



ADMISSIONS POLICY

Approved by: Academic Co-ordinating Committee

Authorizer: Vice-President, Enrolment Management and International Education

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POLICY STATEMENT:

Conestoga is committed to providing educational opportunities and pathways for willing and qualified individuals. In keeping with our mission of providing innovative and excellent education and training to a diverse community, Conestoga has established admission criteria and processes for assessing applications to all full-time and part-time programs. These criteria and processes are designed to provide applicants with the best prospect of success in achieving a degree, diploma, certificate, or other educational goals.

Conestoga welcomes applicants from all academic backgrounds, and the admissions processes used to evaluate all applicants shall be equitable, fair, transparent, timely, measurable, and consistently applied.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to all applicants seeking admission to full-time and part-time programs leading to a credential approved by either the Conestoga Academic Co-ordinating Committee (Conestoga Certificate of Achievement), the Conestoga Board of Governors (Conestoga certificate), the Ontario Credential Validation Service (Ontario college certificate, diploma, advanced diploma, or graduate certificate) or the Post-Secondary Education Quality Assessment Board (baccalaureate degrees). Exceptions may apply to Conestoga programs that do not lead to a credential included in the MTCU's Framework for Programs of Instruction for Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (e.g., Bachelor of Science – Nursing, apprenticeship programs).

DEFINITIONS:

Advanced standing – Placement of a student in a program level beyond semester one on the basis of previous documented educational studies. Advanced standing can be accomplished in three ways: exemptions, qualification recognition, or prior learning assessment.

Articulation agreement – A formal agreement between one or more colleges and one or more educational institutions or boards of education that recognizes learning achievement, facilitates student progress, minimizes curriculum duplications, and eases the transition from one institution to the other.

Collaborative program – Generally, an academic or vocational program of instruction that has been developed co-operatively by university and college partners to facilitate learners' efficient progression towards one or more credentials for which the learning has been achieved in both a college and a university. Collaborative programs of instruction ensure that learning that has already been achieved will be recognized by the receiving institution according to the terms outlined in the articulation agreement. There are a number of models for collaborative programs of instruction.

Conditional offer of admission – An offer of admission that is issued pending the successful completion of one or more published admission requirements and stated in the conditional offer of admission letter.

Conestoga Certificate – A document awarded after successful completion of a program of instruction approved by the Conestoga Board of Governors with prescribed learning outcomes and typically comprising a minimum of three courses and between 180 and 600 hours of study.

Conestoga Certificate of Achievement – A document awarded after successful completion of a group of courses approved by the Conestoga's Academic Co-ordinating Committee with prescribed learning outcomes and typically comprising less than 180 hours of study.

Equal Consideration Date – The date by which all qualified applications are considered.

Graduate certificate program – A program that conforms to the levels of learning articulated in the Credentials Framework (the Minister's Binding Policy Directive on Framework for Programs of Instruction) and leads to the awarding of an Ontario College Graduate Certificate.

Home-schooled applicant – An applicant who has been educated at home and does not possess an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) or equivalent.

International student – A student who does not have Canadian citizenship or permanent residence status in Canada and who is studying in Canada on a valid study visa.

Level 1 – The first semester of the first year of a program.

Mature student – An individual who is 19 years of age or older on or before the start of the program in which he/she is enrolling and who does not have an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) or equivalent.

Non-direct applicant – An applicant not enrolled in high school credit courses through day school, night school, summer school, adult education, continuing education, or correspondence at the time of application.

Ontario Secondary School courses

C level course – A college preparation course offered through the Ontario Secondary School curriculum.

M level course (or U/C level course) – A combined or “mixed” college and university preparation course offered through the Ontario Secondary School curriculum.

U level course – A university preparation course offered through the Ontario Secondary School curriculum.

Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) – A provincially recognized credential of recognition earned on successful completion of secondary school requirements established by the Ontario Ministry of Education.

Oversubscribed or highly competitive program – A program for which the number of qualified applicants exceeds the number of applicants required to fill the program.

Post-secondary program – A program that conforms to the levels of learning articulated in the Credentials Framework (the Minister’s Binding Policy Directive on Framework for Programs of Instruction: Appendix A) and leads to the awarding of one of the following credentials: Ontario College Certificate, Ontario College Diploma, Ontario College Advanced Diploma, or a baccalaureate degree. Basic post-secondary programs also include joint college-university programs that lead to the awarding of a degree by the university partner.

Secondary school applicant – An applicant taking one or more high school level course(s) through day school, night school, summer school, adult education, continuing education, or correspondence.

