

BOARD ORIENTATION AND EDUCATION POLICY

Approved by: Board of Governors
Authorizer: Governance Committee
Version: V1
Date of Approval: June 30, 2026

POLICY STATEMENT

This policy sets out the Board's approach to the orientation and ongoing education of governors and affirms continuous learning as a core component of effective governance. While governors are appointed based on their knowledge, experience, and expertise, the Board recognizes that effective governance requires ongoing professional development to support informed decision-making and collective Board effectiveness.

This policy also establishes expectations for the orientation of new governors, as well as a comprehensive Board-led orientation delivered at the annual Board retreat. It also affirms the Board's commitment to planning and providing ongoing education to strengthen the governance capacity of both the Board and individual governors throughout the Board cycle.

SCOPE

This policy applies to the Board and to any individual or body engaged by or on behalf of the Board in connection with the orientation and ongoing education of governors.

DEFINITIONS

Board: The board of governors of the College.

Chair: The chair of the Board.

College: The Conestoga College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning.

President: The president of the College.

PRINCIPLES

The following principles shall guide the Board's orientation and ongoing education:

1. The Board will proactively identify its orientation and ongoing education needs.

2. The Board will develop an annual education plan through the Governance Committee and include items related to good governance, policy-related matters relevant to the governance function and strategic matters of importance to the College.
3. The Board will encourage broad participation by governors in shared educational offerings.
4. Governors will commit time to participating in the orientation and education sessions as part of their overall commitment as governors.
5. Wherever possible, all governors will participate in the same educational offerings; customized education may be required to support specialized committee work from time to time.

POLICY

Responsibilities

1. The Board, through the Governance Committee and the President, is responsible for:
 - a. defining the key elements of a comprehensive orientation for new governors;
 - b. providing leadership in the delivery of the orientation program (normally through the Chair);
 - c. annually considering its collective and individual needs for professional development of governors; and
 - d. developing an annual education program delivered in one or more special meetings or incorporated into the regular meeting agendas of the Board.
2. The President's responsibility is to coordinate all aspects of the orientation and ongoing education programs, once the Board has defined them.
3. The President and the Chair have responsibility for monitoring and implementing the orientation and ongoing education program.

Orientation

1. All new governors will receive a comprehensive orientation about the College and its mandate, the role of the Board, and the expectations for individual governors. Including mandatory participation in Colleges Ontario and the College Centre of Board Excellence orientation sessions.

2. The orientation will be geared toward the needs of all governors, with specific focus paid to new governors.
3. Orientation should include the following:
 - a. the legislative framework and binding policy directives of the Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security applicable to the College;
 - b. an outline of the College's operations;
 - c. descriptions of Board governance, including structures and processes;
 - d. a list of stakeholders and key relationships; and
 - e. an overview of the post-secondary education environment.

Ongoing Education

1. In recognition of the evolving nature of a governor's responsibilities, ongoing education may be necessary.
2. In most cases, all governors should be exposed to the same education.
3. On an annual basis, the Board (through the Governance Committee) and the President will develop an education agenda for the entire Board based on a consideration of the following:
 - a. suggestions from governors as part of the annual Board evaluation;
 - b. key strategic directions of the College;
 - c. major decisions on the horizon;
 - d. appropriate and significant risk management themes;
 - e. other factors as considered appropriate; and
 - f. training related to any legislated requirements.
4. Governors shall also participate in Colleges Ontario and the College Centre of Board Excellence education sessions on an ongoing basis.

Board Retreat

1. While the format, content, and duration may vary from year to year, every year there will be an additional meeting of the Board, referred to as the Board retreat.
2. The purpose of the Board retreat is to address Board planning needs.

3. All governors are encouraged to participate each year in a Board retreat, designed to supplement orientation to all governors, provide Board development and learning activities, support Board governance, and promote team building and cohesion.

Off-Boarding Process

1. Once a governor has completed their term, they will be asked to complete an exit survey and participate in an exit interview.
2. The off-boarding process will be facilitated by the Governance Committee.
3. The results provide the Board with valuable information that will contribute to the growth and improvement of the Board and will allow the departing governor to share their experience.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Protocol for Board Nominations and Appointments for Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology