



Biotechnology Program Standard

The approved program standard for the Biotechnology program of instruction leading to an Ontario College Diploma delivered by Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (MTCU funding code 51304).

Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security
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Introduction

This document is the Program Standard for the Biotechnology program of instruction leading to an Ontario College Diploma delivered by Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (MTCU funding code 51304).

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 Biotechnology 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 the Biotechnology program have achieved the [ten vocational learning outcomes \(VLOs\)](#), in addition to achieving the essential employability outcomes and meeting the general education (GE) requirement.

Preamble

Biotechnology encompasses several science disciplines, including cell biology, chemistry, physics, microbiology, molecular biology, genetics, genomics, proteomics, biochemistry, and **bioinformatics**. The **interdisciplinary** nature of biotechnology has contributed to an expanding number of biotechnological applications ranging from, for example, the development and production of safe, commercially viable goods and services; to applications in agriculture and food production; bioremediation; diagnostics and forensics; and academic, medical and commercial research. To meet the demands of this high-growth career field, Biotechnology graduates are introduced to emerging fields, advancements in technology and are prepared to engage under supervision in an extensive range of activities related to quality control, laboratory techniques, research and new biotechnology product development.

Graduates of Biotechnology programs have employment opportunities in diverse biobased sectors, such as medical healthcare and pharmaceutical medicines and vaccines; DNA forensics; agriculture and nutrition; food and beverage bioprocesses; environmental protection and bioremediation; and household and industrial product development and manufacturing.

There are opportunities for graduates to pursue further educational or professional qualifications. Through articulation agreements between the colleges, universities and professional organizations, graduates may be granted credits toward relevant degrees or certification. Students should contact their individual colleges for further details on a college's articulation agreements with other institutions or professional associations.

In Canada, the national and provincial associations of professionals working in this field have created, published and endorsed educational standards that define an entry-level requirement for graduates who wish to enter this profession. The program standard that follows is based on those detailed requirements as well as input from appropriate stakeholders in a broad-based consultative process.

[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 Biotechnology (Ontario College Diploma)

The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to:

1. perform all tasks in compliance with relevant legislation, regulations, and biotechnology standards and guidelines.
2. perform quality control and quality assurance procedures and processes to maintain compliance with relevant standards and requirements.
3. apply sustainable practices in biotechnology operations to minimize environmental impact and improve resource efficiency.
4. implement solutions to address biotechnological applications during the execution of lab responsibilities.
5. follow procedures to support quantitative and qualitative tests and analyses done in the laboratory.
6. perform standard cell culture procedures under aseptic conditions to produce experimental results and maintain laboratory safety.
7. perform molecular biology procedures to support biotechnological applications.
8. assist in collecting, analyzing and managing biological information to aid scientists in ensuring data integrity and adherence to approved protocols.
9. assist in collecting and communicating scientific data to meet industry standards and support research.
10. develop and apply strategies for personal and professional development to enhance work performance and stay current in biotechnology.

[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 all tasks in compliance with relevant legislation, regulations, and biotechnology standards and guidelines.

Elements of the performance

- a. Follow **Good Laboratory Practice (GLP)** in accordance with accepted principles of quality assurance.
- b. Follow **Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP)** in accordance with accepted principles of quality management of fabricated/manufactured drug and medicinal products.
- c. Follow **Good Clinical Practice (GCP)** to support clinical trials that involve human subjects.
- d. Follow applicable internationally recognized standards, such as ISO regulations systems (e.g., International Organization for Standardization [ISO] series systems—ISO/IEC 17025), ASTM International biotechnology standards or other pertinent biotechnology standards.
- e. Adhere to the Ontario *Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1990* and its regulations.
- f. Follow the ethical conduct of research involving humans as expressed in the current *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* (TCPS).
- g. Follow the biosafety and biocontainment principles and practices outlined in Health Canada's Laboratory Biosafety Guidelines.
- h. Adhere to pertinent Sections of the *Human Pathogens and Toxins Act, 2009* and its regulations.
- i. Adhere to pertinent **Canadian agricultural biotechnology regulations** including those that are the responsibility of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Health Canada, and Environment Canada.
- j. Adhere to pertinent Sections of the *Patent Act, 1985* and its regulations.
- k. Protect employee's and employers' intellectual property rights, for example, by following relevant guidelines outlined in the Manual of Patent Office Practice (MOPOP) (i.e., Chapter 17 Biotechnology), Industry Canada's Intellectual Property Policy and current organizational practices, agreements, and covenants.

