

Procedure Title:	Program Standards and Program Descriptions
Procedure ID:	#OP 2-213E
Manual Classification:	Section 2 – Academic Affairs
Linked to Policy:	# 2-213
Approved by Senior Management Team (SMT):	October 22, 2024
Effective Date:	November 1, 2024
Next Review Date:	October 1, 2027
Contact for Procedure Interpretation:	Executive Vice President, Academic Experience

1.0 – Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure compliance with Ministry requirements for program standards and descriptions, vocational learning outcomes, essential employability skills, and general education requirements.

Terms not defined in this Procedure have the same meaning found in the Program Quality Assurance Policy.

2.0 – Definitions and Acronyms

Board of Governors (BoG): The authority to govern Sir Sandford Fleming College is given to the Board of Governors through the Ontario College of Applied Arts and Technology Act, 2002, Ontario Regulation 34/03, Ministry Binding Policy Directives, and further outlined in the Board of Governors Bylaw 1

College Community: Any person who studies, teaches, conducts research at or works at, or under, the auspices of the College and includes without limitation, employees or contractors; appointees (including volunteer board members); students; visitors; and any other person while they are acting on behalf of, or at the request of the College.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO): are statements that represent the culminating demonstrations of learning and achievement at the end of a course. CLOs describe essential performance that students are expected to know, understand or do as a result of the learning experiences provided for in the course.

Credential Validation Service (CVS): has been established according to the Minister's Binding Policy Directive, Framework for Programs of Instruction. This service, along with the approval of programs of instruction by the Board of Governors, makes up a component of the self-regulatory mechanisms of the college system. The CVS is operated as a subsidiary of Colleges Ontario.

Elements of Performance: are descriptive phrases that expand the details of each program vocational learning outcome. These are found as part of the Program Standards and ensure there is clarity as to what level and quality of performance is required to meet the intended

outcome. The elements of performance are not to stand alone, but collectively describe the VLOs. These can often be used to create the course learning outcomes.

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 essential areas where graduates must demonstrate skills for knowledge: communication, numeracy, critical thinking, problem solving, information management, interpersonal and personal.

General Education Course: A course that meets the General Education curriculum requirement as defined in the Minister's Binding Policy Directive. Such courses must: 1) expose graduates to at least one discipline outside their vocational field of study; 2) be offered and designed entirely separately from vocational courses; 3) have learning outcomes consistent with at least one of the General Education themes, as set down in Appendix C1 of the Minister's Binding Policy Directive; 4) strengthen students' Essential Employability skills, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication, in the context of an exploration of topics with broad-based personal and/or social importance; 5) emphasize theoretical and conceptual understanding rather than applied skills. Both mandatory and elective General Education courses fall within the descriptor "General Education course."

Graduate: Student who has achieved the approved learning requirements for the program of instruction.

Learning Outcomes: are statements describing essential, complex performance that students are expected to know, understand or do as a result of a learning experience at a course or program level. All aspects of teaching (activities, instructional content/media, and assessments) should be designed with these outcomes in mind. Learning outcomes are inter-related and, as such should be viewed as a comprehensive whole. They describe performance that demonstrates that significant integrated learning by graduates of the program has been achieved and verified.

Ministry of Colleges and Universities (MCU): is the governing body for the Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology and oversees the development and the review of standards for programs of instruction. Each college is required to ensure that academic programming is consistent with these standards and must assist students to achieve essential outcomes.

Minister's Binding Policy Directive, Framework for Programs of Instructions: this binding policy directive applies to all colleges of applied arts and technology and defines expectations for all programs of instruction offered by colleges regardless of the funding source, except for ministry-funded apprenticeship training.

Ontario Qualifications Framework: The Ontario Qualifications Framework includes all non-religious postsecondary certificate, diploma and degree programs offered under the auspices of the Province of Ontario, including apprenticeship certificates, the qualifications awarded by private career colleges, the qualifications awarded by public colleges, and degrees offered by public universities and institutions authorized to award degrees by a consent of the Minister of Colleges and Universities of Ontario.

Program Description: For programs that do not have a defined provincial program standard, an approved program description is used to describe a program validated by the Credential Validation Service (CVS) and approved by the Ministry.

Program Standard: is developed and published by the Ministry in consultation with industry and articulates the essential learning a student must achieve before being deemed ready to graduate.

Program of Instruction: A group of related courses leading to a credential awarded by the College.

Program Team: The program team includes individuals and faculty with knowledge and expertise in the specific field, the Dean/Chair and may include the technician/technologist.

Vocational Learning Outcomes (VLO): also referred to as program learning outcomes, describe learning that is being done at the program level. These are broad statements that include a variety of levels and experiences and include the expectations of what students will achieve by the end of the program. VLOs are the foundation for the design, development and maintenance of all programs at Fleming College. VLOs must be measurable, relevant and reflect the Ministry program standard (if applicable), as well as meet the requirements of professional associations, the labour market, and the program's intended purpose.

3.0 – Guiding Principles

The College ensures that all programs of instruction adhere to the requirements of the Ontario Qualifications Framework.

