

Tuition and Ancillary Fees

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Purpose and Application

Each college is a non-share corporation and except as may be varied by regulation has incidental powers set out in the [Corporations Act](#), including the power to establish fees.

The [Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Act, 2002](#) authorizes the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities to issue policy directives that are binding on colleges in relation to the manner in which they carry out their objects or conduct their affairs.

This binding policy directive applies to all colleges of applied arts and technology. Except where noted otherwise, the directive sets out parameters for establishing tuition fees and related requirements for students and programs that are eligible for funding under the College Funding Framework. Colleges are also asked to consider applying the policies to programs or student categories that are ineligible for funding under the College Funding Framework (e.g., international students) where feasible and appropriate. The binding policy directive does not apply to Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities-funded apprenticeship programs, except for the postsecondary component of co-op diploma apprenticeship programs. In addition, the binding policy directive addresses ancillary fees, tuition billing, tuition fee refunds, accountability and reporting requirements and the allocation of revenue from tuition fee increases to student assistance.

The directives included in this December 2013 version of the *Minister's Binding Policy Directive* and *Operating Procedure on Tuition and Ancillary Fees* replace any existing provisions included in the *Tuition Fee Framework Guidelines for Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology, 2013-14 to 2016-17*. Except where noted, this Binding Policy Directive is effective for the 2013-14 fiscal year.

Non-compliance with this binding policy directive by a college, in addition to any other steps authorized in the [Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Act, 2002](#) and related regulations could result in a deduction from a college's allocation under the College Funding Framework.

For further information regarding this binding policy directive, the Ministry contact can be found at the following [link](http://caat.edu.gov.on.ca) (caat.edu.gov.on.ca).

Principles

- Tuition fees are an important part of funding a healthy postsecondary education system.
- Students and their parents, as direct beneficiaries of postsecondary education, should contribute to the funding of that education through the payment of tuition fees.
- Tuition fees should not be a barrier to qualified and willing students being able to obtain a postsecondary education. The government and colleges have joint responsibility to ensure that financing is available to such students to help them access college programs.
- Students and their parents need reliable information regarding the cost of programs of instruction to be able to plan for postsecondary education.
- Tuition fee increases are to be linked to access for students.

Glossary

Ancillary fees: Fees charged to support services and activities distinct from academic programming or general overhead for the institution. Examples of ancillary fees include convocation fees, student activity fees, athletic fees, health care and insurance fees, field trip fees and fees associated with the cost of buildings such as student centres.

Compulsory ancillary fees: Ancillary fees that a student is required to pay in order to enrol in or successfully complete any course or program of instruction. There are two types of compulsory ancillary fees:

1. Program ancillary fees which are compulsory for students in applicable programs; and
2. Institutional ancillary fees which are compulsory for all students.

Auditing student: An individual who has declared attendance in a course or program of instruction on a non-participating basis and who is not seeking evaluation.

College Funding Framework allocation: The portion of the provincial operating grant for colleges that is distributed among colleges on the basis of each college's historical

average enrolment in courses and programs of instruction eligible for funding. For the purpose of this binding policy directive, reference to the College Funding Framework allocation includes funding provided under the Nursing Operating Grants.

College-university collaborative program: A concurrent program where students are studying simultaneously at both a college and university during an academic year or a joint/integrated program where students are taking the program sequentially at one institution and then the other.

Co-op diploma apprenticeship program: A program of instruction that combines an Ontario College Diploma program and apprenticeship training leading to a Certificate of Qualification. This program enables individuals to train as apprentices in a specific trade while obtaining an associated college diploma.

Entitlement: For the purpose of these guidelines, an entitlement is an amount greater than zero of student loans or grants that a student qualifies for through the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP). The Ministry notifies institutions of students' entitlements through the institution's daily year-to-date file.

Full-time student: An individual who is enrolled in a college program of instruction for at least 70 % of the student contact hours or 66 $\frac{2}{3}$ % of the courses required for the program of instruction in a given semester or reporting period. A student granted advanced standing or an exemption from a course is not considered to be enrolled in the course.