[See Glossary](#)

2. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: perform quality control and quality assurance procedures and processes to maintain compliance with relevant standards and requirements.

Elements of the performance

- a. Support production efficiency and effectiveness by implementing quality control systems (e.g., Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Quality Assurance and **GLP**; International Organization for Standardization [ISO] series systems—ISO 9000 series; Hazard Analysis at Critical Control Points; Lean Six Sigma; and/or continuous improvement [kaizen] efforts).
- b. Ensure biological materials and products or services match their intended purposes, including workplace and/or customer expectations.
- c. Conduct quality assurance inspections, sampling, testing or audits to verify that biological materials and products are manufactured according to required specifications.
- d. Interpret the results of quality assurance sampling and testing to make appropriate improvements to biotechnology production processes.
- e. Select, **calibrate** and use appropriate measuring instruments to inspect biological materials and products.
- f. Apply approved quality control standards and procedures to inspect, sample, test and document anomalies and carry out the needed corrective measures.
- g. Collect and report on quality assurance and quality control data for statistical process control and planning purposes.
- h. Record and report compliance with current quality assurance procedures and required specifications.
- i. Prepare and maintain current, clear, and accurate standard operating procedures and other process documents, project-related documents, and progress reports in accordance with current organizational practices.
- j. Assist in sourcing equipment, materials, supplies, and services related to the production of biotechnology products.

[See Glossary](#)

3. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: apply sustainable practices in biotechnology operations to minimize environmental impact and improve resource efficiency.

Elements of the performance

- a. Act in accordance with bioethical standards.
- b. Comply with environmental management systems (e.g., International Organization for Standardization [ISO] series systems—ISO 14000 series).
- c. Support the responsible and ethical testing of new technologies.
- d. Engage in the socially responsible use of biotechnology in fields (i.e. health care, food and agriculture, industry, and the environment).
- e. Apply best practices in workplaces, such as lean and green **sustainability** practices and procedures.
- f. Determine the interrelationships among science, society, the environment, politics, the economy, and biotechnology projects.
- g. Comply with policies that foster technical, functional, environmental, ecological, sociocultural and socioeconomic improvements.
- h. Apply methods for **sustainability** when selecting and using materials (e.g., renewable, recyclable, or recycled materials).
- i. Use modern technological advancements in biotechnology fields (as applicable).

[See Glossary](#)

4. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: implement solutions to address biotechnological applications during the execution of lab responsibilities.

Elements of the performance

- a. Implement solutions to biotechnological challenges by applying concepts of general, organic, inorganic, analytical, and physical chemistry.
- b. Implement solutions to biotechnological challenges by applying concepts of physiology, cell biology, microbiology, genetics, biochemistry, and molecular biology.
- c. Implement solutions to biotechnological challenges by applying basic concepts of physics, in optics, electromagnetic radiation, fluid mechanics and thermodynamics.
- d. Assist with the design and execution of scientific experiments.
- e. Collect and organize experimental data and summarize and analyze results.

[See Glossary](#)

5. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: follow procedures to support quantitative and qualitative tests and analyses done in the laboratory.

