



Veterinary Assistant Program Standard

The approved program standard for Veterinary Assistant programs of instruction leading to an Ontario College Certificate delivered by Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology. (MTCU funding code 41603)

Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security
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Introduction

This document is the Program Standard for the Veterinary Assistant programs of instruction leading to an Ontario College Certificate delivered by Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (MTCU funding code 41603).

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, Universities, Research Excellence and Security 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); and
- [General education requirement](#) (the requirement for general education in postsecondary programs of instruction).

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

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

The expression of program standards as vocational learning outcomes

Vocational learning outcomes represent culminating demonstrations of learning and achievement. They are not simply a listing of discrete skills, nor broad statements of knowledge and comprehension. In addition, vocational learning outcomes are interrelated and cannot be viewed in isolation 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, Universities, Research Excellence and Security will undertake regular reviews of the vocational learning outcomes for this program to ensure that the Veterinary Assistant 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, Universities, Research Excellence and Security](#).

Vocational standard

All graduates of Veterinary Assistant programs have achieved the [nine vocational learning outcomes \(VLOs\)](#), in addition to achieving the essential employability outcomes and meeting the general education (GE) requirement.

Preamble

The Veterinary Assistant program integrates the knowledge, skills and attitudes that are necessary to perform safely, competently and efficiently as a veterinary assistant.

Veterinary assistants play a crucial role in supporting veterinarians and veterinary technicians in the care and treatment of animals. Graduates can work in a variety of settings, including private veterinary clinics and hospitals, grooming salons, animal shelters and rescue organizations, research laboratories, zoos and wildlife parks, animal boarding facilities and mobile veterinary services. Each setting offers unique experiences and opportunities to work with different types of animals, from domestic pets to exotic species, and to contribute to animal healthcare in numerous capacities.

Veterinary assistants demonstrate high levels of attention to detail, have clear and effective communication skills, are proficient in low-risk technical skills and can perform physically demanding tasks. They have a genuine love for animals and the ability to handle them with care and empathy.

Graduates will have had a well-rounded learning experience which may include hands-on laboratory practice and a work placement in an animal care facility or other settings which may include grooming salons, boarding kennels and pet stores. This practical experience allows them to apply and reinforce the knowledge and skills gained in the program and work ultimately toward the goal of health and well-being for patients.

Veterinary assistants perform a wide range of duties, including husbandry and patient care, medical assistance, sample collecting and handling, client communication, administrative duties and facility maintenance. They possess comprehensive knowledge in anatomy and physiology, pharmacology, nursing, behavior and handling, nutritional **guidelines**, laboratory procedures, health and safety and veterinary software.

The practice requires skills which ensure that, as veterinary assistants, graduates provide quality care and support in a veterinary setting. Veterinary assistants are quick thinking and resourceful professionals who can handle unexpected situations or emergencies. They also demonstrate the ability to work collaboratively with veterinarians, technicians, clients and other staff members.

Since the field of veterinary medicine is constantly evolving and new trends are emerging, graduates must have developed plans to enhance their skills, maintain currency within the animal care sector and prioritize their personal health and well-

being.

Finally, graduates of the Veterinary Assistant program have demonstrated the ability to practice safely and ethically, and comply with current legislation, **standards** and current best practice **guidelines**.

[See Glossary](#)

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

Synopsis of the vocational learning outcomes Veterinary Assistant (Ontario College Certificate)

The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to:

1. Perform daily tasks in an office, hospital, or animal care facility following established **protocols** and procedures to ensure high-quality service and compliance with **standards**.
2. Communicate with clients and **intraprofessional** veterinary team members in routine and complex situations to promote collaborative patient-centered care.
3. Assist with basic husbandry and nursing care across a range of animal species to support their health, comfort and well-being.
4. Assist in assessing patient to identify health concerns and communicate findings to veterinary staff for effective **treatment** planning.
5. Assist, under supervision, with the handling and preparation of dispensed pharmaceutical products in compliance with regulatory **standards** and **protocols**.
6. Assist in collecting, handling and processing biological specimens to support accurate diagnosis and **treatment** of animal health conditions.
7. Assist with diagnostic imaging for patients in compliance with health and safety **standards** to achieve accurate results.
8. Prepare surgical and dental suite and assist in **perioperative procedures** to ensure the animal's safety and wellness.
9. Develop and apply strategies to improve work performance and uphold industry **standards** in veterinary and animal care environments.

