

Strategic Mandate Agreement (2014-17)

Between:

The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities

&

**Conestoga College Institute of Technology and
Advanced Learning**

ONTARIO'S VISION FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

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

CONESTOGA COLLEGE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY AND ADVANCED LEARNING VISION/MANDATE

Vision

- Recognition for excellence in polytechnic education.

Mission

- To **champion** innovation and excellence in career-focused education, training, and applied research.
- To **serve** the ever-changing needs of our diverse and growing community.
- To **inspire** students and employees to strive towards their highest potential.

PREAMBLE

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

The Strategic Mandate Agreement (SMA):

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

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

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

CONESTOGA COLLEGE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY AND ADVANCED LEARNING KEY AREAS OF DIFFERENTIATION

Conestoga College specializes in programs that are linked to its location in Canada's Technology Triangle, a centre of advanced technology, industrial research, design, and manufacturing enterprises. Conestoga has outlined a plan that includes expanded degree offerings, consistent with its status as an Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning.

With the support of industry partners, Conestoga has opened a new Centre for Entrepreneurship, emphasizing an entrepreneurial focus across all college programs.

ALIGNMENT WITH THE DIFFERENTIATION POLICY FRAMEWORK

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

1. JOBS, INNOVATION, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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

1.1 Areas of Institutional Strength

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

- Partnerships in engineering and manufacturing, food processing, trades, health and life sciences, and business areas (i.e., Schlegel Villages).
- Meeting the needs of the region's dynamic labour market.
- Developing applied research in areas of advanced manufacturing, business, and seniors care.
 - Received full Tri-Council eligibility through its work with Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR).
 - Awarded the CIHR/Schlegel Industrial Research Chair for Colleges in Seniors Care.
- Economic Impact Monitoring.

1.2 Additional Comments

- The Ministry acknowledges that Conestoga’s graduate employment rate in 2012-13 was 88.9%, in the top quartile among all colleges. Since 2009-10, Conestoga has been in the top quartile among all colleges for the number of students employed full-time in a related job six months after graduation (55% in 2012-13).

Institutional Strategies

- The Ministry notes that Conestoga is working to establish a new Centre for Smart Manufacturing (CSM) to serve as a hub and connect industry, faculty, students, academic institutions, government, and community partners.

1.3 Metrics

Institutional Metrics	System-Wide Metrics ¹
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Graduates remaining in the area• Adult population accessing college services• Businesses established by graduates• Local enterprises supported through applied research initiatives• Students and staff engaged in applied research projects• Number of Second Career students supported	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Graduate employment rates• Employer satisfaction rates• Number of graduates employed full-time in a related job

2. TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

2.1 Areas of Institutional Strength

Conestoga College offers programs through a number of delivery methods, including:

- Expanding participation in alternative and flexible learning through its new Learning Management System.
- Providing formal support to faculty through the Curriculum and Organizational Development Office in areas such as classroom management, evaluation, teaching methods, and accessibility.
- Providing students with opportunities to participate in experiential learning activities including:
 - Simulation
 - Campus Service Learning
 - Co-operative Education and Field Placements
 - Applied Research
 - Clinical Placements

2.2 Additional Comments

- The Ministry notes that since 2009-10 Conestoga has had strong first to second year retention rates (83.1% in 2012-13). Its graduation rate over the same period has been above the sector average (65.3% in 2012-13).
- The Ministry also acknowledges the steps Conestoga is taking to further develop teaching and learning, particularly through the College's support for faculty to enhance teaching skills and students to participate in experiential learning. Conestoga notes the importance of recognizing field and clinical placements, as well as the use of simulations.

2.3 Metrics

Institutional Metrics	System-Wide Metrics
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Graduate Satisfaction• Number of students involved in Student Life volunteer opportunities and experiential learning activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student Satisfaction Survey results• Graduation rates• Retention rates• Number of programs offered at institution with a co-op stream and number of students enrolled in these programs• Number of online course registrants, programs and courses at institution

3. STUDENT POPULATION

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

3.1 Areas of Institutional Strength

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

- Expanding opportunities and improving access, retention, and success initiatives for non-traditional students and underrepresented groups.
- Providing language and bridging programs to support new Canadians.
- Supporting collaboration with the Grand Connections Regional Planning Team, the School-College-Work Initiative.
- Expanding international student enrolment.

3.2 Additional Comments

- The Ministry notes that Conestoga has made progress in expanding opportunities and improving access, retention, and success for non-traditional students and underrepresented groups:
 - The total number of full-time first generation students as a percentage of total enrolment is 23.7% (sector average is 30.3%).
 - The total number of full-time Aboriginal students as a percentage of total enrolment is 3.5% (sector average is 4.2%).
 - The total number of students with disabilities as a percentage of total enrolment is 10.6% (sector average is 15.2%).
 - The total number of students receiving OSAP as a percentage of total enrolment is 68.3% (sector average is 67.2%).