POLICY ELABORATION:

1. All admissions to Conestoga’s programs covered by this policy will follow the defined Admissions Procedure.

2. It is the responsibility of the applicant to be aware of program requirements and procedures for admission.
3. All information regarding the admission process and any admission decisions shall be clearly communicated in writing to the applicant by the Office of the Registrar.
4. In cases where new and/or more stringent admission requirements are established, Conestoga will make every effort to give applicants a minimum of one year's notice before the change is implemented. Where evidence shows that the change will better prepare students for success in the given program and where it is not possible to provide one year of lead time, Conestoga will make decisions in the best interest of student success.
5. Applicants must meet Conestoga's eligibility criteria and program eligibility criteria and any applicant-selection criteria that may be in place for a program. Applicants applying for readmission to a program will be considered according to the criteria and procedures established by the program for the year in which the student is making the application to return.
6. Conestoga maintains a central publication listing admission requirements and selection procedures for all programs. This publication is made available on Conestoga's website and is available to individuals to be viewed at the registrar's office. Conestoga's website is the authoritative source of admission information and will be considered the definitive resource in the event of discrepancy between admission information on the website and any other source. Conestoga reserves the right to correct admission information on the website and base admission decisions on the correct criteria.
7. Admission requirements are expressed in terms of the Ontario Secondary School curriculum for advanced diplomas, diplomas, certificates, and baccalaureate degrees. Admission requirements for graduate certificates are expressed as credentials offered by publicly funded Ontario post-secondary institutions under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities. Appropriate equivalencies from accredited or recognized educational institutions will be considered.
 - a. **Accredited educational institutions (secondary schools) within Ontario**

There are two types of schools within Ontario that are considered accredited:

 - i. publicly funded schools that fall under the jurisdiction of the Ontario Ministry of Education, or
 - ii. private schools that have been given authority by the Ontario Ministry of Education to provide courses offering credits toward the OSSD.
 - b. **Accredited or recognized educational institutions (secondary schools) outside of Ontario**

Accredited or recognized educational institutions in other Canadian provinces are those publicly funded schools that fall under the jurisdiction of the appropriate

provincial ministry of education or private schools that have been officially recognized by that same ministry.

c. **Accredited or recognized educational institutions outside of Canada**

Conestoga will accept transcripts from educational institutions that are accredited or officially recognized by their own country or jurisdiction, that are deemed “recognized” by an approved provider of credential evaluation services, or that are deemed acceptable by another Ontario college or university for the purposes of admission consideration.

- d. Equivalencies will be considered in terms of their comparison to the Ontario Secondary School curriculum or to a credential offered by an Ontario post-secondary institution and will be determined by Conestoga.
- e. Home-schooled applicants must present official transcripts from an accredited Ontario school as indicated below.

8. Conestoga does not accept courses obtained at private career colleges for the purposes of admission, transfer credit, or advanced standing, except where specific articulation agreements exist.

9. *Home-schooled applicants*

Conestoga welcomes applications from home-schooled applicants. Home-schooled applicants must meet the appropriate admission requirements, including subject requirements and any other college or program specific criteria. Home-schooled applicants must provide the appropriate pre-requisite courses on official transcripts from an accredited Ontario school and meet the required admission average(s). Where appropriate, the home-schooled applicant may present test results to meet specific subject requirements.

10. *Articulation agreements*

Articulation agreements between Conestoga and any secondary schools will not result in preferential consideration or guaranteed admission. Programs included in articulation agreements will be open to applicants who are enrolled in secondary schools that are not participating in the articulation agreements.

11. *High Skills Majors*

Conestoga recognizes that the High Skills Major specializations offered in Ontario high schools provide focus and preparation for students in a particular field of study and may be of benefit to students as they undertake post-secondary studies. High Skills Major specializations, however, are not considered or recognized for the purpose of admission or transfer credit to Conestoga programs.

12. *Dual credit courses*

Dual credit courses earned through partnership programs between secondary schools and colleges may provide students with course exemptions once they are admitted to a

Conestoga program. However, dual credits are not considered in the admission process and they do not privilege applicants to Conestoga programs.

13. Mature student applicants

A mature student is a student who does not hold an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (or equivalent) and who is at least 19 years of age as of the start of the first day of classes. Mature students must demonstrate their potential to work at the post-secondary level in one of two ways: by successfully completing equivalency testing in English and/or mathematics or by completing a program of academic upgrading at a level appropriate to the program of choice. An applicant who possesses an OSSD, regardless of age or number of years out of high school, will be considered on the basis of the OSSD: mature student status does not apply. If specific subjects are required for admission, all applicants must possess those subject requirements or equivalents (e.g., college or university courses or courses obtained through academic upgrading). Mature student applicants will be ranked and compete on the same criteria with all other applicants.