[See Glossary](#)

Note: The learning outcomes have been numbered as a point of reference; numbering does not imply prioritization, sequencing, nor weighting of significance.

The vocational learning outcomes

1. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: perform daily tasks in an office, hospital, or animal care facility following established **protocols** and procedures to ensure high-quality service and compliance with standards.

Elements of the performance

- a. schedule appointments in a timely manner.
- b. communicate with clients and other veterinary professionals via telephone, electronic or in-person contact in a clear, concise and professional manner.
- c. always maintain patient and client confidentiality.
- d. document, update, and maintain client/patient records, radiographs, lab reports, and other required documentation, in compliance with regulatory **guidelines** and veterinary office **procedures**.
- e. use productivity and veterinary practice software to ensure efficient and secure management of office **procedures** and client communication.
- f. manage inventory according to established **protocols**.
- g. use appropriate disposal **protocols** for hazardous materials.
- h. maintain appropriate sanitation **protocols** for a veterinary facility, including patient and laboratory areas.
- i. adhere to the legal boundaries and scope of practice applicable to veterinary health care team members.
- j. always commit to high quality patient care.

[See Glossary](#)

2. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: communicate with clients and **intraprofessional** veterinary team members in routine and complex situations to promote collaborative patient-centered care.

Elements of the performance

- a. communicate in a clear, concise and professional manner in oral, written or electronic form.
- b. use correct veterinary medical terminology and abbreviations.
- c. support provision of client education (e.g., general health, nutrition, vaccine **protocols**, etc.) under the direction of the veterinary team.
- d. prepare communications to promote services and to inform clients (e.g., announcements, handouts, social media posts).
- e. communicate relevant information to clients, appropriate **intraprofessional** team members and external partners to support informed decision-making and continuity of care.
- f. share relevant information with clients and appropriate members of the interprofessional health care team.
- g. respond to client concerns with timeliness to support informed consent and foster trust and reassurance that the animal's care and well-being are a priority.
- h. apply conflict management and **de-escalation techniques** to navigate delicate or challenging situations.
- i. understand the legality of the veterinarian-client-patient relationship and informed consent.
- j. demonstrate professionalism with clients, fellow staff members and all other members of the veterinary team.

[See Glossary](#)

3. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: assist with basic husbandry and nursing care across a range of animal species to support their health, comfort and well-being.

Elements of the performance

- a. prepare animal for grooming and apply basic **techniques** in a **therapeutic** and safe manner.
- b. demonstrate understanding of permanent identification, its use and **techniques**.
- c. implement sanitation **procedures** for animal holding and housing areas to ensure optimal environmental conditions.
- d. maintain the patient's nutritional requirements for general health.
- e. provide current information to client regarding general health and nutritional requirements (e.g., life-stage diets, species-specific nutritional differences).
- f. assist in establishing and achieving appropriate **standards** for meeting the housing needs of animals under care.
- g. identify basic health, housing and maintenance requirements for care and management of exotics, wildlife and livestock species.
- h. understand common pathologies such as kennel cough, feline upper respiratory tract infections (URTI), flea allergy dermatitis (FAD), common external parasites, etc.
- i. assist with basic clinical **procedures**.
- j. recognize clinical signs of toxicity and respond appropriately.
- k. administer topical medication as directed by a veterinarian.
- l. apply ear and eye medication as directed by a veterinarian.
- m. apply established **protocols** and assist in veterinary medical emergencies as delegated by a veterinarian.
- n. apply restraining and transportation **techniques** in a **low stress** manner for various species.
- o. identify clinical signs of common and zoonotic diseases.
- p. recognize signs of stress and pain, and notify veterinary technician or veterinarian.
- q. recognize normal and abnormal patterns in behaviour and assist with managing.
- r. apply enrichment-related activities that benefit the animal's well-being.
- s. operate and maintain standard veterinary medical equipment following health and safety regulations and in accordance with veterinary profession **standard**.
- t. apply the federal, provincial and local animal welfare regulations.

