

## **ACADEMIC ADVANCEMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT POLICY**

**Approving Authority:** Academic Coordinating Committee

**Policy Owner:** Vice President, Academic

**Policy Lead(s):** Vice President, Academic

**Effective Date:** 2019-09-11

**Date of Last Approval:** 2024-12-17

### **POLICY STATEMENT:**

The academic experience at Conestoga College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning ('Conestoga') focuses on excellence in program delivery and services which empower students to achieve their potential. Conestoga supports students' academic advancement, achievement, and recognition through the procedures governed by this policy.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a consistent, equitable, and transparent process that facilitates Conestoga student progression through their chosen program of studies to graduation.

### **SCOPE:**

This policy applies to all students enrolled in Conestoga programs governed by the Ministry of Colleges and Universities' Ontario Qualifications Framework (OQF).

### **DEFINITIONS:**

#### **Academic Administrator**

For the purposes of this policy, an Academic Administrator is an Executive Dean, Dean, or Chair.

#### **Academic Standing**

A measure of a student's academic achievement relative to their program requirements that determines their eligibility to be admitted to and/or proceed in their academic program and to qualify for graduation.

#### **Advanced Standing**

A procedure for granting credit to a student for previous academic studies completed at a recognized postsecondary institution.

**Comprehensive Program Review**

Comprehensive program reviews require program teams to undertake a strategic assessment in support of Ministry and/or accrediting bodies' program requirements. Most programs follow a 5-7 year review cycle unless external and/or internal circumstances identified through the annual reflections indicate the need for a revised review cycle. Conestoga's comprehensive program reviews include the Major Program Review, the degree renewals and program accreditations.

**Discontinuance**

The involuntary withdrawal of a student from a Program of Study for academic or non-academic reasons.

**Discontinuance Period**

The length of time that a student is involuntarily withdrawn from a Program of Study prior to being eligible to apply for readmission. This can be for one term or longer.

**Full-time Ministry Approved Post-Secondary Program**

A diploma, graduate certificate or degree program that is approved by the Ministry of Colleges and Universities.

**Learning Contract**

A formal agreement between the College and a student outlining specific requirements of achievement for the student. Learning Contracts are required when students are on probation for a second time. They may also be used when students are readmitted to a program after having been discontinued.

**Learning Plan**

A document developed with the student and used to plan learning supports over a defined period.

**Program Design**

The structure of a program dated for a particular cohort which reflects the approved courses, hours, credits, and sequencing, prerequisites and co-requisites which are the basis for admission, delivery and assessing the completion of the program for student graduation.

**Program Weighted Average**

An average based on the program code/version and all the courses taken that are part of the program of study including electives. These courses may have been taken either via the cohort or through part-time studies (non-cohort). This is represented as a percent value and is printed on the transcript and achievement records for cohort and non-cohort-based programs.

**Program of Study**

An academic program that leads to issuance of a post-secondary credential or certificate for a particular area of study.

**Semester**

Refers to an established cluster of courses identified in the Program of Study.

**Term**

The period of delivery for a particular level of a program.

**Term Weighted Average**

An average based on all courses within the specified term. This is represented as a percent value and is printed on the transcript and achievement records.

**RESPONSIBILITIES:****Vice President, Academic**

- Ensure that this policy and associated procedures are reviewed, communicated and fully implemented.

**Deans/Chairs**

- Set academic criteria, program requirements, and performance outcomes for students.
- Oversee application and administration of these criteria/requirements.
- Lead promotion meetings.

**Registrar**

- Produce and distribute grade reports and transcripts.
- Administer the processes of grade collection and transcript production.
- Inform students of their grades, promotion status, and eligibility for graduation.
- Produce and grant diplomas and certificates.
- Maintain the official convocation and graduation records.
- Monitor and interpret this policy.

**Faculty Team**

- Evaluate students and submit course grades, program promotion status, or standing to the Registrar in a timely manner.
- Communicate academic requirements to students and document these requirements in course outlines and other official College materials.
- Support promotion discussions and decisions.

**POLICY:****1. Credentials**

- 1.1. The College assigns credentials for all certificate, diploma and degree programs consistent with the OQF, validated by CVS, and issued by MCU.

**2. Program Design**

- 2.1. For each program, the College defines a Program Design that lists the courses, organized by semester, that students must complete to earn the appropriate Conestoga credential.
- 2.2. Programs are regularly reviewed and changes are made where necessary as part of the Annual Program Reflection (APR) or Comprehensive Review cycle.
- 2.3. Each new intake of students is admitted into the most current Program Design.
- 2.4. Students are required to complete the courses in their Program Design assigned when admitted to their program.