14. Academic upgrading

Conestoga recognizes that many students will apply to programs from a variety of backgrounds. Academic upgrading provides non-direct applicants with the opportunity to improve their academic skills in order to meet the admission requirements for post-secondary study or apprenticeship training.

15. Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)

Conestoga does not use Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) (the recognition of prior learning of skills, knowledge, or competencies that have been acquired through employment, formal and informal education, non-formal learning or other life experiences) for the purposes of admission to a program.

16. Priority for admission

As defined by MTCU policy, students will be admitted to Conestoga in the following priority order:

- i. Permanent residents of Ontario
- ii. Permanent residents of other provinces or territories in Canada
- iii. Applicants from other countries

Conestoga may allocate additional spaces in specific programs for international students, for non-Ontario residents of Canada, or for students recognized in specific articulation agreements between Conestoga and other post-secondary institutions.

17. Oversubscribed and highly competitive programs

- a. Where eligible applicants exceed the number of available program spaces (oversubscribed or highly competitive program), applicants will be accepted into the oversubscribed program according to the priority for admission listed above.

- b. Oversubscribed and highly competitive programs may apply program-specific criteria for selection of applicants. All program-specific selection criteria will adhere to the guidelines listed under “Applicant selection” in the Admission Procedure document.
- c. Random selection will not be used as an applicant selection technique.
- d. *Waiting Lists*
Realistic waiting lists will be established for oversubscribed and highly competitive programs and will be based on the experience of the registrar’s office, the historical enrolment trends of the program, and the likelihood of vacancies occurring after Conestoga has sent out final admission offers. The waiting lists will be maintained up to the end of the registration period. The registrar’s office will inform applicants, upon request, of their relative position on the wait list as soon as their relative position can be reasonably determined.

18. International applicants

Conestoga welcomes international applicants according to the priority ranking for admission listed above. International applicants must apply through the International Education Office and pay the applicable fee. All international applicants must have a valid student visa in order to register in any Conestoga course or program and meet any requirements established by Immigration Canada. Applicants who are Canadian citizens or permanent residents or who have refugee status do not require a student visa to study at Conestoga.

19. English language proficiency

Conestoga has established English language proficiency requirements for all of its programs. Applicants for whom English is not a first language must provide proof of English language proficiency as indicated for the programs to which they are applying. Students may be admitted to a program on condition of meeting minimum English language proficiency requirements.

20. Admission

Applicants must meet admission requirements in order to be considered eligible for admission to a program. Meeting minimum admission requirements does not guarantee admission into a program.

21. Admission Review

Conestoga recognizes that disputes regarding an admission decision may occur between applicants and the Conestoga community. Conestoga has established procedures to deal with admission appeals in an effective, timely, fair, and impartial manner. An applicant may request a review of an admissions decision. Applicants wishing a review of a decision should see the Admission Decision Dispute and Resolution and Appeal Procedure for further information.

22. *Accessibility for applicants with disabilities*

Conestoga is committed to ensuring that its programs, services, and facilities are accessible to all applicants. Conestoga provides resources for applicants requiring assistance with various admission procedures through our Accessibility Services Office. Conestoga complies with the requirements laid out in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). Conestoga will provide reasonable accommodation in the admission process to applicants with disabilities; however, applicants with disabilities will be assessed for admission according to the same requirements and standards established for all applicants to Conestoga and/or to the individual program. It is the responsibility of the applicant to request accommodation in the admission process and to provide official documentation indicating what accommodation is required.

23. *Targeted Admissions*

From time to time Conestoga will develop an alternative admissions process for targeted admissions groups in order to satisfy the requirements of a government program or directive. In these cases, Conestoga may deviate from the normal admissions and fees procedure. The intent will be to meet the special circumstances of the targeted group without compromising admissions standards or the goal of Conestoga's admissions policy to ensure that all admitted applicants will have a reasonable likelihood of being successful in the program.

REFERENCES:

- Admissions Procedure
- This policy is directed by the framework established in the:
 - Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) Binding Policy Directive — Admissions Criteria,
 - Post-secondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB) Handbook for Ontario Colleges (degree level standards),
 - Ontario Human Rights Code
 - Conestoga Board of Governors
 - Conestoga Academic Co-ordinating Committee.

REVISION LOG:

December 8, 2014

Policy and Procedure Committee

December 17, 2014

Academic Coordinating Committee