



Public Relations (Ontario College Advanced Diploma) Program Standard

The approved program standard for Public Relations program of instruction leading to an Ontario College Advanced Diploma delivered by Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (MTCU funding code 60243)

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Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
Programs Branch, Program Standards and Evaluation Unit
23rd floor, Mowat Block
900 Bay Street
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1L2

E-mail: pseu@ontario.ca

Inquiries regarding specific Public Relations (Ontario College Advanced Diploma) programs offered by colleges of applied arts and technology in Ontario should be directed to the relevant college.

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Table of Contents

I. Introduction	1
Development of System-Wide Program Standards.....	1
Program Standards.....	1
The Expression of Program Standards as Vocational Learning Outcomes.....	2
The Presentation of the Vocational Learning Outcomes.....	2
The Development of a Program Standard.....	2
Updating the Program Standard	3
II. Vocational Standard	4
Preamble.....	4
Synopsis of the Vocational Learning Outcomes.....	7
The Vocational Learning Outcomes.....	9
Glossary.....	20
III. Essential Employability Skills	21
Context.....	21
Skill Categories.....	21
Application and Implementation	22
IV. General Education Requirement	24
Requirement	24
Purpose.....	24
Themes.....	25

I. Introduction

This document is the Program Standard for the Public Relations program of instruction leading to an Ontario College Advanced Diploma delivered by Ontario colleges of applied arts and technology (MTCU funding code 60243).

Development of System-Wide Program Standards

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

The Program Standards and Evaluation Unit of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities have responsibility for the development, review and approval of system-wide standards for programs of instruction at Ontario colleges of applied arts and technology.

Program Standards

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

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

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

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

The Expression of Program Standards as Vocational Learning Outcomes

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

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

The Presentation of the Vocational Learning Outcomes

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

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

The Development of a Program Standard

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

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

participating stakeholders on the essential learning that all program graduates should have achieved.

Updating the Program Standard

The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities will undertake regular reviews of the vocational learning outcomes for this program to ensure that the Public Relations (Ontario College Advanced Diploma) Program Standard remains appropriate and relevant to the needs of students and employers across the Province of Ontario. To confirm that this document is the most up-to-date release, please contact the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities at the address or email address noted on the inside cover page.

II. Vocational Standard

All graduates of Public Relations Advanced Diploma programs have achieved the ten (10) vocational learning outcomes (VLOs) listed in the following pages, in addition to achieving the essential employability skills (EES) learning outcomes and meeting the general education (GE) requirement.

Preamble

Managing an organization's relationships with its diverse stakeholders* (i.e., those individuals, groups or other organizations that are impacted by or may impact the organization), is the strategic management function of public relations. Public relations activities focus on planning, implementing and evaluating targeted communication and stakeholder* engagement strategies to achieve mutual understanding and realize organizational goals; strong written and oral communication skills are essential for those choosing to work in the field.

Depending on the organization, public relations professionals may focus on specific functions or stakeholder* relationships (e.g., media relations, community relations, government relations, internal/corporate communications, investor/donor relations, reputation/crisis/issues management, etc.) and/or specific public relations activities (e.g., communication and social media campaigns, Web content development, special events, fundraising, etc.). The Advanced Diploma program provides graduates with the opportunity to coordinate and contribute to the planning, implementation and evaluation of public relations activities to manage a range of stakeholder* relationships and support organizational objectives.

Graduates of the Public Relations Advanced Diploma program write and edit clear, accurate, targeted copy, aligned to organizational objectives, appropriate for the chosen channel(s)* and to a specified deadline. This requires adherence to style guides and templates and compliance with ethical and legal obligations related to intellectual property, plagiarism, privacy and confidentiality of information, and factual accuracy. Graduates use writing style, language and tone appropriate for the purpose of the communication (e.g., informing vs. persuading) and channel(s)* (e.g., print, broadcast, speech, digital communications, social media applications, Web content, etc.). Graduates also adapt their language, tone and style to engage stakeholders* in a range of public relations settings and activities (e.g., interviews, meetings, internal and media briefings, news conferences, special events, trade shows, etc.). Their conduct should promote equity, inclusion and collaboration and follow protocols and practices for a range of public relations functions. Strategies and tools graduates select to build and maintain mutually-beneficial professional relationships may include: communicating professionally and ethically with stakeholders*; managing contact lists; investigating the benefits, resources and networking

opportunities associated with membership in professional associations; and maintaining a professional online presence.

