aims to add to its portfolio of advanced credentials in identified areas of growth, such as the Entrepreneurship Acceleration Graduate Certificate approved by its Board of Governors in February 2014, and to meet industry needs across the federal government, technology, and health sectors.
- The College's quality assurance process includes an annual curriculum review, program mix review, and a cyclical five-year program quality review to ensure programs and courses are achieving intended learning outcomes. The College has indicated that its Program Quality Assurance Process Audit conducted in spring 2011 resulted in Algonquin's quality assurance processes achieving a high rating for its quality criteria. With more extensive Quality Assurance Standards, the College plans to enhance its processes for the review of hybrid and online courses. This process is also used for all Algonquin credentials offered offshore.

4.3 Metrics

Institutional Metrics	System-Wide Metrics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proportion of enrolment at colleges by occupational cluster and by credential• Institution's system share of enrolment by occupational cluster and by credential• Number of apprentices in each trade

5. INSTITUTIONAL COLLABORATION TO SUPPORT STUDENT MOBILITY

This component profiles partnerships between institutions that ensure students have access to a continuum of learning opportunities in a coordinated system. This may include, but is not limited to, credit transfer pathways and collaborative or joint programs between or within sectors.

5.1 Areas of Institutional Strength

Algonquin College streamlines the mobility of learners across the Ontario postsecondary system:

- Competency-based learning units support learner credit recovery, persistence, enhanced access to postsecondary education, and mobility of students across the system. Already embedded in programs like the Outdoor Naturalist and select health programs, the learning units help students advance to the next level of study more quickly and at lower cost.
- Academic Upgrading supports over 1,600 students each year, enabling their continued pursuit of postsecondary education.
- Experienced worker and internationally-educated and trained bridge programs provide students with opportunities to upgrade their skills and continue their studies, leading to employment in their field.
- Algonquin has more than 400 articulation agreements with institutions across Canada and around the world.
- Graduates are provided advanced standing opportunities with some training organizations, accelerating their ability to add to their credentials and improve their career marketability at a lower cost.
- University educated learners enroll in graduate certificates to develop new skills and acquire applied education and training experiences to enhance job preparedness. Similarly, college students enroll in Algonquin College graduate certificates or applied bachelor degrees to specialize or upgrade the skills and knowledge they have already acquired.

- The College works closely with regional school boards to support transitions from high school to College and work placement. A few examples include:
 - School/College/Work Initiative and Specialist High Skills Majors.
 - Dual Credit program (the College estimates that about 50% of its dual credit students continue on to postsecondary studies at the College).
 - Navigating College Life for Aboriginal students.

Algonquin College collaborates across the postsecondary education system to create inter-professional opportunities and facilitate the mobility of learners. Examples include:

- The College partnered with Carleton University and Queen's University to represent Team Ontario at the US Department of Energy Solar Decathlon 2013. The team finished 1st in Engineering, 1st in Energy Balance, 1st in Hot Water, 2nd in Affordability, 4th in Market Appeal, and 6th overall.
- The Hydro One College Consortium, which launched the Women into Electrical Engineering Technology (WEET) program, sponsored in part by Hydro One and the Leacross Foundation.

Algonquin College offers joint programs with other institutions; in some cases, students may attain a College advanced diploma and university degree. Examples include:

- Carleton University Bachelor of Information Technology: Multimedia and Design
- Carleton University Bachelor of Information Technology: Network Technology
- Carleton University Bachelor of Information Technology: Photonics & Laser Technology
- University of Ottawa Bachelor of Science in Nursing

5.2 Additional Comments

Institutional Strategies

- The College has developed a Centralized Course Outline Management and Mapping System to inventory, store, and share curricula easily, map courses for credit transfer, and streamline Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition processes. The system has been made available to Confederation College and there are pilots planned at nine Ontario colleges.
- Algonquin College will continue to expand its outreach to secondary schools in order to support more informed choices and improve success for learners.
- The College will also continue to develop pathways for students, including graduate certificates and applied bachelor degrees.

