

# Goal Path Description for Practitioners and Learners – Postsecondary

Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities

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The logo for Employment Ontario, featuring the words "EMPLOYMENT" and "ONTARIO" in white, bold, uppercase letters stacked vertically within a black rectangular box.

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# Goal Path Description for Practitioners and Learners – Postsecondary

## Postsecondary Summary

### What is the learner's goal?

The postsecondary goal path description examines the connection between Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) service provision and transition to postsecondary education. This goal path description addresses options available to learners who wish to obtain a diploma and/or degree.

### The role of LBS service providers

LBS service providers help learners examine the benefits and opportunities in pursuing a postsecondary goal, as well as review what is involved in the process. LBS service providers work with a learner to explore whether a postsecondary goal is appropriate to the learner's needs and abilities, is feasible within the learner's means, and is achievable in the learner's community. If postsecondary education is not a suitable goal, the LBS service provider should help the learner explore alternative options and/or other goal paths.

LBS service providers develop a learner plan that describes the learner's goal path and includes the learning activities, resources and assessment tools that prepare a learner for transitioning to postsecondary education.

### Key questions when discussing a learner's postsecondary goal:

1. Has the learner already identified a goal with another agency? If not, the LBS service provider should support the learner in identifying a goal.
2. What tools, resources, experiences and training does the learner already have to achieve this goal?
3. What is the learner's purpose and/or need for entering a postsecondary program? What postsecondary program is the learner interested in?
4. Is a postsecondary education appropriate to the learner's needs and/or wants?
5. Is the selected postsecondary program a realistic goal for the learner?

6. Does the learner understand the time and effort required to enter and pursue a postsecondary education?
7. Are there other program options that could prepare learner for this goal?

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**What is postsecondary education?**

Postsecondary education includes all formal educational programs offered at colleges or universities for which high school completion or equivalency is the normal entrance requirement. After completion, learners will attain a diploma, degree or certificate. Program duration usually ranges from one to four years.

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**Who is eligible and what are the entrance requirements?**

**Postsecondary**

Any individual who has the recognized academic requirements which include: *Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD)*, *Academic Career Entrance (ACE) Certificate*, or *General Education Development (GED) Certificate*.

**Policies and criteria for admission vary from institution to institution, and from program to program within an institution.**

Specific credits and/or experiences may be required for admission into postsecondary programs.

Many institutions provide mature student admissions testing which, if successfully taken, can be used for meeting the requirements of course-based admission into a postsecondary program (e.g. completion of an admissions test, such as the Canadian Adult Achievement Test (CAAT) or Accuplacer, may replace the math and/or English course prerequisites for some college entry). Learners may also be able to take senior high school credits or ACE courses that meet the needs for college entry.

It is important that a learner reviews college calendars, brochures and websites so that they are informed of admission requirements. If a learner needs more information they should contact a college counselor, the registrars' offices or liaison departments.

If necessary, learners can also contact the specific college program departments and/or department heads where they may be granted access into a preparatory program and/or access routes which will allow them to enter college using alternative methods to the published mandatory entrance requirements.

**Ontario College Application Services (OCAS) Application Process and Acceptance Process**

All postsecondary college applications must be submitted to Ontario Colleges at [www.ontariocolleges.ca](http://www.ontariocolleges.ca). This service receives and records applications and student responses to college offers of admission.

For fall admissions, learners can apply to a college as soon as the application is available in October. While there are

no deadlines to apply to colleges in Ontario, applications received on or before the Equal Consideration Date for programs starting in September will be given equal consideration.

However, after the Equal Consideration Date applications are considered on a first-come, first-served basis. The Equal Consideration Date is particularly important for those applying to college programs that are considered highly competitive - a program for which the number of qualified applicants exceeds the number of seats for the fall term.

The equal consideration date deadline for fall programs is usually **February 1** and for winter programs is usually **October 3**. To confirm these deadlines for each given year, it is important for the learner to visit the Ontario Colleges website at [www.ontariocolleges.ca](http://www.ontariocolleges.ca) well before beginning the application process. All applicants are encouraged to apply well in advance of an Equal Consideration Date. It is important to note that website volumes are at their highest level leading up to the Equal Consideration Dates and may present challenges in accessing the server.

Learners planning to attend a college program must either have all prerequisites completed before enrolment or currently be in programming that will provide them with the credits, credentials or equivalencies required.

For programs beginning at other times of the year, learners should review the program website or contact the college for more information about application processing dates.

For more information on how to apply to colleges visit Ontario Colleges at [www.ontariocolleges.ca](http://www.ontariocolleges.ca) and Ontario College Application Services at <http://www.ocas.ca/ocas/home/publications.html>.

### **Role of LBS Service Providers**

LBS service providers should work with learners to identify the necessary supports, tools and information for their desired postsecondary education program. This includes finding a program offered in the learner's language (French, English or American Sign Language) where possible. If possible, LBS service providers should help the learner identify how they will obtain the required language proficiency or required supports such as note takers, assistive devices, etc.

**Key Questions:**

1. What is the learner's highest level of academic achievement and what upgrading or refreshing of skills and knowledge is needed in order to succeed in a postsecondary environment?
2. Does the learner have a high school diploma or the equivalent?
3. Does the learner have a secondary school transcript? What is missing? (e.g. current grades, adequate admission requirements, etc.)
4. Where did the learner earn credits? (e.g. in province, out of province, in another country)
5. How long has the learner been out of school?
6. Does the learner have the skills and knowledge, including second-language skills, motivation and aptitude for a postsecondary program?
7. What is the learner's timeframe for achieving this goal and is it appropriate to the learner's circumstances?
8. What are the access routes for postsecondary education in the community?

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**How are achievements for this goal recognized?****Postsecondary**

The learner will receive a diploma, degree or certificate from a college or university.

This postsecondary goal path description focuses on two- to three-year college diplomas. Although university degrees and one-year or less graduate certificates are technically postsecondary programs, this is not the focus of this document. (For skills training of less than one-year, please refer to the *Apprenticeship Goal Path Description*.)

**Role of LBS Service Providers**

LBS service providers prepare learners by providing them with the necessary literacy and basic skills, which in turn will support an effective transition into a postsecondary goal.

**Key Questions:**

1. Is earning a postsecondary diploma or certificate a personal goal of the learner?
2. Is a postsecondary goal related to the learner's advancement at work or a possible career change?

**What are the learner's options for postsecondary education?****Postsecondary**

There are a number of college and university programs that can be attended on a flexible schedule in many communities or accessed online. Entrance requirements will vary based on program and institution. It is important that the learner sets a realistic goal and understands the variety of program options and requirements. For more information please visit the Ontario Colleges website at <http://www.ontariocolleges.ca/ontcol/home.html>.

**Role of LBS Service Providers**

An LBS service provider should support and help learners explore the options available in their community for obtaining the skills or academic credentials required for entrance into postsecondary education.

**Key Questions:**

1. What are the programming options available in the learner's community that match the learner's needs in terms of language requirements, scheduling and proximity?
2. What are the general requirements of postsecondary education in the learner's community or region?
3. What delivery modes might be suitable for and available to the learner? (e.g. part time, full time, distance education, etc.)

**Are there any additional requirements?****Postsecondary**

Specific prerequisite courses may be required for postsecondary programs. Learners should have a clear understanding of all the requirements for their desired postsecondary program in advance of the application process.

For example for a two-year Practical Nursing Diploma, learners will be required to complete courses in Grade 11 or 12 Biology, Chemistry and Mathematics. In addition, learners are required to have a First Aid course completed before entrance.

Some postsecondary programs may also require work experience in the prospective field.

To transition into and manage postsecondary coursework, it is necessary for a learner to have certain levels of communication and language proficiency. A learner may be asked to write a language proficiency test such as: Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), Test of Spoken English (TSE), Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), Michigan English Language Assessment Battery (MELAB), Canadian Academic English Language Assessment (CAEL) and/or International English Language Testing Service (IELTS). It is important that the learner contacts the specific college program department and/or department head to obtain information on the language entry requirements and the language proficiency assessment used.

### Role of LBS Service Providers

LBS service providers assist the learner in identifying whether there are additional requirements for the goal and provide referrals for any applicable supports and/or services.

### Key Questions:

1. Does the learner need accessibility or disability supports? If so, who should you contact at the postsecondary institution, *Ontario Disability Support Program* (ODSP) and/or other community services?
2. Are there accessibility requirements that may influence the learner's options?

**What are the costs and required supports? Are government supports available?**

### Postsecondary

Costs vary based on the program type, length and institution.

There are many government supports such as the *Ontario Student Assistance Program* (OSAP), bursaries, and scholarships. It is important that the learner contacts the necessary person or department at the college who manages student financial aid.

All colleges in Ontario have an office for students with disabilities or a disability services office. The learner will need to contact staff at the office, identify themselves as a student with a disability and work with staff to

determine the type of accommodation they need. For more information please visit <http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/postsecondary/careerplanning/disabilities.html#display>.

### Role of LBS Service Providers

LBS service providers provide learners with the necessary supports, tools and information so that they are able to contact the appropriate college departments to determine the costs and supports that are applicable to their prospective postsecondary program.

### Key Questions:

1. What are the financial resources the learner will require?
2. What government financial supports are available for postsecondary education?
3. Is the learner on income support?
4. Are they eligible for postsecondary education as part of income support?
5. Is Employment Ontario's Second Career program a potential option for the learner? (For more information please review the Second Career website at [http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/secondcareer/?cm\\_sp=onsite-ads- -footer- -second-career](http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/secondcareer/?cm_sp=onsite-ads- -footer- -second-career).)

## Key Resources

**What assessment tools and learner resources are used for postsecondary?**

### Assessment Tools used at Postsecondary Institutions

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)

### Admissions may require completion of a mature student test such as:

- Canadian Adult Achievement Test (CAAT)
- Accuplacer
- Essential Skills assessments
- Other forms of testing may also be required

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### Role of LBS Service Providers

The *OALCF Selected Assessment Tools* provides a sampling of assessments and resources available to practitioners and assessors.

To review the *OALCF Selected Assessment Tools* please visit

[http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/publications/OALCF\\_Selected\\_Assessment\\_Tools\\_Mar\\_11.pdf](http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/publications/OALCF_Selected_Assessment_Tools_Mar_11.pdf)

To find an appropriate collection of learning materials, please visit the *OALCF Resources* page of the OALCF website at <http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/oalcf/tools-and-resources.html>.

To review the *OALCF Selected Learning Materials List: Identified by Academic Upgrading Service Providers* visit [http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/publications/OALCF\\_Selected\\_LMs\\_AU\\_Mar\\_11.pdf](http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/publications/OALCF_Selected_LMs_AU_Mar_11.pdf).

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### How do I know what information, referrals and supports a learner needs?

Learner goal attainment is closely linked to the quality of supports they receive. Supports contribute to learners' persistence in LBS programming and can be organized under five types: financial/material, academic, health, employment, and social skills.

### Role of LBS Service Providers

Service coordination requires LBS service providers to refer their learners to the necessary programs and supports available in the community. It is the responsibility of the LBS service providers to provide learners with the appropriate information and referrals.

### Key Questions:

1. Do you have the necessary information to determine which support(s) and/or referral(s) are needed?
2. What supports does the learner need? (e.g. child care, transportation, learning disability assessment, physical accommodation, etc.). Does the learner need to further English skills or second-language skills?
3. Has the learner already accessed any of the necessary supports?
4. What referrals are needed for postsecondary transitioning? When should they be accessed?

5. What other community programs or agencies could possibly help the learner achieve a postsecondary goal?
6. What forms of government supports or programs could help the learner achieve this goal?
7. Are there any issues or potential areas of concern for the learner which may need to be assessed by another agency?

### Postsecondary Key Development Skills

Learners need to develop all six OALCF competencies (*Find and Use Information, Communicate Ideas and Information, Understand and Use Numbers, Use Digital Technology, Manage Learning and Engage with Others*) to achieve their goals. The Key Development Skills below list the specific skills a learner needs to develop a postsecondary goal. These skills were drawn from goal path-specific research and development projects conducted in Ontario.

