Police Foundations Program Standard

The approved program standard for Police Foundations program of instruction leading to an Ontario College Diploma delivered by Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (MTCU funding code 53008)

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Inquiries regarding specific Police Foundations programs offered by colleges of applied arts and technology in Ontario should be directed to the relevant college.

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I.   Introduction

This document is the Program Standard for the Police Foundations program of instruction leading to an Ontario College Diploma delivered by Ontario colleges of applied arts and technology (MTCU funding code 53008).

Development of System-Wide Program Standards

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

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

Program Standards

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

- **Vocational standard** (the vocationally specific learning outcomes which apply to the program of instruction in question),

- **Essential employability skills** (the essential employability skills learning outcomes which apply to all programs of instruction); and

- **General education requirement** (the requirement for general education in postsecondary programs of instruction).

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

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

The Expression of Program Standards as Vocational Learning Outcomes

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

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

The Presentation of the Vocational Learning Outcomes

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

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

The Development of a Program Standard

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

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

Updating the Program Standard

The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities will undertake regular reviews of the vocational learning outcomes for this program to ensure that the Police Foundations 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 telephone number noted on the inside cover page.

II. Vocational Standard

All graduates of the Police Foundations program of instruction must have achieved the eleven vocational learning outcomes listed in the following pages, in addition to achieving the essential employability skills learning outcomes and meeting the general education requirement.

Preamble

A guiding principle of the Police Foundations program is the requirement that students, through a variety of experiences, achieve a basic grounding in the policing and law enforcement fields. This principle makes it possible for students to develop and reliably demonstrate their willingness to serve and protect the public and to act justly to ensure respect for human rights and freedoms when interacting with all individuals in their community.

Graduates of the program are prepared to use critical thinking, problem solving and decision-making skills to mitigate risks and maintain order in crisis*, conflict* and emergency* situations. They will have developed and implemented plans to attain personal target levels of health, fitness and well-being appropriate to a career in those physically demanding, high-stress occupations that are typical in the policing and law enforcement fields. This program also equips the graduates with the technology skills needed to deal with an increasingly computerized work environment. In all duties and responsibilities, they are ready to: apply relevant sociological and psychological theories to real life situations; keep current with criminology research and trends; perform tasks safely and ethically; communicate effectively verbally, electronically and in writing; work independently, simultaneously with the ability to work collaboratively in a team environment; and comply with current legislation, regulations, standards and organizational policies. Additionally, graduates will have a professional development plan to advance their careers.

Graduates of the Police Foundations program are awarded an Ontario College Diploma. The program prepares graduates for a wide range of meaningful, exciting and challenging careers within the Canadian justice system and enables them to meet or exceed the minimal academic requirement for applicants seeking admission to Ontario Regional and Municipal Police Forces, the Ontario Provincial Police, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Canadian Forces Military Police (as non-commissioned members). Prior to employment, graduates who wish to work in the policing field may be required to complete employer-specific orientation and training, as well as other employment-related screening as part of their recruitment. To prepare for an entry-level policing position (i.e., Police Constable), graduates are generally expected to meet basic requirements and make their way through a multi-staged selection process. The Police Sector Council, representing police services from across Canada, outlines the common selection requirements necessary for successful performance as a Constable.

The Police Foundations program gives graduates a wide scope of skills and knowledge, and the opportunity to follow their interests. Accordingly, there are numerous career opportunities for training, specialization, movement and advancement in a variety of ancillary occupations within the Canadian law enforcement field. These may include private police, university and college police, as well as transportation, waterways and parks police.

Graduates can find employment opportunities in such job sectors as Police Services, Canada Border Services, Correctional Services, the Canadian Forces, private civil and criminal investigation, private security, court enforcement and security, municipal by-law enforcement and the Ministry of Natural Resources (i.e., Park Rangers). There are also opportunities for graduates to pursue further educational qualifications through articulation agreements between the colleges and universities. Students should contact individual colleges for further details of a college's agreements with universities.