[See Glossary](#)

4. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: assist in assessing patient to identify health concerns and communicate findings to veterinary staff for effective **treatment** planning.

Elements of the performance

- a. apply appropriate low-stress handling and restraining **techniques** for various animal species.
- b. minimize stress and ensure the safety of both animal and veterinary health team.
- c. obtain an accurate and thorough patient history.
- d. assist in performing basic examinations and collect objective (including vital signs) and subjective patient data.
- e. assist in assessing the patient's behavior and well-being.
- f. assist in assessing the animal's nutritional status.
- g. check airway, breathing and respiration (ABC) and state of consciousness.

[See Glossary](#)

5. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: assist, under supervision, with the handling and preparation of dispensed pharmaceutical products in compliance with regulatory **standards** and **protocols**.

Elements of the performance

- a. follow the veterinarian's pharmacy orders.
- b. follow the veterinarian's prescribed medications.
- c. mix solutions accurately.
- d. dispose of hazardous waste in compliance with industry standards.
- e. administer oral and topical medication with low reactivity (antibiotics, antiparasitic) prescribed and delegated by a veterinarian.
- f. observe and monitor the patient's **therapeutic** responses to medication and report any adverse effect to the veterinarian.
- g. describe the safe and effective administration of vaccines.
- h. file medications.
- i. comply with all federal regulatory **guidelines** for drug purchase, storage, administration, withdrawal, dispensing, disposal, and inventory control (e.g., biologics and **therapeutic** agents, pesticides and hazardous wastes).
- j. comply with controlled substance regulations.

[See Glossary](#)

6. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: assist in collecting, handling and processing biological specimens to support accurate diagnosis and **treatment** of animal health conditions.

Elements of the performance

- a. prepare required supplies (bandages, alcohol, tools).
- b. prepare patient for **procedures** and use restraints safely, as required.
- c. prepare supplies for collection and processing of specimen to be performed by the veterinary technician or veterinarian.
- d. identify external parasites (e.g., fleas, ticks, etc.).
- e. perform parasite load assays with the assistance of a veterinary technician or veterinarian.
- f. prepare and collect non-sterile fecal specimens.
- g. collect and perform basic analysis of urine (reading of stick, specific gravity, concentration).
- h. receive, collect, label, record, and attach results.
- i. adhere to all regulatory **guidelines** to ensure that all requirements are met (e.g., health and safety).

[See Glossary](#)

7. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: assist with diagnostic imaging for patients in compliance with health and safety **standards** to achieve accurate results.

Elements of the performance

- a. follow recommended radiation safety measures.
- b. assist in patient restraint, using various means and positioning (hands-free radiography).
- c. assist in producing standard radiographs, ultrasound imaging, CT scan, MRI, dental radiographs.
- d. assist in processing of images.
- e. participate in creating logs.
- f. maintain diagnostic imaging equipment.

[See Glossary](#)

8. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: prepare surgical and dental suite and assist in **perioperative procedures** to ensure the animal's safety and wellness.

Elements of the performance

- a. prepare instruments, equipment, supplies and environment.
- b. sterilize instruments and supplies according to industry **standards**.
- c. prepare and maintain asepsis of equipment and workspaces.
- d. assist veterinary technician in preparing patient for surgery (e.g., pre-surgical basic TPR, surgical scrub).
- e. perform post-operative care (e.g., warming, managing noise, recovery).
- f. assist with emergency resuscitation, CPR, chest compressions and first aid as directed by the veterinarian or veterinary technician.
- g. document and maintain records.
- h. protect the confidentiality of client and patient information.
- i. perform post-surgical clean-up (e.g., equipment, instruments, room, disposal of hazardous medical waste, etc.).
- j. record findings for dental charting.
- k. maintain basic surgical and dental equipment.