High demand program of instruction: A postsecondary program of instruction eligible for funding under the College Funding Framework for which colleges have the discretion to charge fees above the maximum permitted for regular fee programs.

International student: A foreign national who is authorized under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (Canada) to enrol as a student in an educational institution in Canada.

Late fees: Both lump-sum and percentage-based fees charged over and above a student's tuition fees if a student does not pay tuition and/or ancillary fees before payment deadlines.

Part-time student: An individual who is enrolled in one or more courses comprising less than 70 % of the student contact hours or 66⅔ % of the courses required for a full-time program of instruction in a given semester or reporting period.

Per-term billing: Dividing the total tuition fees for the academic year by the number of academic terms that the student is scheduled to participate in for the academic year, and requiring a subsequent payment each term.

Postsecondary program of instruction: A group of related courses that conforms to the levels of learning articulated in the Credentials Framework and leads to the awarding of a credential. There are two types of postsecondary programs of instruction:

- **Basic postsecondary program:** Conforms to the levels of learning articulated in the Credentials Framework and leads to the awarding of one of the following credentials: Ontario College Certificate, Ontario College Diploma or Ontario College Advanced Diploma (see Minister's Binding Policy Directive on [Framework for Programs of Instruction](#): Appendix A). Basic programs also include joint college-university programs that lead to the awarding of a degree by a university partner.
- **Post-basic program:** Conforms to the levels of learning articulated in the Credentials Framework and leads to the awarding of an Ontario College Graduate Certificate or an applied degree (see Minister's Binding Policy Directive on Framework for Programs of Instruction: Appendix A).

Prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR): A process that uses a variety of tools to help learners reflect on, identify, articulate and demonstrate past learning. Prior learning can be acquired through study, work and other life experiences that are not recognized through formal transfer of credit mechanisms.

- **Challenge process:** A method of assessment, other than portfolio assessment, developed and evaluated by subject-expert faculty to measure an individual's learning achievement against course learning outcomes. The process measures demonstrated learning through a variety of written and non-written evaluation methods for the purpose of awarding credit without requiring enrolment in a course.
- **Portfolio assessment:** A method of assessment that involves the evaluation of an organized collection of materials developed by a learner that records learning

achievements and relates them to personal, educational or occupational goals, in this case, achievement of stated learning outcomes of college courses or programs.

- **Portfolio development course:** A course in which students develop a portfolio for subsequent assessment for prior learning assessment and recognition purposes.

Regular fee program: A postsecondary program of instruction for which colleges must establish a tuition fee within the minimum and maximum fees specified in Appendix A in order to be eligible for funding under the College Funding Framework. Regular fee programs include the following types of activity:

- full-time regular postsecondary basic programs
- part-time activity
- tuition-short programs
- prior learning assessment and recognition

Student Access Guarantee: The name of a set of ministry policies and processes that coordinate institutional and government financial aid to students attending public Ontario universities and colleges, so as to more fully meet students' assessed financial needs. These policies and processes include both mandatory provisions and voluntary provisions.

Student contact hour (SCH): A unit representing one student enrolled in one required hour of instruction.

Subsequent payment: An amount that is paid after the initial tuition deposit as part of the student's total fees, to reduce the amount of fees owing for the academic year.

Tuition deposit: An amount that is paid as part of the student's total tuition fees for the academic year to secure a student's enrolment at a college.

Tuition fees: Fees charged to students representing their contribution towards the operating and capital costs of academic program delivery and general overhead for the institution.

Tuition short program of instruction: A basic postsecondary program that generally is less than 52 weeks in duration, is designed to prepare students for employment or career advancement or to provide vocational updating or academic upgrading, and

normally leads to a college certificate as defined in the Credentials Framework (see the Minister's Binding Policy Directive on [Framework for Programs of Instruction](#): Appendix A).

Binding Policy Directive

1. The board of governors of a college must approve tuition fees and ancillary fees for all programs of instruction and courses delivered by the college.

Setting Tuition Fees

2. Colleges may not establish fees in addition to tuition with respect to recovering costs relating to the operating and capital costs of academic program delivery or general overhead for the college.
3. All full-time students enrolled at the same time in the same year of the same program of instruction are to pay the same tuition fee.
4. All part-time students enrolled in the same course at the same time are to pay the same tuition fee.
5. Tuition fees for programs must be equal to or above the minimum fees; and equal to or below the maximum fees set out in Appendix A: Minimum and Maximum Tuition Fees for Regular Programs.
6. Notwithstanding Section 5, colleges may establish tuition fees for new applied degree programs that exceed the maximum listed in Appendix A, provided they do not exceed the average tuition fees of all applied degree programs in the college sector. Regardless of the tuition fee established, all applied degree programs are deemed to be high demand.
7. Notwithstanding Section 5, colleges may establish tuition fees for designated high demand programs that exceed the maximum listed in Appendix A, provided they do not exceed the maximum fee rates charged by other colleges for comparable Ontario programs. A college may establish high demand fees for the following types of programs of instruction:
 - I. Post-basic programs of instruction;

- II. Baccalaureate of Nursing programs of instruction offered in collaboration with a university;
- III. Basic postsecondary programs of instruction that satisfy the following criteria:
 - a. There is a high demand for instructional space;
 - b. Graduates have above average prospects for employment;
 - c. Graduates have the potential to earn an above average income; and
 - d. The aggregate enrolment in all basic postsecondary programs that are designated as high demand comprise up to 15% of basic full-time enrolment at the college.
- 8. All students seeking credit for the same course at the same time through the same prior learning assessment and recognition activity are to pay the same fee.
- 9. The tuition fee for a prior learning assessment and recognition activity must be equal to or above the minimum fees set out in Appendix A; and equal to or below the lesser of:
 - I. The maximum fees set out in Appendix A; or
 - II. The part-time fees that would be charged for the same course.

Annual Increases in Tuition Fees

- 10. For four years beginning in 2013-14, the overall average tuition fee increase for all students at an institution will be capped at 3.0% per year.
- 11. Subject to the overall average tuition fee increase cap:
 - I. Tuition for regular fee programs at colleges may increase by up to 3.0% annually.
 - II. Tuition for high demand programs may increase by up to 5.0% annually; with the following exceptions:

- a. Tuition fees for returning students who were enrolled in high demand programs in 2012-13 may increase by up to 4.0% annually until such time as these students could reasonably be expected to complete their program of instruction.
- b. Tuition fees for Collaborative Baccalaureate of Nursing programs may increase by up to 3.0% annually.

Tuition Policy Exceptions

12. Students with permanent, documented disabilities that require a reduced course load as a learning accommodation are entitled to pay a reduced tuition fee of \$20 per course once they have paid the equivalent in tuition fees as a student taking the same program in the approved duration and in the same academic years and terms. Details related to eligibility are set out in the operating procedure [Tuition and Ancillary Fees Reporting](#).
13. Colleges may also establish tuition fees below the minimum part-time fee per student contact hour, but not less than \$20 per course, for students that are:
 - I. Members of college staff;
 - II. Senior citizens;
 - III. Enrolled in field placement courses;
 - IV. Enrolled part-time in a full-time program of instruction where the total fees for the part-time courses taken would exceed the tuition fee if the student were full-time in the program; and
 - V. Other exceptional circumstances as determined by the college.
14. The enrolment of auditing students is not eligible for funding under the College Funding Framework. College boards of governors have full discretion to establish tuition fees for auditing students.
15. College boards of governors have full discretion to establish tuition fees for international students who are ineligible to be counted for funding under the College Funding Framework, provided that year-over-year increases of the

annual tuition fee for returning international students do not exceed 20.0 % until such time as these students could reasonably be expected to complete their program of instruction.

16. For all programs of instruction or courses that are ineligible for funding under the College Funding Framework, boards of governors are to establish tuition fees at levels they deem appropriate.

Tuition Fee Set-Aside and Student Access Guarantee

17. A college must, as part of its participation in the Student Access Guarantee, make financial aid available to full-time students enrolled in programs of instructions approved for Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) purposes who would otherwise have OSAP-assessed unmet need related to the amount by which their tuition, compulsory ancillary fees and/or their book, equipment and supply costs exceed annually ministry-established amounts.

The college's financial aid may be provided through bursaries, student scholarships, work study or employment between academic semesters. For second-entry programs aid may also be through access to private loans.

For details refer to the ministry's annual Student Access Guarantee Guidelines.

18. Tuition fee set-aside assistance to be disbursed annually will be set at the sum of the previous year's tuition fee set-aside (base level) multiplied by the percentage change in enrolment plus 10.0% of the change in average tuition fee multiplied by the previous year's enrolment. Tuition fee set-aside funds are to be used for student assistance purposes.

For details on tuition fee set-aside expenditure policies refer to the ministry's annual Tuition Fee Set-Aside Expenditure Guidelines.

Compulsory Ancillary Fees

19. Institutional compulsory ancillary fees may be increased or new fees added only through implementation of a protocol that has been jointly agreed to by the college administration and student government representatives and approved by the board of governors. Minimum requirements for the protocol are identified in the operating procedure [Tuition and Ancillary Fees Reporting](#).

20. Notwithstanding Section 19, the following types of institutional compulsory ancillary fees may be introduced or increased without observing the protocol referenced above:
- I. Existing fees established through student referenda, where the sponsor of the referenda was the college administration or a combination of the college administration and students. (College administrations are not to proceed with referenda concerning compulsory ancillary fees in the future unless provided for within the protocol).
 - II. Existing and future fees established by student governments, including those resulting from referenda sponsored by them.
 - III. Fees for transcripts and convocation ceremonies including items such as cap and gown rentals for graduation.
 - IV. System wide fees where, through a formal agreement, the students at all Ontario colleges pay a comparable fee for a comparable service. In the case of system-wide fees established as of the 2014-15 academic year, colleges must advise student governments about the potential impact of new system-wide fees, as well as potential timelines associated with the introduction of these new fees.
 - V. Fees for digital learning materials that are the property of the student and which can include test/assessment tools.
 - The Ministry considers the payment of tuition as supporting the cost of instruction and assessment. Where a course or program relies substantially on assessments that are included with a learning resource, such as an online textbook, the Ministry expects colleges to have a policy with respect to their students' interests in these situations. Such a policy could include a rebate to students of a portion of their textbook fees where bundled assessments represent a substantial portion of a student's mark for a course.
 - The Ministry acknowledges the contribution that these resources can make to the quality of teaching and learning, including support for adaptive learning and formative assessment. Colleges should be proactive in monitoring conditions attached to the use of learning resources by faculty and students, to ensure that these are consistent with institutional academic policies and values.

21. Any increase or expansion in the rate of institutional compulsory ancillary fees which would increase total institutional compulsory ancillary fees by more than 20% in one academic year must be approved through student referendum.
22. Institutions may not charge an ancillary fee for confirmation of credential completion or for providing a graduation certificate.

Tuition Billing

23. In 2012 and 2013, the Ministry consulted with stakeholders on the introduction of a system-wide approach to tuition billing practices, including payment deadlines and fees for late or partial payment. These policy changes are being introduced with the expectation that colleges will implement them for the 2014-15 academic year. The Ministry recognizes that some colleges, due to system changes required, may not be able to fully implement these changes until the 2015-16 academic year. These tuition billing practices will be mandatory as of 2015-16.
24. Colleges may not charge a fee for the administration of tuition deposits or subsequent billings.

Tuition Billing: Tuition Deposits

25. Colleges may require a tuition deposit from students before the start of their study term for the academic year.
26. The tuition deposit shall reduce the amount of tuition owed by the student and shall not be an additional fee over and above the course/program fees for the academic year.
27. The maximum tuition deposit that a college can require is 10 per cent of the student's total tuition fees for the academic year or \$500, whichever is greater.
28. Up to \$500 of the tuition deposit may be non-refundable. However, colleges shall make accommodations and refund deposits to students who withdraw for reasonable circumstances (e.g., parental or medical leave).
29. Colleges may require the tuition deposit no sooner than three (3) months prior to the first day of the month of the student's study period start (e.g., a tuition deposit

can be required as early as June 1st for study periods that begin anytime in September).

30. A tuition deposit can be charged to students enrolled in consecutive terms of study only once during the academic year, except in the case of:
- I. Students who take a term off from their studies. This exception does not include students who take a term off from their studies for education-related reasons such as a co-op/work term.
 - II. Students who elect to switch their program of study during the academic year.

Tuition Billing: Subsequent Payments

31. Subject to Section 33, colleges shall provide all students with the option of per-term billing. Colleges may do this for all students or can require students to opt-in to the per-term billing process. For the purpose of Sections 32 to 33, per-term billing refers to dividing the total tuition fees for the academic year by the number of academic terms that the student is scheduled to participate in for the academic year, and requiring a subsequent payment each term.
32. In the case of programs for which colleges do not utilize academic terms, the total tuition fees shall be divided as follows:

Total study period length	Minimum number of payments expected for per-term billing
Less than 21 weeks	1
21 to 40 weeks	2
More than 40 weeks	3

33. Colleges may charge subsequent payments in accordance with the following:

- I. Subsequent payments for students *without* an Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) entitlement one month prior to the study period start shall not be due sooner than:
 - Mid-November for the Winter term; and
 - One (1) month prior to the start date of the respective term, for all other terms.

- II. Subsequent payments for students *with* an Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) entitlement one month prior to the study period start shall not be due sooner than the start date of the respective term.
 - Colleges shall automatically administer per-term billing, without an opt-in requirement, for these students who have also elected on their OSAP application to have financial assistance provided under OSAP paid directly to their institution for the purpose of payment toward their tuition fees.
 - Colleges may not charge a fee for this later payment date or for providing this service to students.
 - Colleges may extend this option to students entitled to financial assistance through other programs (either from Ontario, the federal government or other jurisdictions).

Tuition Billing: Late Fees

34. While bearing in mind the need to ensure timeliness of tuition fee payments, late fees shall be reasonable and transparent to students.
 - Late fees are intended to ensure timeliness of tuition payment; and colleges are to establish reasonable late fee policies.

Requirement to Communicate Fees

35. All tuition and compulsory ancillary fees to be paid by students are to be published by colleges before the deadline for accepting offers of admission for new students, and by the registration deadline for returning students. Fees are not to be increased and new fees are not to be introduced following the deadline for accepting offers of admission or the registration deadline, as appropriate, for the semesters of a program or course delivery of a given tuition year.

36. All compulsory ancillary fees are to be adequately explained to students to enable them to understand the purpose of these fees and the materials, services or facilities to be made available through the payment of such fees.

Refund Policy

37. This tuition and ancillary fee refund policy applies to all students whether or not their enrolment is eligible for funding through the College Funding Framework. A college cannot require a student to waive his or her right to a refund as a condition of the student's enrolment in a full-time program.
38. Students who submit formal notification of withdrawal from a full-time program of instruction, are entitled to a refund of tuition and ancillary fees as follows:
- I. Within 10 business days of the beginning of a semester or the beginning of the period for which the student paid fees, students that are eligible for funding under the College Funding Framework are entitled to a refund of the full tuition and ancillary fees for the semester or program period less \$500, and a refund in full of any tuition and ancillary fees paid in advance for subsequent semesters.
 - II. Within 10 business days of the beginning of a semester or the beginning of the period for which the student paid fees, students paying international student fees are entitled to a refund of a portion of the full tuition and ancillary fees paid for the semester or program period as calculated according to the following equation:

$$\text{Refund} = \text{fees paid} - \frac{\text{international student tuition fee}}{\text{tuition fee for CFF students}} \times \$500$$

CFF Students= students that are eligible for funding under the College Funding Framework

As well, a refund in full is to be paid for any tuition and ancillary fees paid in advance for subsequent semesters.