See glossary

Synopsis of the Vocational Learning Outcomes
Police Foundations (Ontario College Diploma)

The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to

1. complete all tasks in compliance with pertinent legislation, as well as policing standards, regulations and guidelines.
2. analyze all relevant information and make effective and legally defensible* decisions in accordance with ethical and professional standards.
3. be accountable for one's actions when carrying out all tasks.
4. develop and implement ongoing effective strategies for personal and professional development.
5. ensure the respect of human rights and freedoms in all interactions.
6. work co-operatively in multidisciplinary teams to achieve mutual goals.
7. collaborate in the development and implementation of community policing* strategies.
8. monitor, evaluate and document behaviours, situations and events accurately and discreetly in compliance with legal, professional, ethical and organizational requirements.
9. mitigate risks and maintain order by applying effective strategies in crisis*, conflict* and emergency* situations.
10. take positive actions to help crime victims.
11. conduct investigations by collecting, documenting, preserving and presenting admissible evidence*.

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*

complete all tasks in compliance with pertinent legislation, as well as policing standards, regulations and guidelines.

Elements of the Performance

- describe all the steps to create laws and regulations, from identification of need to royal assent
- determine how political changes and trends, public opinion and special interest groups influence the creation of laws, regulations, policies and practices that govern police services
- distinguish among the various areas of government and their roles in creating laws, regulations and policies that influence police work
- delineate the jurisdictional scope and limits of international laws, federal laws, provincial and territorial laws, municipal by-laws, Royal Commissions, public inquiries and tribunals
- discern the similarities and differences among the criminal justice system, the youth criminal justice system, the civil justice system and the restorative justice system in Canada
- differentiate and accurately categorize indictable, hybrid and summary offences
- outline the historical development and current status of Aboriginal peoples in Canada
- conduct oneself in compliance with standards, policies, procedures and practices covered by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 1982* and all applicable codes, acts, regulations and prohibitions, as well as the legislation governing police authority and power
- conduct oneself in a manner that does not undermine the public trust in law enforcement personnel
- intervene appropriately in cases of unprofessional conduct such as any disgraceful or disorderly action that could bring discredit to law enforcement personnel
- perform all tasks within the scope of practice of the responsibilities and liabilities associated with duty of care, use of force, search and seizure, powers of arrest and police discretion
- detail the procedures necessary to lay charges in compliance with federal and provincial legislation
- protect confidentiality and privacy in accordance with legislation, such as the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act*, *2000* (PIPEDA), *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, *1990* (FIPPA), *Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004* (PHIPA) and the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, *1990* (MFIPPA)

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

analyze all relevant information and make effective and legally defensible* decisions in accordance with ethical and professional standards.

Elements of the Performance

- analyze how group, organizational or sociocultural biases can influence personal biases
- analyze how personal biases and values affect one's perception, decisions and behaviour
- analyze ethical dilemmas that can arise in various situations
- implement decision-making strategies that are consistent with the ethical standards of police services
- make credible and just choices with an attitude of objectivity based on ethical decision-making principles
- use effective and legally defensible* information and intelligence gathering techniques that contribute to the decision-making process, including observation, research and consultation
- determine and assess the risks and vulnerabilities in crisis*, conflict* and emergency* situations
- identify, prioritize and select alternate courses of action in consultation with peers, stakeholders and supervisors
- apply timely, legally defensible* and effective problem-solving strategies in crisis*, conflict* and emergency* situations
- evaluate and take steps to enhance the effectiveness of personal decision-making techniques

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

be accountable for one's actions when carrying out all tasks.

Elements of the Performance

- explain the rationale and necessity for integrity and credibility in upholding the law
- anticipate issues and potential problems, and consult with the appropriate authorities on taking appropriate actions when necessary
- work effectively with or without supervision
- set priorities and complete all tasks in an organized and timely manner in accordance with organizational policies and procedures
- exhibit professionalism through appropriate language level, deportment, attire, hygiene and grooming
- perform all tasks in accordance with occupational health and safety standards
- wear appropriate and approved protective clothing and use protective equipment when needed to ensure safety and security
- articulate the legal justifications for one's actions
- discuss the consequences of inappropriate actions and the corresponding discipline processes covered by the *Police Services Act, 1990*
- describe the obligations surrounding "whistle-blowing" in relation to illegal activities of law enforcement personnel
- use existing and emerging mobile and smart technologies with full knowledge of how personal online information reflects on one's moral character and habits, and is available for the world, including colleagues and employers to see
- be aware of the value of discretion, professionalism and courtesy when posting personal information on social networking sites

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

develop and implement ongoing effective strategies for personal and professional development.

Elements of the Performance

- identify hiring requirements for careers in police services and law enforcement
- promote the value of health, fitness and a wellness lifestyle for law enforcement professionals
- apply effective time management and organizational techniques to all aspects of work
- employ appropriate self-care strategies and resources to manage stress and optimize personal wellness and job performance while minimizing the potential for injury and mental and physical exhaustion
- develop effective ways to maintain composure and refrain from negative actions when provoked or faced with opposition or escalating tension
- develop, implement, monitor, evaluate and modify a personalized program to enhance physical performance
- keep pace with and adapt to changing workforce demands and trends, as well as technological and scientific advances in the law enforcement field
- develop learning strategies and plan self-directed learning activities to expand one's skill base
- participate in learning and professional development opportunities within public service organizations and community volunteer agencies
- conduct periodic self-assessments and seek out and act upon constructive feedback to enhance performance

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

ensure the respect of human rights and freedoms in all interactions.

Elements of the Performance

- uphold the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 1982*, *Canadian Human Rights Act*, *1985* and all pertinent provincial or territorial Human Rights Codes
- act equitably and justly with individuals, groups and communities
- recognize and adapt to the unique characteristics in verbal and non-verbal communication when dealing with individuals
- explain the rationale and necessity for all victims, witnesses and suspects to be entitled to the same high level of professional courtesy
- communicate and collaborate effectively with individuals in an empathetic, respectful and understanding manner
- build partnerships with community group leaders
- support organizational policies that promote an inclusive, equitable, respectful, safe and supportive workplace environment
- recognize and challenge situations involving harassment, bullying and violence
- describe what constitutes racial bias, racial profiling and racial discrimination in the provision of services
- recognize and challenge racism, sexism and other individual and institutionalized forms of discrimination

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

work co-operatively in multidisciplinary teams to achieve mutual goals.

Elements of the Performance

- develop and promote mutual goals by collaborating with others and encouraging a positive team environment
- employ a variety of effective team-building strategies to maintain safe and positive working relationships
- assume various roles in multidisciplinary teams, including team leader, facilitator or team builder
- develop and implement ways to enhance the functioning of a multidisciplinary team in emergency* situations
- implement strategies to maintain team cohesion in everyday working group situations and in crisis*, conflict* and emergency* situations
- determine when and how to assist and support team members
- adopt a positive work ethic and support a working group environment that is free of harassment and discrimination
- carry out team-based law enforcement and emergency* measures in a safe, confident and non-threatening manner
- contribute to effective and efficient team communications by employing information and communications technologies (ICT), such as mobile and wireless communication devices for transmitting text, voice, video and data
- employ standard communication conventions, such as the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), law-based acronyms and naming convention abbreviations
- use appropriate, concise and relevant terminology to improve interactions with colleagues, professionals and the public
- implement strategies to deal with inappropriate or unethical behaviours of any team members

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

collaborate in the development and implementation of community policing* strategies.

Elements of the Performance

- analyze the various root causes, forms and patterns of criminal behaviour based on criminology, psychology and sociology theories
- analyze the impact of social problems on individuals, families, groups and communities
- explain the interrelationships among the various community agencies, stakeholders in Canada's justice system and police services
- research and evaluate policing initiatives, such as community engagement and mobilization
- contribute to policing initiatives, such as the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police (OACP) Mobilization and Engagement Model of Community Policing*
- describe to community members how to access Canada's justice system and appropriate community agencies and services
- research, document and analyze community security concerns, criminal activities and crime rates
- help members of the community to identify mutual goals and engage in creative, collaborative and community-based problem-solving strategies to accomplish their goals (e.g., to make neighbourhoods safe)
- contribute to the development of practical measures for reducing and preventing crime and violence in communities using evidence-based practices and procedures
- identify community resources and leaders to contribute to the development of effective and sustainable partnerships among community agencies and groups
- collaborate with community group leaders to advocate for systemic change to improve the quality of life in the community

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

monitor, evaluate and document behaviours, situations and events accurately and discreetly in compliance with legal, professional, ethical and organizational requirements.

Elements of the Performance

- identify the essential elements of offences involving existing and emerging computer, mobile and smart technologies, the Internet and electronic data
- recognize what behaviours, events or circumstances may trigger disruptive or dangerous situations in order to minimize their occurrence
- recognize symptoms and behaviours that can be indicative of common mental disorders
- recognize the signs and symptoms of impairment from being under the influence of alcohol, drugs and other psychoactive substances
- recognize reasonable and probable grounds that a person is a danger to himself or herself, others or property
- interpret verbal and non-verbal communication cues to predict behaviours
- monitor, record and assess behaviours accurately and discreetly in compliance with legal, professional, ethical and organizational requirements
- use research, observation and interviewing techniques, as well as appropriate equipment to collect and preserve admissible evidence*
- record statements and observations accurately and objectively
- maintain clear and precise written or electronic journals to ensure that documented information is concise, factual and objective
- prepare documents that provide an accurate analysis and description of information appropriate to the end-user

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

mitigate risks and maintain order by applying effective strategies in crisis*, conflict* and emergency* situations.

Elements of the Performance

- apply approved protocols and techniques to prevent, contain, mitigate or resolve crisis*, conflict* and emergency* situations
- apply critical thinking processes and effective problem-solving techniques when intervening in crisis*, conflict* and emergency* situations
- contribute to the development and revision of security and emergency* preparedness and response plans
- take part in emergency* training procedures to strengthen the surge capacity of local emergency* service providers in a major incident or disaster
- act with discretion, tact and calm when provoked or when working under stressful conditions
- ensure protection from injury in crisis*, conflict* and emergency* situations by taking appropriate precautionary measures
- apply lawful conflict* management measures to prevent harm to oneself or others, including and not limited to non-physical interventions, conflict* reduction, mediation and conciliation
- take charge and assert authority within the bounds of duty of care when required (e.g., to prevent those at risk from being harmed or harming others)
- secure the environment to reduce the risk of harm, danger or loss in a incident scene

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

take positive actions to help crime victims.

Elements of the Performance

- recognize the physical, emotional, psychological, financial and social impact of crime and violence on victims, their families, friends, associates and community members
- research and analyze patterns of offending and victimization
- take preventive actions to manage and reduce the risk of victimization
- develop strategies to respond appropriately and effectively to the needs of crime victims and traumatized witnesses
- protect the safety of crime victims and traumatized witnesses and treat them with compassion, sensitivity, dignity and respect
- inform crime victims of their rights under the *Victim's Bill of Rights, 1995* and their right to seek compensation through the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board
- inform crime victims about the availability of restorative justice programs (e.g., victim-offender mediation and other victim-offender reconciliation and restitution programs)
- advise and follow up with victims to ensure they have initiated contact with victim services or the appropriate community agencies

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

conduct investigations by collecting, documenting, preserving and presenting admissible evidence*.