Institutional Strategies

- Through the College's rebranded Accessibility Services office, the College has implemented the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, impacting its practices, policies, and services in all departments of the College. This includes mandatory faculty training, video captioning, and other alternate formats for learning materials.

3.3 Metrics

Institutional Metrics	System-Wide Metrics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students entering directly from high school • Number of Aboriginal students • Number of first generation students • Growth in international student enrolment • Number of immigrants accessing bridge programming • Dual credit enrolment and completion rate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and proportion of Aboriginal, first generation, students with disabilities, and francophone students at an institution • Number and proportion of international students enrolled in Ontario (as reported in annual institutional enrolment reporting) • Proportion of an institution’s enrolment that receives OSAP

4. PROGRAM OFFERINGS

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

4.1 Areas of Institutional Strength

Current program areas of strength include:

1. Business
2. Health & Life Sciences
3. Media & Design
4. Engineering
5. Trades & Apprenticeship
6. Preparatory & Foundation Programming
7. Culinary/Food and Beverage
8. Public Safety, Risk Management, and Community Development

Proposed program areas for growth include:

1. Accounting & Finance
2. Advanced Manufacturing (Engineering)
3. Applied Food Safety
4. Media and Design – Digital Content Creation
5. Security and Intelligence
6. Early Learning

4.2 Additional Comments

- Conestoga’s plans to expand its total credential offerings in existing areas of program strength are supported by student outcomes and program infrastructure, particularly in the areas of business, health and life sciences, and engineering; this includes nine planned degree programs.
- The Ministry notes Conestoga’s intention to focus on public safety, community development, and risk management, which will strengthen and modernize programming.
- The Ministry notes that a large number of new or expanded engineering programs are proposed province-wide, which will have an impact on the Ministry’s review of engineering program proposals beyond the three engineering degree programs currently proposed by Conestoga.

Institutional Strategies

- The Ministry notes Conestoga’s emerging plans for a culinary food innovation hub built upon their current food processing programs, which will enhance pathways into food processing with a focus on seniors care, incorporating food safety and risk management, food preparation, and product development. The Ministry would welcome an early conversation as plans develop.

4.3 Metrics

Institutional Metrics	System-Wide Metrics
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No institution-specific metrics currently identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proportion of enrolment at colleges by occupational cluster and by credential• Institution’s system share of enrolment by occupational cluster and by credential• Number of apprentices in each trade

5. INSTITUTIONAL COLLABORATION TO SUPPORT STUDENT MOBILITY

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

5.1 Areas of Institutional Strength

Conestoga College focuses on improving collaboration, pathways, and student mobility in the areas of:

- Enhanced pathways and multiple entry points.
- Continued work with the surrounding school boards to expand dual-credit course enrolments and the scope of the dual credit programs.
- Furthering the College’s partnership activities through Polytechnics Canada to capitalize on various national and provincial opportunities.
- Collaborating with other postsecondary education institutions.
 - Signed an MOU with Wilfrid Laurier University in 2013, including the development of integrated programs (e.g., Graduate Certificate in Digital Content Creation linked to Laurier).

5.2 Additional Comments

Institutional Strategies

- Conestoga is planning a new partnership with the City of Guelph and University of Guelph to expand opportunities to access career-focused education and training programs in the community.
- Conestoga also plans to build on its collaboration with Wilfrid Laurier University to provide access to education in applied areas in multiple communities.

5.3 Metrics

Institutional Metrics	System-Wide Metrics
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of pathways and articulation agreements• Increase in dual credit enrolment• Number of college diploma holders enrolled in Conestoga degree programs• Number of university transfer or degree holders enrolled in Conestoga degree programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of college and university pathways and/or articulation agreements (college-college, university-college)• Number of transfer applicants and registrants• Number of college graduates enrolled in university programs

ASPIRATIONS

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

a) Expanded Credentials

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

b) Capital Expansion

Requests for capital project funding are outside the scope of the SMA process. However, future capital projects should be aligned with the College's areas of strength highlighted in their SMA. Decisions regarding approval and/or funding for capital projects will be made within the context of the Ministry's long-term capital planning. Decisions around campus expansion will be made through the Ministry's Major Capacity Expansion process.

c) Institutional Types

The Ministry recognizes that Conestoga offers a wide range of credentials and aspires to be recognized for excellence in polytechnic education. The Ministry does not have a policy classifying additional institutional types, and considers this issue to be outside of the SMA process.

ENROLMENT GROWTH

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

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

Baseline Projected Eligible Full-Time Headcounts

Level	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Certificate/Diploma	8,375	8,423	8,442
Degree	857	915	957
Conestoga Total	9,232	9,338	9,399

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

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

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

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

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

The Ministry notes Conestoga's successful work to focus on productivity.

MINISTRY/GOVERNMENT COMMITMENTS

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

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

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

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

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

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY

Deborah Newman
Deputy Minister

April 7, 2014

Date

SIGNED for and on behalf of The
Conestoga College Institute of
Technology and Advanced Learning by:

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY

Dr. John W. Tibbits
President

April 14, 2014

Date