4.0 – Scope

This procedure applies to all programs.

5.0 – Operating Procedure

5.1 – Programs of Instruction with Program Standards

Program Standards are produced by the Ministry of Colleges and Universities (MCU) which determine the minimum standards of learning a student must achieve prior to graduation. Program standards apply to all programs of instruction with the same program MTCU code.

Each program standard (VLOs, EES, and GNEDs) is communicated to students through program handbooks, the program website, and through dialogue with program faculty.

During program review, each program team will examine all VLOs, EES, and GNEDs during curriculum mapping to verify compliance of the program curriculum with the program standard. At no time, can the program standard be diminished.

If there is a recommendation by the program team to add vocational learning outcome(s) to the existing program standard, the proposed change must be recorded on the 'Major Program Change Form' and sent for the required levels of approval as described in 2-213B Program Curriculum Change and Implementation.

To review the requested change, the Academic Quality Office shall generate a table that cross-references the original standard with the proposed additions to ensure that the approved Ministry standard is not compromised.

If the addition of vocational learning outcome(s) is/are approved, the Academic Quality Office will generate a report to send to the Credential Validation Service (CVS) for approval, and this document will become a part of the historical record of the program.

When the Ministry modifies programs (standards and/or titles), the Academic Quality Office will support the College response and implementation plan by contacting the appropriate program Dean to review and confirm the attestation to the new standard/title (this activity may include curriculum mapping).

Notifications of the approved changes will be in accordance with the timelines of the Academic Planning Cycle as described in 2-213B Program Curriculum Change and Implementation for Certificates and Diplomas.

The program Dean will ensure that the program team implements the newly developed or revised program standards within the designated timelines established by the Ministry.

All current and historical information regarding the standard is stored centrally in the Academic Quality Office, including additions or provincial changes to the program standard.

5.2 – Programs of Instruction with Program Descriptions

If there is no approved program standard for a program, the program team will develop a set of VLOs that follows the closest relevant Program Description where they exist within the college system, at the level appropriate to the credential.

Each program description (program VLOs) is communicated to students through program handbooks, the program website and through dialogue with the program faculty.

Employers, industry, professional associations, and employees currently working in the field, may be involved in the development of the VLOs as described in the New Program Development Operating Procedure #2-213G.

After its formation, the Program Advisory Committee will review the set of program VLOs for accuracy, currency, and relevancy, and thereafter on an ongoing annual basis.

During program review, each program team will examine all VLOs, EES, and GNEDs during curriculum mapping to ensure they represent current trends, developments, and requirements to verify compliance of the program with the program description.

If there is a recommendation by the program team to modify the program description/VLOs, the proposed changes must be recorded on the 'Major Program Change Form' and sent for the required levels of approval as described in OP #2-213B Program Curriculum Change and Implementation.

To review the requested change, the Academic Quality Office shall generate a table that cross-references the original VLOs with the proposed modifications to ensure that all changes are

recorded.

If the modification is approved by the Academic Quality Office, the Vice President Academic Experience, and the Board of Governors, the Academic Quality Office will generate a report to send to the CVS for approval, and this document will become a part of the historical record of the program.

All review, historical and current program VLO information is stored centrally in the Academic Quality Office.

5.3 – Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the **Senior Management Team** to ensure that the Program Quality Assurance Policy and Program Standards and Program Descriptions Procedure are fully implemented.

It is the responsibility of the **Executive Vice-President Academic Experience** to oversee the implementation of the Program Quality Assurance Policy and Program Standards and Program Descriptions Procedure and to report to the Senior Management Team on this implementation as necessary.

It is the responsibility of the **Academic Quality Office** to ensure the tracking and central storing of all documentation relating to the review and updating of VLOs for all programs at Fleming College.

It is the responsibility of the **program Dean** to provide the resources and supervision to ensure that requests for VLO changes review of VLOs and consultation with Program Advisory Committee is accomplished.

It is the responsibility of the **program team** to ensure the VLOs of their program are relevant to the industry, are compliant with established standards or approved descriptions, and are taught and evaluated throughout the courses in their program.

It is the responsibility of the **Learning Design and Support Team** to provide curriculum-related expertise to program teams as required, such as course outline support, program mapping and analysis support, course and VLO development and the development of authentic assessments aligned to course learning outcomes.

It is the responsibility of the **Program Advisory Committee** to review any program learning outcomes presented to them for currency and relevancy, and make recommendations to the program Dean/Designate.

6.0 – Related Documents

- Minister's Binding Policy Directive: Framework for Programs of Instruction
- College Quality Assurance Audit Process (CQAAP) Standards of Quality
- Ontario Qualifications Framework (OQF)
- College Policy #2-213: Program Quality Assurance
- College Policy #2-212: General Education

- Operating Procedure #2-213B Program Curriculum Change and Implementation.
- Operating Procedure #2-213G New Program Development

7.0 – History of Amendments & Reviews

Date Approved	Approved By	List of Approved Amendments / Review
June 2019	SMT	NEW
October 22, 2024	SMT	Updating to new format. Substantive change.