Graduates coordinate and contribute to the planning and implementation of various public relations activities by identifying key stakeholders* and relationship management needs, developing clear, measurable communication objectives and project or tactical budgets, selecting strategies and tactics to achieve them, executing logistics and completing tasks. They follow instructions, use knowledge of public relations theory and practices, apply project management skills and tools, and work collaboratively on project teams. Research tools and results are used, and analytical skills and evaluation techniques are applied, to guide the planning of public relations activities and evaluate their impact against objectives and metrics.

Graduates also enhance the production of effective, timely visual, audio, multimedia and interactive communications using fundamental design principles, accessibility standards and a range of tools, applications and elements (e.g., cameras, scanners, photo editing, design, presentation, desktop and/or Web publishing software, social media applications, images, graphics, animations, hypertext, etc.).

Graduates comply with and support others to work in compliance with relevant professional association and industry codes of ethics, public relations professional standards and practices, legal obligations, protocols and policies, to support organizational objectives and to serve the public interest. This may include application of principles of corporate social responsibility to public relations activities and the workplace.

The speed, volume, accessibility and impact of information on organizations and their stakeholder* relations requires graduates to keep current with emerging social and economic trends, local, national and global issues. This requires that they identify relevant trends and issues and determine the reliability, authority, legality and currency of information and its source. Keeping current enhances graduates' work performance and guides their personal professional development.

Graduates also demonstrate proficiency in the use and selection of current and emerging technologies to enhance the quality and delivery of public relations activities and organizational effectiveness.

The need for managing mutually beneficial stakeholder* relationships through communication and engagement applies across all employment sectors and industries. Opportunities for graduates of Public Relations programs exist within a broad range of large and small commercial, government and not-for-profit organizations, and public relations agencies serving one or more sector or industry. Entry-level positions for graduates may encompass a variety of public

relations activities or specialize on a particular public relations function, activity or stakeholder* relationship.

There are opportunities for graduates to pursue further educational qualifications. Graduates should contact individual colleges and universities for further details.

Endnote: The Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT) maintains the provincial postsecondary credit transfer portal, ONTransfer, at <http://www.ontransfer.ca>.

**See Glossary*

Synopsis of the Vocational Learning Outcomes

Public Relations (Ontario College Advanced Diploma)

The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to

- 1. coordinate and contribute to the planning of public relations activities, including the development of clear, measurable communication objectives and project or tactical budgets and selection of strategies, tactics, tools and resources, to manage a range of stakeholder* relationships and support organizational objectives.**
- 2. coordinate and contribute to the implementation of strategies and tactics and the management of budgets and resources for a range of public relations activities to achieve communication objectives and meet activity guidelines and requirements.**
- 3. write and edit clear, accurate, targeted copy aligned to organizational objectives, appropriate for the chosen channel(s)* and to a specified deadline.**
- 4. apply visual, audio, multimedia and interactive elements, fundamental design principles and accessibility standards, independently and collaboratively, to enhance the production of effective, timely communications appropriate for diverse channels* and audiences.**
- 5. select information sources, research tools and results, and apply analytical skills to guide the development of communication objectives, selection of strategies and tactics and evaluation of the impact of public relations activities.**
- 6. engage stakeholders* by adapting language, tone and presentation style to the public relations purpose, situation, audience and channel(s)*.**
- 7. comply with and support others to work in accordance with relevant professional association and industry codes of ethics, public relations professional standards and practices, and legal obligations, protocols and policies.**
- 8. keep current with emerging social and economic trends, and local, national and global issues to enhance public relations plans and activities, support organizational effectiveness and stakeholder* relationships, and guide ongoing personal professional development.**

9. **select and use current and emerging technologies to enhance the quality and delivery of public relations activities and support organizational effectiveness.**
10. **select strategies and tools to build and maintain professional relationships to support public relations activities, organizational objectives and career development.**

**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*

coordinate and contribute to the planning of public relations activities, including the development of clear, measurable communication objectives and project or tactical budgets and selection of strategies, tactics, tools and resources, to manage a range of stakeholder* relationships and support organizational objectives.

