Journalism Program Standard

The approved program standard for the Journalism program of instruction leading to an Ontario College Advanced Diploma delivered by Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology. (MCU funding code 62006)

Acknowledgements

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Contents

Introduction

This document is the Program Standard for Journalism programs of instruction leading to an Ontario College Advanced Diploma delivered by Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (MCU funding code 62006).

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 Unit of the Ministry of 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 of Applied Arts and Technology across the province of Ontario. 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).
- **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 from 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 of Ontario 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 Colleges and Universities will undertake regular reviews of the vocational learning outcomes for this program to ensure that the Journalism 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 Colleges and Universities.

Vocational standard

All graduates of the Journalism program have achieved the [seven vocational learning outcomes (VLOs)](#), in addition to achieving the essential employability outcomes and meeting the general education (GE) requirement.

Preamble

Journalists are professionals who stand against misinformation and disinformation. They are committed to equity, diversity and inclusion that ensures all members of a society have a voice and representation. Journalists champion compelling and accurate narratives that have the potential to drive change. Strong writing, fact checking, research, and critical thinking skills and the ability to capture and use sound and imagery are some of the essential tools of their craft.

Journalism at the advanced diploma level provides an opportunity for students to develop their own skills and mentor peers in developing knowledge, ethics, and professional mindset required to work in media and apply these transferable, high demand skills to journalism or other related fields (such as marketing, public relations, communications, social media, and advertising). The advanced diploma program allows graduates to learn advanced storytelling skills, pitch creative ideas, and critique work of others. Graduates work in collaborative environments developing a variety of multi-media content while tracking the engagement of the audience and reviewing analytics. Through hands-on training in the use of a production tools and practices, and multimedia platforms graduates develop expertise in reporting, writing, producing, developing, and distributing complex and in-depth content, independently and as part of teams. Graduates acquire knowledge of applicable legislation, standards, and professional ethics. Graduates also develop entrepreneurial skills for self employment, freelance and business opportunities.

Partnerships within the industry may provide options for field placement, work-integrated learning, and/or study abroad exchange opportunities. Among other activities, educational experiences may include producing magazines, websites, podcasts, radio, and television content using advanced storytelling skills. Graduates may also be part of editorial teams, and staff newsrooms.

Journalists are employed by a variety of multiplatform media outlets that distribute content. Employment opportunities include full time, part time and casual newsroom or production positions in small and large news organizations, freelance or self-employment opportunities and/or positions in media related fields such as content creation, social media, marketing, communications, and public relations.

A journalist's responsibilities could include research and gathering information for local, national, or international audiences, pitching story ideas, writing, and producing content for a variety of outlets on topics such as sports & gaming, truth & reconciliation, climate

change, arts & entertainment, health & lifestyle, politics & community events. Journalism graduates recognize the importance of continuous learning and responding to emerging technology.

Note: The Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT) maintains the provincial postsecondary credit transfer portal, ONTransfer.

Synopsis of the vocational learning outcomes
Journalism (Ontario College Advanced Diploma)

The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to:

1. Evaluate information gathered from a variety of sources to ensure accuracy and quality of produced content.

2. Track metrics and review analytics of audience engagement to synthesize, contextualize and publish content.

3. Pitch ideas and develop content for multiple media platforms using advanced storytelling skills and journalistic principles to propose news stories and generate coverage.

4. Collaborate and mentor in the creation and adaptation of multimedia content to cultivate knowledge exchange and professional accountability.

5. Perform all assigned work in compliance with media legislation, standards, principles, and ethical practices of journalism

6. Use an equitable, diverse, inclusive, fair and culturally aware approach to collect and synthesize journalistic information.

7. Develop business and/or entrepreneurial skills within media related industries to foster professional growth.

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. Evaluate information gathered from a variety of sources to ensure accuracy and quality of produced content.