- III. After 10 business days all students are entitled to a refund in full of any fees paid in advance for subsequent semesters.

- IV. For students of programs or colleges that do not utilize academic terms, “a refund in full of fees paid in advance for subsequent semesters”, refers to a refund of billings for future study periods, as defined in Section 32.
39. Notwithstanding Sections 37 and 38, refunds for co-op education semesters and part-time activity are at the discretion of the board of governors.

Ministry Reporting

40. Colleges are to submit the following reports to the ministry:
- I. audited enrolment;
 - II. tuition and ancillary fee report;
 - III. tuition fee set-aside expenditure report; and
 - IV. other reports as may be requested.
- Tuition fees and related items are to be calculated and reported as detailed in the operating procedure [Tuition and Ancillary Fees Reporting](#).

Summary of Responsibilities

Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology

The college is responsible for:

- Ensuring that tuition fees and ancillary fees for all courses and programs of instruction operated by the college are approved by the board of governors and in compliance with this Binding Policy Directive on Tuition and Ancillary Fees.
- Ensuring that information is made available to the college community, including students and potential students, regarding tuition and ancillary fees, the tuition and ancillary fee refund policy, the use of revenues from tuition and ancillary fee increases, and other aspects of policy related to tuition and ancillary fees.

- Consulting with students through the protocol for increasing or introducing ancillary fees.
- Submitting tuition and ancillary fee reports to the ministry at scheduled times.
- Utilizing revenue from tuition fee increases for student-aid purposes.
- Ensuring that financial aid as required under the Directive is available to Ontario students who would otherwise face financial need.

Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities

The ministry is responsible for:

- Communicating to colleges the legislative and policy framework and expected outcomes related to tuition and ancillary fees.
- Monitoring the activities of colleges to confirm that they are in compliance with legislation, this binding policy directive, government policies, and working with colleges to facilitate corrective action in cases of non-compliance.
- Notifying colleges of best practices identified and encouraging their implementation by colleges.

Appendix A: Minimum and Maximum Tuition Fees for Regular Programs

Program Type	Minimum	2013-14 Maximum	2014-15 Maximum	2015-16 Maximum	2016-17 Maximum
Full-time Postsecondary Annual Base Tuition Fees ¹	\$1,275.00	\$3,243.50	\$3,340.80	\$3,441.02	\$3,544.25
Full-Time Tuition Short Weekly Fees ²	\$35.65	\$90.70	\$93.42	\$96.22	\$99.10
Part-time Fee per Student Contact Hour ³	\$3.05	\$7.71	\$7.94	\$8.17	\$8.41
PLAR Fee per Challenge Process or Portfolio Assessment	\$20.00	\$178.01	\$183.35	\$188.85	\$194.51

Appendix B: Allowable Annual Tuition Fee Increases by Program Type

Program Type	Maximum Allowable Annual Base Increase in Tuition Fees
Full-time regular fee program Part-time regular fee per student contact hour (SCH)	3.0% for all students
Full-time high demand program Part-time high demand fee per student contact hour (SCH)	5.0% for new students; 4.0% for students in 2012-13
Full-time Collaborative Baccalaureate of Nursing Part-time Collaborative Baccalaureate of Nursing fee per student contact hour (SCH)	3.0% for all students
Full-time and part-time tuition short weekly fees	3.0% for all students
PLAR fee per challenge process or portfolio assessment	3.0% for all students
OVERALL AVERAGE TUITION INCREASE	3.0%