Elements of the Performance

- apply rules of evidence in accordance with Canadian legal requirements
- observe, research, collect and preserve admissible evidence* in accordance with forensic requirements and accepted rules of practice
- identify situations that require investigation and apply effective investigation and admissible evidence* collection techniques
- apply fundamental investigative techniques, including and not limited to preliminary, detailed and follow-up investigations of criminal offences
- conduct interviews to collect relevant information using professional, legal and ethical methods
- identify inconsistencies in the statements of interviewees and witnesses and substantiate or validate information gathered
- document accurately and objectively the relevant facts from interviews and preserve admissible evidence* in accordance with organizational policies and procedures
- document an accurate written account of daily activities
- analyze critically, and derive conclusions from, all information and evidence gathered during an investigation
- prepare clear and precise court documents that adhere to disclosure rules
- contribute to the preparation and presentation of a full report for the court, a public inquiry, tribunal, commission or an employer as required
- adhere to courtroom procedures, practices and protocols and testify clearly, precisely and in a professional manner

Glossary

Admissible Evidence – evidence, such as testimony, documents, data or physical objects, that is entitled or deemed worthy and relevant to be admitted, allowed or conceded as proof of the existence of a fact before a court in compliance with the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 1982* and the rules of evidence in the Ontario *Evidence Act, 1990* and the *Canada Evidence Act, 1985*.

Community Policing – in Ontario, community policing deals with a continuum of police services ranging from law enforcement and crime reduction to proactive crime prevention strategies by engaging the people in communities to increase their own and others' safety, security and well-being, and by mobilizing the people in communities to deal with the root causes of crime and insecurity in their neighbourhoods.
Source: Adapted from The Community Policing Committee, Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police (Spring, 2009)

Conflict – a state of antagonism, opposition, resistance, strife or struggle involving two or more individuals, or larger social groups, that have mutually incompatible goals, ideas, views, desires, needs and/or values.

Crisis – the turning point or decisive moment at which a situation either will or will not result in harm or loss of life and/or loss or serious damage to possessions, property and/or other vital interests.

Emergency – a situation that presents an immediate risk to health, life, property or the environment and requires urgent action to prevent, alleviate or mitigate the harmful or dangerous effects of an incident or disaster.

Legally Defensible – an action, conclusion, decision or statement that is capable of being defended, upheld or justified within the bounds of the law.

III. Essential Employability Skills

All graduates of the Police Foundations 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	• Reading • Writing • Speaking • Listening • Presenting • Visual literacy	1. *communicate clearly, concisely and correctly in the written, spoken and visual form that fulfills the purpose and meets the needs of the audience.* 2. *respond to written, spoken or visual messages in a manner that ensures effective communication.*
NUMERACY	• Understanding and applying mathematical concepts and reasoning • Analyzing and using numerical data • Conceptualizing	3. *execute mathematical operations accurately.*
CRITICAL THINKING & PROBLEM SOLVING	• Analyzing • Synthesizing • Evaluating • Decision making • Creative and innovative thinking	4. *apply a systematic approach to solve problems.* 5. *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	• Gathering and managing information • Selecting and using appropriate tools and technology for a task or a project • Computer literacy • Internet skills	6. *locate, select, organize and document information using appropriate technology and information systems.* 7. *analyze, evaluate and apply relevant information from a variety of sources.*
INTERPERSONAL	• Teamwork • Relationship management • Conflict resolution • Leadership • Networking	8. *show respect for the diverse opinions, values, belief systems and contributions of others.* 9. *interact with others in groups or teams in ways that contribute to effective working relationships and the achievement of goals.*
PERSONAL	• Managing self • Managing change and being flexible and adaptable • Engaging in reflective practices • Demonstrating personal responsibility	10. *manage the use of time and other resources to complete projects.* 11. *take responsibility for one's own actions, decisions and their consequences.*

IV. General Education Requirement

All graduates of the Police Foundations 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.