5.3 Metrics

Institutional Metrics	System-Wide Metrics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of university graduates enrolled at Algonquin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of college and university pathways and/or articulation agreements (college-college, college-university, university-college) Number of transfer applicants and registrants Number of college graduates enrolled in university programs

ASPIRATIONS

The Ministry recognizes the importance of supporting institutions to evolve and acknowledges the strategic aspirations of its postsecondary education institutions; the SMA is not intended to capture all decisions and issues in the postsecondary education system, as many will be addressed through the Ministry’s policies and standard processes.

a) Expanded Credentials

The Ministry has noted the College’s aspirations to expand degree granting activity and this will be examined as part of the Ministry’s policy review of Ontario’s credential options.

b) Growing Applied Research, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship

The College plans to grow its applied research activities and establish more Research Centres across the College. The Ministry does not provide targeted funding support for applied research activity at Ontario’s colleges and universities.

ENROLMENT GROWTH

The strategic enrolment and planning exercise is in the context of a public commitment in the 2011 Budget to increase postsecondary education enrolment by 60,000 additional students over 2010-11 levels. This government has demonstrated a longstanding commitment to ensuring access to postsecondary education for all qualified students.

Algonquin College’s planned enrolment forecast as expressed in this baseline eligible enrolment scenario is considered reasonable and in line with Ministry expectations, based on the current and projected demographic and fiscal environments.

Baseline Projected Eligible Full-Time Headcounts

Level	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Certificate/Diploma	16,581	16,913	17,251
Degree	485	495	505
Algonquin Total	17,066	17,407	17,755

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

The Ministry and the College recognize that financial sustainability and accountability are critical to achieving institutional mandates and realizing Ontario's vision for the postsecondary education system. To this end, it is agreed that:

- It is the responsibility of the governing board and Senior Administrators of the College to identify, track, and address financial pressures and sustainability issues. At the same time, the Ministry has a financial stewardship role. The Ministry and the College agree to work collaboratively to achieve the common goal of financial sustainability, and to ensure that Ontarians have access to a full range of affordable, high-quality postsecondary education options, now and in the future; and
- The College remains accountable to the Ministry with respect to effective and efficient use of resources to maximize the value and impact of investments made in the postsecondary education system.

The Ministry and the College agree to use the following metrics to assess the financial health and sustainability of the institution:

1. Annual Surplus/Deficit
2. Accumulated Surplus/Deficit
3. Net Assets to Expense Ratio
4. Debt Servicing Ratio
5. Quick Ratio
6. Debt to Asset Ratio
7. Net Income to Revenue Ratio

The Ministry notes the work underway by Algonquin to focus on the efficient use of space, and to assess all programs and services in terms of relevance, demand, quality, and resource utilization.

MINISTRY/GOVERNMENT COMMITMENTS

Over time, the Ministry commits to align many of its policy, process, and funding levers with the Differentiation Policy Framework and SMAs in order to support the strengths of institutions and implement differentiation. To this end, the Ministry will:

- Engage with both the college and university sectors around potential changes to the funding formula, beginning with the university sector in 2014-15;
- Update the college and university program funding approval process to improve transparency and align with institutional strengths as outlined in the SMAs;
- Streamline reporting requirements across Ministry business lines with the goals of (1) creating greater consistency of reporting requirements across separate initiatives, (2) increasing automation of reporting processes, and (3) reducing the amount of data required from institutions without compromising accountability. In the interim, the Multi-Year Accountability Report Backs will be adjusted and used as the annual reporting mechanism for metrics set out in the SMAs;
- Consult on the definition, development, and utilization of metrics;
- Undertake a review of Ontario's credential options; and
- Continue the work of the Nursing Tripartite Committee.

The Ministry and the College are committed to continuing to work together to:

- Support student access, quality, and success;
- Drive creativity, innovation, knowledge, and community engagement through teaching and research;
- Increase the competitiveness of Ontario's postsecondary education system;
- Focus the strengths of Ontario's institutions; and
- Maintain a financially sustainable postsecondary education system.

SIGNED for and on behalf of the
Ministry of Training, Colleges and
Universities by:

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY

Deborah Newman
Deputy Minister

April 30, 2014

Date

SIGNED for and on behalf of
Algonquin College of Applied Arts
and Technology by:

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY

Dr. Kent McDonald
President

May 8, 2014

Date