To review the six competencies in the OALCF please visit <http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/oalcf/tools-and-resources.html>.

#### Self-Management Key Development Skills

- meets attendance expectations
- shows commitment to the program
- demonstrates motivation
- demonstrates a positive attitude
- shows determination
- stays on task
- shows ability to multi-task at a level of maturity appropriate for adult learning
- has well-defined, realistic goals
- sets short-term goals and follows through
- understands own weaknesses and strengths

- uses available resources strategically
- meets both program and self-imposed deadlines
- demonstrates time management in and out of class
- manages workload with outside commitments
- demonstrates ownership of learning needs
- shows willingness to spend time getting help outside of class
- shows self-reliance
- demonstrates self-discipline
- possesses self-awareness related to readiness for next steps of learning, testing, etc.
- demonstrates initiative
- works independently
- works with distractions
- “ask the right questions” - a willingness to take ownership and request assistance when stuck on a problem or task
- shows curiosity; asks questions
- shows persistence
- strives for constant improvement
- exudes a positive attitude; sees difficulties as a positive challenge
- works both independently and as a team member
- demonstrates interpersonal skills with peers (e.g. group support)
- uses organizational skills
- demonstrates familiarity with college services
- displays good study skills

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**Academic Key Development Skills**

- reads, interprets and proceeds with minimal support
- asks questions which demonstrate higher cognitive thinking
- uses quantitative thinking
- masters math skills over and beyond the basic skills numeracy required for the program and demonstrates good algebra skills
- tackles postsecondary-type math questions successfully
- grasps formula manipulation – this demonstrates cognitive ability
- demonstrates reading comprehension (e.g. reads and follows instructions to successful completion of the task)
- follows and carries out instructions especially from several sources; able to synthesize and integrate
- reads an article or text of several pages with no clear organization, then demonstrates understanding, reads and extracts information and comments on that information
- uses proper grammar in oral and written work
- uses correct sentence structure
- demonstrates a high level of organization, coherence and unity in writing
- demonstrates essay writing skills
- uses correct documentation skills
- writes a technical report or essay, proofreads and submits first draft without questions
- locates, organizes, analyzes and documents information for essays/reports
- synthesizes information from various sources
- delivers oral presentations by effectively summarizing text and sources, paraphrasing and quoting sources
- goes “above and beyond” (e.g. asks questions to take learning further)

- uses critical thinking skills
- demonstrates problem solving skills
- grasps abstract concepts
- achieves success on unit tests
- answers the question being asked
- completes demonstration activities with minimal or no support
- applies learning to own life (e.g. transfers skills and knowledge)
- demonstrates technological proficiency in order to survive in a technology-based learning environment (e.g. Microsoft Office applications)

#### **Math and Science:**

- *Many postsecondary programs have specific course prerequisites in math and science. It is important that learners develop the necessary foundational skills in these subjects so that they are able to transition towards their goal. Although many college programs do not have specific math and science prerequisites, those that do typically require Grade 12 or equivalent courses to be completed.*

#### **Additional Key Development Skills**

- sets goals and accomplishes them
- demonstrates commitment to the program and to goals
- assumes ownership of goals; sets timelines and benchmarks to determine/assess progress
- confirms commitment to results
- works in groups successfully (e.g. getting the project completed, dealing with non-contributing members, etc.)
- possesses strong reading comprehension skills
- embraces proactive problem solving, following through to resolution
- works to achieve academic levels beyond the necessary basic skill levels for the chosen goal
- secures social, housing and financial supports (e.g. Ontario Works, OSAP, EI, etc.)

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- manages personal life appropriately including health, child care, transportation and finances
  - resolves transportation issues
  - knows college systems, database and facilities
  - shows excitement about the “next step”

## Community Notes

LBS service providers can use this section to enter community related information for the postsecondary goal including contact information, specific program entrance requirements, costs, program registration dates, etc.