Elements of the performance

a. Identify, locate, and contact sources relevant to the story using different modes of communication.

b. Gather and evaluate comprehensive and context-appropriate facts from quality, reliable and diverse current and archived sources.

c. Use a variety of digital tools, social media, and search techniques to locate, collect, and archive information.

d. Develop and maintain databases of credible sources while exercising professional citation and confidentiality practices, as applicable.

e. Apply technical skills to record information verbally and visually in an objective and professional manner

f. Analyze a variety of data sources to identify newsworthy stories and to validate accuracy of content

g. Analyze, recognize, and distinguish between credible information, misinformation, and disinformation in gathered sources.

h. Separate opinions from facts using verifying, contextualizing, corroborating, and lateral reading skills.

i. Identify, validate and fact check by verifying the information gathered from primary sources and produced content.

j. Review and edit the accuracy and ethical viability of content created using available artificial intelligence tools and other emerging technologies.

2. Track metrics and review analytics of audience engagement to synthesize, contextualize and publish content.

Elements of the performance

    a. Track and examine analytics to identify meaningful trends or patterns to enhance audience engagement.

    b. Evaluate story ideas reflecting news values and audience interests

    c. Cultivate proficiency in effective observation, objectively skeptical interpretation, and attention to details.

    d. Measure success of content and audience engagement using readily available tools.

    e. Recognize links between past and current events while evaluating local, national, and global issues.

    f. Use metrics to create and edit journalistic content that follow Canadian Press Stylebook guidelines and writing mechanics.

    g. Demonstrate proficiency in the use of grammar, syntax and language rules in writing and copyediting when synthesizing and publishing content.

    h. Follow ethical editing and writing style by outlining and accurately reflecting the intent of the source and provide appropriate context.

    i. Gauge audience reaction to revise and adapt material for publication and production.

    j. Use metrics to demonstrate success of published content and prioritize editorial directives.

3. Pitch ideas and develop content for multiple media platforms using advanced storytelling skills and journalistic principles to propose news stories and generate coverage.

Elements of the performance

a. Recognize the timeliness of the most newsworthy story to develop content following the inverted pyramid and/or other storytelling structures.

b. Distinguish and apply advanced writing and presentation skills/tools for a variety of multiplatform formats and audiences.

c. Gather information to pitch ideas that combine effective storytelling with relevant and unique perspectives.

d. Classify and organize information to frame the narrative intended for reporting and production requirements.

e. Develop a repository of failed and successful pitches to exercise reflective practice

f. Employ a variety of imagery and sound to develop captivating content

g. Relate current content with past context of stories for holistic representation

h. Develop and create content following platform-appropriate essential elements of story structure.

i. Use advanced storytelling skills to create relevant and concise pitch to captivate interest.

j. Identify gaps to draft compelling narratives that generate coverage.

4. Collaborate and mentor in the creation and adaptation of multimedia content to cultivate knowledge exchange and professional accountability.

Elements of the performance

a. Share and exchange knowledge and materials to produce and adapt content.

b. Select and use current technologies and tools to collaborate and produce effective storytelling.

c. Demonstrate competency in the use and teaching of audio, video, photo, lighting equipment and related editing, production, and distribution software for platform-appropriate content.

d. Apply presentation skills to work within the roles of journalism individually and with others.

e. Develop and practice verbal and active listening skills by exercising empathy and integrity in groups.

f. Develop and practice written skills of professional communication and accurate records in note taking.

g. Apply proficient time management skills to meet the needs of the situation and related individual and group deadlines.

h. Apply leadership skills while mentoring peers in story production.

i. Measure the quality and impact of content produced by combining skills and resources shared by team members.

j. Reflect on the effectiveness of mentoring through regular feedback and responsive goal setting.

5. Perform all assigned work in compliance with media legislation, standards, principles, and ethical practices of journalism.

Elements of the performance

a. Collect all content in adherence with Canadian ethical standards and codes of conduct of journalism.

b. Understand and apply the principles of the legal use and limits of copyright in the generation of content.

c. Demonstrate the understanding of the standards and protocols related to current social communication and generated content technologies.

d. Produce content in compliance with media law, and in adherence with Canadian ethical standards and codes of conduct of journalism.

e. Apply knowledge of media-related national and international legal and ethical guidelines to all assigned work.

f. Differentiate between the legal rights and restrictions that apply to journalists within Canada and abroad.