### **3. Passing Grades for Courses**

- 3.1. A minimum passing grade of 55% is typically required in all courses offered at Conestoga.
  - 3.1.1. Some courses may require a higher minimum standard due to the nature of the program, including, but not limited to, accreditation or regulatory requirements. In such cases, the Academic Administrator (Dean) responsible for those courses approves the higher minimum passing grade in consultation with the Registrar.
  - 3.1.2. Courses in Ontario College Graduate Certificates and Degrees offered at Conestoga require a minimum 60% passing grade.
  - 3.1.3. The passing grade for a course is communicated on the course outline.

### **4. Repeated Courses**

- 4.1. A student may attempt a course 2 times.
- 4.2. A student wishing to register in a course for a third time must have approval from the Academic Administrator with academic responsibility for the program in which the student is registered.
- 4.3. Should a student not be able to complete a course because they have exhausted the number of available attempts, they will not be able to graduate from that program.
- 4.4. In situations where there is limited capacity in a placement or course, a student repeating a course cannot displace another student who has progressed through their program unrestricted.
- 4.5. In the case of repeated courses, the calculation of the Program Weighted Average includes only the most recent result. However, the student's transcript records all grades.

### **5. Interruption of Studies**

- 5.1. In cases where a student's studies are interrupted, the College may require the student to repeat courses as documented in the Re-admission Procedure.
- 5.2. While courses completed in the last 5 years are generally considered current, this may not be the case in all programs, especially in programs experiencing significant change

like IT programs. The Dean's decision, with respect to suitability of an older version of a course, is final.

## **6. Advancement from One Semester to the Next**

### **6.1. Promotion with Good Academic Standing**

6.1.1. Students progress from one Semester to the next upon achievement of a minimum Term Weighted Average of 60%.

6.1.1.1. Some programs may require a higher minimum standard due to the nature of the program, including, but not limited to, accreditation or regulatory requirements. In such cases, the Academic Administrator (Dean) responsible for those courses approves the higher minimum passing grade in consultation with the Registrar.

### **6.2. Promotion on Probation**

#### **6.2.1. Certificates and Diplomas**

6.2.1.1. Promotion on probation refers to students who achieve a Term Weighted Average between 55% and 59.99%.

6.2.1.2. The Term Weighted Average requirement is adjusted in programs with a higher passing grade requirement (e.g. Paramedic, HVAC, etc.). Students should refer to the Academic School Handbook for a full list of programs with a higher passing grade requirement.

#### **6.2.2. Degrees**

6.2.2.1. Promotion on probation refers to students who do not achieve the minimum overall acceptable achievement for progression (across all degree course requirements, including the breadth and discipline-related course requirements) of the Term. It is typically designated by a Term Weighted Average between 60% - 64.99%.

#### **6.2.3. All Programs**

6.2.3.1. Students who progress on probation can register in the next Term, but course registration is subject to course prerequisites.

##### *6.2.3.2. First Probation (P1)*

6.2.3.2.1. Students on probation for the first time are encouraged to meet with their Student Success Advisor (SSA) or Program Coordinator to map out a Learning Plan and discuss strategies they can use to support their success.

##### *6.2.3.3. Second Probation (P2)*

6.2.3.3.1. Students on probation for a second consecutive Semester must meet with their Student Success Advisor (SSA) or Program Coordinator to develop a Learning Contract.

6.2.3.3.2. The Learning Contract specifies the student's responsibilities and College's expectations.

## **7. Program Withdrawal**

- 7.1. Students who officially withdraw from a course or from the College within the first ten days of Term have all courses removed from their transcript.
- 7.2. Students who withdraw from a course or from the College after the first ten days but before the last day to withdraw in a Term without academic penalty, receive a “W” (withdrawn) for all courses on their transcript.
  - 7.2.1. “W” grades do not affect the student’s Program Weighted Average.
- 7.3. Students who withdraw from a course or from the College after the last day to withdraw in a semester without academic penalty, receive a “zero” (failure) for all courses on their transcript.
- 7.4. Those who do not officially withdraw receive grades earned on their transcript.