Elements of the Performance

- Identify key stakeholders* and relationship management needs of a range of organizations in various sectors (e.g., commercial, not-for-profit, government, etc.) and industries
- Distinguish between goals, objectives, strategies and tactics
- Coordinate and contribute to the selection of strategies, tactics, tools and resources appropriate for different public relations functions (e.g., media relations, community relations, government relations, internal/corporate communications, investor/donor relations, reputation/crisis/issues management, special events, fundraising, sponsorship, etc.), sectors (e.g., commercial, not-for-profit, agency, government, etc.) and industries
- Coordinate and contribute to the selection of strategies and development of tactical plans to achieve objectives and guide public relations activities
- Research and compile lists for a range of public relations functions, strategies and tactics (e.g., media lists, communication distribution lists, influencer lists, event invitation lists, lists of relevant social media platforms and Websites, potential donor lists, etc.)
- Conduct needs analysis of target audiences to support the development of communications objectives
- Draft communication objectives that are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, time-sensitive (SMART), and aligned with organizational objectives
- Accurately record project instructions, resources and constraints to support the planning process and guide evaluation of project success
- Identify problems that may impact public relations activities, and apply creative approaches to problem solving and project planning
- Coordinate and contribute to the development of project or tactical budgets that balance expenses with resources within known constraints
- Select and apply public relations theories and practices to enhance the planning of public relations activities
- Use project management tools to enhance the planning of public relations activities (e.g., work plans, critical paths, Gantt charts, etc.)
- Contribute to a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) or similar analysis to support the planning of communications or public

- relations activities
- Identify and respond to the specific needs of journalists and news media in the planning of communication strategies and tactics for media relations
- Source suppliers and follow principles, guidelines and relevant purchasing policies to obtain estimates for required products and services
- Monitor, report and respond to issues and trends that impact the public relations activity planning process
- Actively coordinate and contribute to project planning teams, fostering collaboration and completing tasks

* See *Glossary*

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

coordinate and contribute to the implementation of strategies and tactics and the management of budgets and resources for a range of public relations activities to achieve communication objectives and meet activity guidelines and requirements.

Elements of the Performance

- Perform individual tasks and coordinate completion of work by others in a timely and effective manner
- Work collaboratively with team members and liaise with relevant stakeholders* to enhance project implementation, and coordinate tasks necessary to achieve communication objectives
- Select and apply public relations theories and practices to enhance the implementation of public relations activities
- Use project management tools to enhance the implementation of public relations activities (e.g., work plans, critical paths, Gantt charts, etc.)
- Coordinate and execute the logistics and tactics for a range of public relations communication strategies (e.g., print, digital and/or multimedia announcements, reports, newsletters and brochures, social media campaigns, Website content development, press kits, speeches, etc.) and events (e.g., press conferences, meetings, seminars, fundraising events, publicity events, etc.)
- Suggest alternative approaches and opportunities to enhance public relations activity implementation
- Select applications and tools to track resources, expenses, timelines, progress and completion of work to avoid waste, manage budgets and meet deadlines

* See *Glossary*

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

write and edit clear, accurate, targeted copy aligned to organizational objectives, appropriate for the chosen channel(s)* and to a specified deadline.

Elements of the Performance

- Adhere to formal and in-house style guides (e.g., Canadian Press) and standard formats and templates for various public relations communications (e.g., media releases, annual and other reports, communication plans, biographies, briefing and speaking notes, presentation slides, factsheets, Q&As, letters, memos, articles, etc.)
- Draft clear, accurate targeted copy appropriate for a variety of channels (e.g., print, broadcast, Web-based, Internet and digital communications, social media applications, Webpages, email, text messages, etc.)
- Proofread work and correct for typographical errors and errors in spelling, grammar, punctuation, diction and syntax
- Fact check as necessary to ensure accuracy of communications
- Solicit and give feedback and use constructive criticism to revise work as appropriate
- Use time management and organizational skills and tools to track timelines, stay on task and meet copy deadlines
- Comply with ethical and legal obligations related to intellectual property, copyright, fair use, plagiarism and acknowledgement of sources, privacy and confidentiality of information, and defamation
- Choose writing styles, language and tone appropriate for the purpose of the communication (e.g., persuading, informing, explaining, pitching, engaging, soliciting information, telling a story, etc.), the audience and the channel(s)*
- Edit copy for clarity, logical organization, and to eliminate unnecessary material
- Use knowledge of organizational objectives to align copy appropriately for relevant communications