[See Glossary](#)

9. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: develop and apply strategies to improve work performance and uphold industry **standards** in veterinary and animal care environments.

Elements of the performance

- a. participate in lifelong learning activities to ensure currency and credibility in the animal care industry.
- b. participate in evidence-based practice.
- c. employ critical self-assessment to identify ongoing needs.
- d. practise competent, responsible problem solving, decision-making and self-management skills that will enhance the working environment of all members of the veterinary health care team.
- e. seek out and use feedback to improve performance (e.g., performance and peer reviews).
- f. engage with relevant professional associations.
- g. recognize the impact of legislation on the assistant's role and scope of practice.
- h. remain current with veterinary jurisprudence and its impact on one's scope of practice.
- i. develop and maintain positive working relationships with clients, colleagues, supervisors and community partners.
- j. implement strategies that support physical and mental well-being.

[See Glossary](#)

Glossary

De-escalation technique: a set of purposeful verbal and non-verbal communication strategies used to calm down a tense or potentially aggressive situation.

Guidelines: are systematically developed recommendations that assist veterinarians and veterinary teams in making informed decisions about patient care. They are based on the best available scientific evidence and expert consensus.

Key characteristics of guidelines

- Evidence-based: drawn from clinical research, case studies, and expert opinions
- Standardized: promote consistency in care across practices
- Adaptable: can be tailored to individual patient needs and practice settings
- Educational: help veterinary professionals stay current with best practices.

Intraprofessional: a group of professionals from the same profession working together on a task or service.

Low-stress technique: focuses on minimizing anxiety and fear in animals during exams and procedures. This involves understanding animal behaviour, creating a calm environment, using gentle handling techniques, and employing positive reinforcement. The goal is to make vet visits less traumatic for pets and their owners, fostering trust and cooperation.

Non-conventional therapy: Non-conventional therapy is defined as treatment and/or care that exists outside of conventional veterinary medicine. When non-conventional therapies are used in combination with conventional veterinary medicine, they are considered as integrative therapies. When they are used instead of conventional veterinary medicine, they are considered as alternative therapies.

Perioperative care: refers to the comprehensive care provided before, during, and after a surgical procedure. It encompasses three main phases: preoperative (patient preparation), intraoperative (care provided during surgery), postoperative (recovery including pain management, monitoring for complications and rehabilitation).

Procedure: a specific course of action or a series of steps taken to diagnose, treat, or prevent disease or injury in animals. These actions can range from simple diagnostic tests to complex surgical interventions. Procedures are typically protocol-driven and may involve multiple techniques.

Protocol: a written, detailed procedure or set of instructions that outlines the specific steps to be followed in a particular situation, such as a treatment, procedure, or management plan. Protocols ensure consistency, efficiency, safety, and quality patient care by providing a standardized approach for veterinary teams.

Standard: a benchmark for expected behaviour and/or action that is accepted within a

particular sector, including professions.

There are two main types of standards that the veterinary team will encounter in their practice:

1. standard of practice (e.g., published policies, peer reviewed literature, clinical guidelines, and accepted expectations of peers); and
2. standard of care (e.g., expectations related to the veterinarian client-patient relationship, informed client consent, medical recordkeeping, prescribing and dispensing, and telemedicine).

Technique: refers to the specific method or skill used to perform part of a procedure. It is more about how (e.g., the method of restraint for an animal) something is done rather than what is done.

Therapeutic: non-surgical treatment serving to cure, or to heal.

Treatment: refers to the overall management plan to cure, control or alleviate a disease or condition in an animal. Its scope includes medical, surgical, nutritional, and supportive care. A treatment may include one of several procedures as part of a treatment or diagnostic plan

Essential employability skills

All graduates of the Veterinary Assistant 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 & 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:

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

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 Veterinary Assistant 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 Certificate or an Ontario College Advanced Certificate, 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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