6. Use an equitable, diverse, inclusive, fair and culturally aware approach to collect and synthesize journalistic information.

Elements of the performance

a. Describe the measures taken to collect the information fairly and equitably.

b. Identify, describe, and acknowledge ideological, unconscious, and personal bias in collecting information.

c. Analyze, and address various opinions, biases, and influences in the development of a story.

d. Describe different perspectives and elements of diversity and inclusivity reflected in journalistic content.

e. Gather, evaluate, and produce content using a culturally competent approach.

f. Use critical news judgement to determine story selection and priority.

g. Recognize the role of lived experiences in storytelling.

7. Develop business and/or entrepreneurial skills within media related industries to foster professional growth.

Elements of the performance

a. Examine a range of career options in media related industries for applying journalism skills.

b. Create and maintain a professional portfolio reflective of independent and collaborative work.

c. Develop strategies to adapt, pivot and cope with the challenges associated with journalism.

d. Develop freelancing, networking, and branding skills to promote self-employment.

e. Identify and engage in a variety of mentoring opportunities.

f. Identify and engage with the opportunities for professional development.

g. Demonstrate an understanding of financial literacy related to journalistic production and business management.

h. Examine concepts of sustainability in journalistic practices.

Essential employability skills

All graduates of the Journalism program of instruction must have reliably demonstrated the essential employability skills learning outcomes listed below, 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 and 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: communication

Defining skills

Skill areas to be demonstrated by graduates:

- reading
- writing
- speaking
- listening
- presenting
- visual literacy

Learning outcomes

The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to:

3. Communicate clearly, concisely and correctly in the written, spoken and visual form that fulfills the purpose and meets the needs of the audience.
4. Respond to written, spoken or visual messages in a manner that ensures effective communication.

Skill category: numeracy

Defining skills

Skill areas to be demonstrated by graduates:

- understanding and applying mathematical concepts and reasoning
- analyzing and using numerical data
- conceptualizing

Learning outcomes

The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to:

1. Execute mathematical operations accurately.

Skill category: critical thinking and problem solving

Defining skills

Skill areas to be demonstrated by graduates:

- analyzing
- synthesizing
- evaluating
- decision making
- creative and innovative thinking

Learning outcomes

The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to:

1. Apply a systematic approach to solve problems.
2. Use a variety of thinking skills to anticipate and solve problems.

Skill category: information management

Defining skills

Skill areas to be demonstrated by graduates:

- gathering and managing information
- selecting and using appropriate tools and technology for a task or a project
- computer literacy
- internet skills

Learning outcomes

The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to:

1. Locate, select, organize and document information using appropriate technology and information systems.
2. Analyze, evaluate and apply relevant information from a variety of sources.

Skill category: interpersonal

Defining skills

Skill areas to be demonstrated by graduates:

- teamwork
- relationship management
- conflict resolution
- leadership
- networking

Learning outcomes

The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to:

1. Show respect for the diverse opinions, values, belief systems and contributions of others.
2. Interact with others in groups or teams in ways that contribute to effective working relationships and the achievement of goals.

Skill category: personal

Defining skills

Skill areas to be demonstrated by graduates:

- managing self
- managing change and being flexible and adaptable
- engaging in reflective practices
- demonstrating personal responsibility

Learning outcomes

The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to:

1. Manage the use of time and other resources to complete projects.
2. Take responsibility for one's own actions, decisions and their consequences.

General education requirement

All graduates of the Journalism program must have met the general education requirement described below, 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](#) in the Minister's Binding Policy Directive Framework for Programs of Instruction.

In programs of instruction leading to either an Ontario College Advanced 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 Ontario Colleges in the development and identification of courses that are designed to fulfil 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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