* See *Glossary*

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

apply visual, audio, multimedia and interactive elements, fundamental design principles and accessibility standards, independently and collaboratively, to enhance the production of effective, timely communications appropriate for diverse channels* and audiences.

Elements of the Performance

- Contribute to the production of a variety of public relations communications (e.g., print and digital newsletters, brochures, reports, social media content, Web-based content, videos, multimedia presentations, presentation slides, digital communications, etc.)
- Apply fundamental design principles to enhance visual communications (i.e., balance, proximity, alignment, repetition, contrast and space)
- Work independently and collaboratively to enhance the effectiveness of communications for diverse channels* and audiences using a range of tools and applications (e.g., digital and video cameras, scanners, social media applications, photo editing, design, presentation, desktop and/or Web publishing software, etc.) and multimedia or interactive elements (e.g., images, graphics, audio or video, hypertext, animations, social media interactivity, etc.)
- Manage files for version control, consistency, security and compliance with organizational standards and protocols for communications
- Apply creative approaches to the production of print, digital, multimedia and interactive communications
- Adhere to the requirements of legislation and regulations related to accessibility of communications, including but not limited to the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2004*, S.O. 2004, c. 11
- Show respect for diversity in the production of public relations communications
- Comply with ethical and legal obligations related to intellectual property, copyright, fair use, plagiarism and acknowledgement of sources, privacy and confidentiality of information, and defamation

* See *Glossary*

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

select information sources, research tools and results, and apply analytical skills to guide the development of communication objectives, selection of strategies and tactics and evaluation of the impact of public relations activities.

Elements of the Performance

- Select and use appropriate research methods and protocols for diverse information needs (e.g., online and library research, social and other media monitoring, surveys, focus groups, interviews, media or environmental scan, etc.)
- Identify data sources (e.g., stakeholders*, news and current events, databases, social media, industry and government reports, etc.) for a range of research needs
- Collect data on stakeholder* attitudes, opinions, expectations, satisfaction and/or perceptions of an organization's qualities, operations and reputation to support the planning and evaluation of public relations activities
- Evaluate the impact of public relations activities against objectives or key performance indicators using a variety of evaluation techniques (e.g., metrics, monitoring tools, surveys, interviews, data analysis, etc.)
- Determine the reliability, authority, legality, relevance and currency of information and information sources
- Collect appropriate primary, secondary, formal, informal, qualitative, quantitative, formative and summative data for project planning and evaluation purposes
- Contribute to a competitive analysis to support the development of communication objectives
- Communicate and collaborate professionally and ethically with stakeholders* to gather the information needed to support the communications planning and evaluation processes
- Use results of public relations activities to guide the strategic planning process

* See *Glossary*

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

engage stakeholders* by adapting language, tone and presentation style to the public relations purpose, situation, audience and channel(s)*.

Elements of the Performance

- Use appropriate language, style, tone and non-verbal communication to engage, inform, explain, pitch, persuade, solicit information, or tell a story
- Promote equity and inclusion when communicating and collaborating with a diversity of stakeholders* and audiences
- Follow business meeting etiquette to ensure meetings run smoothly and are productive (e.g., set and follow an agenda, start and end on time, prepare in advance, allow equal opportunity for participation, etc.)
- Communicate with others professionally and confidently in a range of communications and public relations settings and activities (e.g., interviews, meetings, internal and media briefings, news conferences, special events, trade shows, etc.)
- Contribute to the preparation of speaking notes, slides and/or other supporting resources for a range of presentations
- Adapt presentation style and format as appropriate for the selected channel(s)*
- Follow established industry and organizational communication protocols and practices for a range of public relations functions (e.g., media relations, internal/corporate communications, government relations, community relations, investor/donor relations, special events, reputation/issues/crisis management, fundraising, sponsorship, etc.)
- Apply strategies to manage or resolve conflicts among internal or external stakeholders*

* See *Glossary*

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

comply with and support others to work in accordance with relevant professional association and industry codes of ethics, public relations professional standards and practices, and legal obligations, protocols and policies.