## **8. Program Discontinuance**

- 8.1. Annually, the College publishes academic dates and deadlines on the College website.
- 8.2. The College will discontinue students who have a Term Weighted Average of less than 55%, or who have failed to clear probation after two consecutive Terms.
  - 8.2.1. The Term Weighted Average requirement is adjusted in programs with a higher passing grade requirement (e.g. Paramedic, HVAC, etc.) Students should refer to the Academic School Handbook for a full list of programs with a higher passing grade requirement.
  - 8.2.2. Discontinued students are ineligible to register in their original Program of Studies for a minimum period of one Term. This includes any programs that share a common platform to the program from which the student has been discontinued.
  - 8.2.3. Discontinued students may apply to another College program. However, Conestoga strongly recommends that discontinued students who wish to begin another program speak to a Student Recruitment Advisor before applying.
  - 8.2.4. At the conclusion of Discontinuance Period, students who wish to return to their original program must apply for re-admission.
  - 8.2.5. Students who register for courses before final grades are submitted will have their registration cancelled if they have been discontinued from their program.

## **9. Graduation Requirements**

### **9.1. Certificates and Diplomas**

- 9.1.1. Completion of the Program of Study with an overall minimum Program Weighted Average of 60% except where higher minimum Program Weighted Average has been determined due to the nature of the program, including, but not limited to, accreditation or regulatory requirements.
- 9.1.2. Students must earn a minimum of 25% of the credits for their program at the College.

## 9.2. Degrees

- 9.2.1. Completion of the Program of Study with an overall Program Weighted Average (65%).
- 9.2.2. Students must earn a minimum of 50% of the total number of credits in their degree program at Conestoga.

## 9.3. All Programs

- 9.3.1. For students completing a second credential at Conestoga, a minimum of 25% of courses used towards the second credential must be completed at Conestoga.
- 9.3.2. In addition, at least 25% of courses must consist of courses not included towards a previous Conestoga credential.

## 9.4. Timelines for Graduation

- 9.4.1. The College expects students to complete their Program of Study within the following time limits based upon the original program or course start date:

Credential	Length	Timelines for Graduation
Certificate and Graduate Certificate	One-year program	Up to 200% of program length
Diploma	Two-year program	
Advanced Diploma	Three-year program	
Degree	Four-year program	Up to 175% of program length
Board Level Certificates	Varies	Up to 200% of program length

- 9.4.2. These timelines align with Ministry guidelines.
- 9.4.3. Approval of the Dean, with academic responsibility for the program, is normally required to extend these time limits. However, Conestoga may grant students with a documented disability extended time limits to graduate as verified and recommended by Conestoga's Accessibility Services.

## 9.5. Graduation Clearance

- 9.5.1. The Registrar approves students for graduation, on the advice of the Dean as based on a student's completion of the program.

## 10. Graduate Standing

- 10.1. The College awards students (on their transcript) a designation for programs governed by the Ontario Qualifications Framework.

### 10.1.1. *Graduated with Distinction*

- 10.1.1.1. Recognition is awarded upon graduation for all students in full-time ministry approved post-secondary programs who achieve an average of 80-89% in all courses of the program of study, with no failed courses.

*10.1.2. Graduated with High Distinction*

10.1.2.1. Recognition is awarded upon graduation for all students in full-time ministry approved post-secondary programs who achieve an average of 90% or greater for all courses of the program of study, with no failed courses.

*10.1.3. President's Honour List*

10.1.3.1. Recognition is awarded upon graduation to the student in full-time ministry approved post-secondary programs who obtains the highest average in the program. Students must achieve an average of 90% or greater for all courses of the program of study, with no failed courses.

**RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND RELATED DOCUMENTS:**

Academic Credential Procedure

Academic Dispute Resolution and Appeal Policy and Procedure

Academic Offences Policy and Procedure

Baccalaureate Degree Promotion and Graduation Procedure

Convocation Procedure

Discontinuance Procedure

Evaluation of Student Learning Policy and Procedure

Grading Procedure

Posthumous Credential Process

Program Development Procedure

Program Quality Assurance Policy

Program Review Procedure

Promotion Decision Procedure

Readmission Procedure

Supplemental Assessment Policy and Procedure

**REVISION LOG:**

2019-09-11	Academic Forum
2024-07-24	Academic Forum
2024-07-31	Academic Coordinating Committee
2024-11-13	Academic Forum – Minor amendment
2024-11-20	Academic Coordinating Committee – Minor amendment
2024-12-17	Academic Coordinating Committee – Minor amendment