Elements of the performance

- a. Maintain, troubleshoot and **calibrate** laboratory instruments and equipment.
- b. Use laboratory equipment properly, such as pH meters, centrifuges, spectrophotometers, chromatographic systems, electrophoresis apparatus, compound microscope and incubators.
- c. Perform basic laboratory operations.
- d. Prepare chemical solutions, calculate required mass or volume based on the required concentration, using established protocols, and determine a solution concentration.
- e. Perform basic bioassay methods in enzymology, immunology, microbiology and molecular biology.
- f. Purify macromolecules using current and established procedures.
- g. Analyze samples and test materials using a variety of microscopic methods.
- h. Use current and emerging **biotechnologies** to support the implementation of laboratory projects.
- i. Acquire and/or update computer skills applicable to current and emerging **biotechnologies**.

[See Glossary](#)

6. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: perform standard cell culture procedures under aseptic conditions to produce experimental results and maintain laboratory safety.

Elements of the performance

- a. Follow standardized aseptic technique practices and procedures to minimize the risk of pathogenic contamination in a laboratory environment.
- b. Perform cell manipulations via genetic and epigenetic alterations.
- c. Prepare, maintain and preserve plant, animal, microbial and/or viral cultures.
- d. Prepare and dispose of culture media and bioactive materials appropriately.
- e. Assist in batch fermentations and continuous fermentations using processes such as the preparation of fermentation media, sterilization procedures and inoculum development.
- f. Identify cell cultures using appropriate microscopic, biochemical, culture, microbial culture, and molecular and immunological techniques.

[See Glossary](#)

7. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: perform molecular biology procedures to support biotechnological applications.

Elements of the performance

- a. Extract and purify DNA/RNA and proteins from biological samples.
- b. Manipulate DNA using procedures, such as cloning/subcloning, sequencing and amplification by Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR).
- c. Separate DNA/RNA and proteins using chromatographic and electrophoretic techniques.
- d. Quantify DNA/RNA and proteins using spectrophotometric techniques.
- e. Carry out routine procedures in accordance with current practices in genomics and proteomics.
- f. Use **bioinformatics** tools including DNA and protein sequence analysis software.

[See Glossary](#)

8. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: assist in collecting, analyzing and managing biological information to aid scientists in ensuring data integrity and adherence to approved protocols.

Elements of the performance

- a. Characterize the **interdisciplinary** nature of **bioinformatics**.
- b. Use effective techniques to manage common biological data types and formats.
- c. Use effective ways to deal with the data management challenges associated with the rapid rate in the growth of biological data.
- d. Collaborate to access and extract data from private database and public Internet-accessible database sources.
- e. Use standard methods for searching, retrieving and storing biological datasets.
- f. Assist in analyzing and integrating data from a variety of biological databases such as DNA, RNA and protein sequence databases, protein structure databases, species-specific databases, biological matter (e.g., bacterial strains, vectors, etc.) and reference gel images.
- g. Assist with controlling statistical errors that can confound the interpretation of biological data.
- h. Use effective protocols for archiving biological datasets.
- i. Assist in extracting, transforming and integrating biological data from multiple data sources using information technologies and methodologies.

[See Glossary](#)

9. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: assist in collecting and communicating scientific data to meet industry standards and support research.

Elements of the performance

- a. Conduct literature searches and organize scientific information.
- b. Produce referenced technical documents and presentations.
- c. Manage, manipulate and display scientific data using software such as spreadsheet, database or statistical software.
- d. Use biostatistics to summarize, report and present scientific data.
- e. Contribute to the interpretation of scientific research results.
- f. Summarize, document and present lab experiments in written reports.
- g. Produce and maintain accurate biostatistical records.
- h. Present scientific research results clearly and concisely using oral, written, graphic and electronic formats.

[See Glossary](#)

10. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: develop and apply strategies for personal and professional development to enhance work performance and stay current in biotechnology.

Elements of the performance

- a. Identify areas for further development of knowledge, skills, and abilities and create a plan to meet those needs.
- b. Use constructive feedback from peers, co-workers, and supervisors to continuously improve knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- c. Use relevant and evidence-based resources to maintain currency in knowledge, skills and abilities and adapt to technological and scientific advances in the field.
- d. Take responsibility for individual performance and performance as a member of a team.
- e. Explore the benefits of professional associations and organizations (e.g., Ontario Association of Certified Engineering Technicians and Technologists (OACETT), Technology Accreditations Canada (TAC) and Technology, Professionals Canada (TPC)).
- f. Identify additional courses, workshops, and programs to support employment opportunities in the biotechnology field.
- g. Demonstrate professionalism in all interactions including collaborating as a member of a team.
- h. Demonstrate effective time-management and organizational skills.

[See Glossary](#)

Glossary

Bioinformatics: Bioinformatics involves the analysis and interpretation of various types of data, including nucleotide and amino acid sequences, protein domains and protein structures. It integrates knowledge from many different fields to advance the development of innovative solutions to scientific problems. A primary goal of bioinformatics is to increase the understanding of biological processes using computationally intensive techniques, (e.g., pattern recognition, data mining, machine learning algorithms and visualization).

Calibrate: To check and adjust the accuracy of the measurement, reading or output of a measuring instrument against an established standard.

Canadian Agricultural Biotechnology Regulations: Collectively, Health Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency are responsible for regulating products derived from biotechnology through enforcement of regulations (<https://inspection.canada.ca/en/plant-varieties/plants-novel-traits/general-public/regulating-agricultural-biotechnology>) such as Food and Drug Regulations (Novel Foods Regulation), Pest Control Products Regulations, Fertilizers Regulations, Feeds Regulations, Health of Animals Regulations, Seeds Regulations, and New Substances Notification Regulations (Organisms).

Emerging Biotechnologies: Biotechnologies that are not yet standard but which will probably be adopted in the near term. The expectation is that an emerging biotechnology will come into standard usage when the application of the technology matures.

Good Clinical Practice (GCP): Good Clinical Practice (GCP) is an international ethical and scientific quality standard for designing, conducting, recording and reporting trials that involve the participation of human subjects. Compliance with this standard provides public assurance that the rights, safety and well-being of trial subjects are protected, consistent with the principles that have their origin in the Declaration of Helsinki, and that the clinical trial data are credible. (Health Canada, 2004).

Health Canada has adopted, and endorses, the principles and practice guidelines of the International Conference on Harmonization of Technical Requirements for the Registration of Pharmaceuticals for Human Use-Good Clinical Practice (ICHGCP).

Good Laboratory Practice (GLP): Good Laboratory Practice (GLP) is a quality system concerned with the organizational process and the conditions under which non-clinical health and environmental safety studies are planned, performed, monitored, recorded, archived and reported (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 1998).

In Canada, the Standards Council of Canada (SCC) is responsible for accrediting and recognizing the competence and reliability of laboratory facilities in accordance with the

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Principles of Good Laboratory Practice (GLP).

Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP): Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) is a system governing consistency, quality control and risk management over the testing, manufacturing, processing, packaging, labelling, storing and distributing of medicinal products and devices, foods and biologics so that they comply with applicable requirements, specifications and regulations.

For instance, in Canada, Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) are the part of quality assurance that ensures that drugs are consistently produced and controlled in such a way to meet the quality standards appropriate to their intended use, as required by the marketing authorization... [a] legal document issued by Health Canada, authorizing the sale of a drug or a device based on the health and safety requirements of the Food and Drug Act and its associated Regulations. (Health Canada, 2010, 2009).

Interdisciplinary: Interdisciplinary refers to the interaction among two or more different disciplines and occurs at the interface between disciplines. This may range from the sharing of ideas to the full integration of concepts, methodology, procedures, theory, terminology, data, organization of research and training (Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, 2009).

Sustainability: Sustainability encompasses the ethical ideal that calls for optimizing the long-term carrying capacity and vitality of three interdependent systems—environmental, social and economic. In a biotechnology context, sustainability aims to save and improve the quality of human life, improve the quality and abundance of food while protecting nature, by engaging in biotechnology processes that are safe and humane, conserve biological diversity and protect ecosystems; benefit employees, consumers and communities; and strengthen enterprises that foster economic growth and prosperity.

Essential employability skills

All graduates of the Biotechnology 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 Biotechnology 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 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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