Elements of the Performance

- Comply with codes of ethics, professional standards and practices and legal obligations to avoid potential conflicts of interest and damaging individual or organizational reputations
- Adapt to differences in organizational and industry protocols and practices to support organizational effectiveness and enhance work performance
- Respect intellectual property rights, comply with copyright law, attribute sources as required to preclude plagiarism, and fact check to avoid liability for defamation
- Comply with human and consumer rights legislation (e.g., *Human Rights Code*, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.19, *Consumer Protection Act, 2002*, S.O. 2002, c. 30, Sched. A, etc.) to support organizational objectives and serve the public interest
- Comply with statutory requirements related to accessibility of communications (e.g., *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, S.O. 2005, c. 11), and statutes and regulations pertaining to the collection, use and dissemination of information (e.g., *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act*, S.C. 2000, c. 5, *Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004*, S.O. 2004, c. 3, Sched. A, *Privacy Act*, R.S.C. 1975, c. P-21, *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. F.31, etc.)
- Set an example of appropriate behaviour in the workplace to support others to avoid the consequences of unethical, unprofessional and illegal conduct
- Explain how organizational behaviour theories may be used to influence organizational culture
- Suggest appropriate responses to public relations ethical issues and dilemmas
- Apply principles of corporate social responsibility and work in ways that minimize negative impacts and optimize social, environmental and economic benefits
- Work within established practices, procedures and protocols for a variety of public relations functions (e.g., media relations, internal/corporate communications, government relations, community relations, investor/donor relations, special events, reputation/issues/crisis management, fundraising, sponsorship, etc.)

* *See Glossary*

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

keep current with emerging social and economic trends, and local, national and global issues to enhance public relations plans and activities, support organizational effectiveness and stakeholder* relationships, and guide ongoing personal professional development.

Elements of the Performance

- Identify trends and issues that may impact or influence stakeholder* relationships, public relations activities or organizational effectiveness
- Contribute to informed discussions and report on the impact of trends and issues on the public relations profession, activities, stakeholder*, or organizational effectiveness
- Select and use appropriate monitoring tools to stay informed of relevant trends and issues impacting the public relations profession and an organization's reputation, effectiveness, stakeholder* relationships and public relations activities
- Suggest alternative approaches to address the impact of trends and issues on the planning and implementation of public relations communications and activities
- Determine the reliability, authority, legality, relevance and currency of information and information sources
- Track issues and trends to identify opportunities for ongoing personal professional development and career advancement and to support lifelong learning
- Contribute ideas to support organizational effectiveness based on emerging trends and issues

* See *Glossary*

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

select and use current and emerging technologies to enhance the quality and delivery of public relations activities and support organizational effectiveness.

Elements of the Performance

- Select and use appropriate software and applications proficiently and effectively to complete tasks and enhance work performance (e.g., word-processing, spreadsheet, presentation, graphic design, content management, social media, etc.)
- Work effectively across a variety of current and emerging technology platforms and information systems
- Select and use technology to effectively deliver communications, collect feedback, and monitor media for information impacting public relations activities and organizational effectiveness
- Recommend current and emerging technologies to encourage collaboration among stakeholders* and enhance communications within organizational structures
- Analyze the advantages and disadvantages of a range of technologies and channels* to support their use for public relations activities and organizational effectiveness
- Use current and emerging applications and tools to track deadlines, progress and completion of work, organize files, contacts, lists and schedules to enhance work performance and organizational effectiveness
- Update online and digital content independently and collaboratively to support the quality, delivery and timeliness of public relations activities
- Manage online personal and organizational profile and account settings to support organizational effectiveness

* *See Glossary*

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

select strategies and tools to build and maintain professional relationships to support public relations activities, organizational objectives and career development.

Elements of the Performance

- Maintain contact lists of media representatives, suppliers, colleagues, and other appropriate stakeholders*
- Investigate the benefits, resources and networking opportunities associated with membership in communications and public relations professional associations
- Use appropriate applications and monitor account settings to create and maintain a professional online presence (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc.)
- Communicate professionally and ethically with public relations professionals to develop trust, provide mutual support, enhance work performance and career development
- Identify opportunities to expand professional network on a regular basis to enhance work performance and career development
- Share knowledge, skills and experience with others to build professional relationships
- Adapt as necessary to differences in organizational and/or sector protocols and practices (e.g., corporate, small business, not-for-profit, agency, government, etc.) to encourage trust and mutual respect

* *See Glossary*

Glossary

Channel(s) - The method, means and/or medium used for communication.

Stakeholder(s) - Any individual, group or organization that is impacted by or may have an impact on another organization or its public relations communications and activities.

III. Essential Employability Skills

All graduates of the Public Relations (Ontario College Advanced Diploma) program of instruction must have reliably demonstrated the essential employability skills learning outcomes listed on the following pages, in addition to achieving the vocational learning outcomes and meeting the general education requirement.

Context

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

The teaching and attainment of these EES for students in, and graduates from, Ontario's colleges of applied arts and technology are anchored in a set of three fundamental assumptions:

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

Skill Categories

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

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

Application and Implementation

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

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

SKILL CATEGORY	DEFINING SKILLS: Skill areas to be demonstrated by graduates:	LEARNING OUTCOMES: The levels of achievement required by graduates. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to:
COMMUNICATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading • Writing • Speaking • Listening • Presenting • Visual literacy 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. communicate clearly, concisely and correctly in the written, spoken and visual form that fulfills the purpose and meets the needs of the audience. 2. respond to written, spoken or visual messages in a manner that ensures effective communication.
NUMERACY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding and applying mathematical concepts and reasoning • Analyzing and using numerical data • Conceptualizing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. execute mathematical operations accurately.
CRITICAL THINKING & PROBLEM SOLVING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyzing • Synthesizing • Evaluating • Decision making • Creative and innovative thinking 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. apply a systematic approach to solve problems. 2. use a variety of thinking skills to anticipate and solve problems.

SKILL CATEGORY	DEFINING SKILLS: Skill areas to be demonstrated by graduates:	LEARNING OUTCOMES: The levels of achievement required by graduates. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to:
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gathering and managing information • Selecting and using appropriate tools and technology for a task or a project • Computer literacy • Internet skills 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>locate, select, organize and document information using appropriate technology and information systems.</i> 2. <i>analyze, evaluate and apply relevant information from a variety of sources.</i>
INTERPERSONAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teamwork • Relationship management • Conflict resolution • Leadership • Networking 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>show respect for the diverse opinions, values, belief systems and contributions of others.</i> 2. <i>interact with others in groups or teams in ways that contribute to effective working relationships and the achievement of goals.</i>
PERSONAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing self • Managing change and being flexible and adaptable • Engaging in reflective practices • Demonstrating personal responsibility 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>manage the use of time and other resources to complete projects.</i> 2. <i>take responsibility for one's own actions, decisions and their consequences.</i>

IV. General Education Requirement

All graduates of the Public Relations (Ontario College Advanced Diploma) program must have met the general education requirement described on the following pages, in addition to achieving the vocational and essential employability skills learning outcomes.

Requirement

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

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

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

Purpose

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

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

Themes

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

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

1. Arts in Society:

Rationale:

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

Content:

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

2. Civic Life:

Rationale:

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

Content:

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

3. Social and Cultural Understanding:

Rationale:

Knowledge of the patterns and precedents of the past provide the means for a person to gain an awareness of his or her place in contemporary culture and society. In addition to this awareness, students will acquire a sense of the main currents of their culture and that of other cultures over an extended period of time in order to link personal history to the broader study of culture.

Content:

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

4. Personal Understanding:

Rationale:

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

Content:

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

5. Science and Technology:

Rationale:

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

Similarly, the various applications and developments in the area of technology have an increasing impact on all aspects of human endeavour and have numerous social, economic and philosophical implications. For example, the operation of computers to process data at high speed has invoked an interaction between machines and the human mind that is unique in human history. This and other technological developments have a powerful impact on how we deal with many of the complex questions in our society.

Content:

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