

Investment Management Agreement for Public Post- Secondary Institutions

Portage College
Ministry of Advanced Education
2021-2022

SIGNED for and on behalf of the
Ministry of Advanced Education

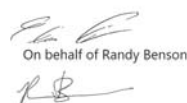


Minister


June 14, 2021

Date

SIGNED for and on behalf of Portage
College



On behalf of Randy Benson



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Board Chair

Date

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Intent of Investment Management Agreement (IMA)

Alberta's twenty-six publicly funded post-secondary institutions provide a variety of learning opportunities to people within Alberta, across Canada, and abroad. These institutions are often world-class organizations which excel in teaching and research. They prepare graduates for fulfilling careers and additional learning, while contributing to Alberta's economic and community development through skill development, research and innovation.

To support system coordination and optimize the allocation of public investments in adult education, each of these institutions is designated to a sector based on its programming, research and scholarly activity, and collaboration initiatives.

For 2021-2022, each institution will also sign an Investment Management Agreement with the Government of Alberta. This agreement will include the institution's mandate, a financial commitment from government, mutual priorities, and a performance metric to facilitate the allocation of outcomes-based funding, to ensure government and institutions are focused on meeting the needs of the province. Specifically, the Investment Management Agreement:

- identifies and explains the shared objectives and priorities between the Government of Alberta and the institutions; and
- describes the agreed upon investment framework that includes the key performance metric in a priority area.

While the IMA was originally designed to be a three-year agreement between each institution and the government, this year's IMA is serving as a pilot. Therefore, the agreement is for one year, from April 2021 to March 2022, with performance evaluated at the end of the fiscal year to provide learnings and identify improvements that could be incorporated into a three-year IMA.

The IMA is not intended to be the sole element of the relationship between the institution and the government, nor to include all decisions and issues in the post-secondary system. Government will continue to work closely with institutions and other stakeholders in a number of areas, and provide many aspects of system direction through legislation, regulation, policy, and other processes.

IMAs may be amended in the event of substantive policy or program changes that would significantly affect joint commitments made in the agreement. Any such amendment would be mutually agreed to in writing, dated, and signed by both signatories.

Legislative and Policy Requirements

Post-secondary Learning Act

Section 78 of the Post-secondary Learning Act requires that Boards of all 21 Public Post-secondary Institutions, and Independent Academic Institutions, enter into an Investment Management Agreement with the Minister of Advanced Education, which must include: the mandate of the institution (not applicable to Independent Academic Institutions), performance metric(s) for the institution, and anything else determined by the Minister. The Minister may specify the form of the agreement, and the date by which it must be in effect. The Boards of the 21 Public Post-secondary Institutions are also required to prepare, approve and submit to the Minister a budget and a capital plan. The budget submitted by an institution may not project consolidated operating expenses exceeding consolidated operating revenues, unless the Board has the written approval of the Minister.

Fiscal Planning and Transparency Act

Section 10 of the Act requires the Board of a Public Post-secondary Institution to provide a business plan for each fiscal year to the Minister. This requirement is fulfilled by each institution entering into an Investment Management Agreement with the Minister, delivering a budget and capital plan in accordance with section 78 of the *Post-secondary Learning Act*.

Operating and Program Support Grant Agreement

Each institution's Investment Management Agreement is appended to its respective Operating and Program Support Grant Agreement, and funds will be distributed in accordance with the institution's performance in meeting the target established in the Investment Management Agreement.

Mandate

1. Type of Institution, Sector, and Governance

Portage College is a board-governed Public Post-secondary Institution operating in Alberta as a Comprehensive Community College under the authority of the PSLA.

2. Outcomes

As a Comprehensive Community College, Portage College stewards its region providing adult education and training in its geographic service region in alignment with the strategic planning initiatives of the Ministry of Advanced Education. Program quality assurance

processes ensure that training is relevant to employers and a balance of technical and soft skills is provided. Portage College undertakes in-depth consultation with all of its community stakeholders including community adult learning providers, school districts, current and past students, service and industry employers, Program Content Advisory Committees, and Municipal and Indigenous Community Leaders.

3. Clients/Students

Open to all Albertans, focused in the Northeast of the province, Portage College's mandate is to serve learners typically underrepresented in post-secondary institutions. Portage College students are older, more likely to be married or single parents, and more likely to be Indigenous than the student body at other post-secondary institutions. Many students benefit from learning supports, smaller classes, and local campuses.

4. Geographic Service Area and Type of Delivery

Portage College has campus locations in Lac La Biche, Cold Lake, St. Paul, Frog Lake First Nation, Saddle Lake Cree Nation, Boyle, and Whitefish Lake First Nation #128.

Portage College excels in designing and delivering programs that respond to the learning needs of students and local employers. Portage programs utilize leading-edge learning technologies and are offered in multiple instructional modalities, including traditional face-to-face, online (synchronous and asynchronous), and a blend of online and face to face. The College's blended learning offerings, outreach programming aimed at foundational and integrated learning, and service to small cohorts demonstrate its ability to make both instruction and learning supports readily available to students at times and places convenient to them. The College offers learning assistance counselling and other support services addressing the needs of disadvantaged learners.

As a Comprehensive Community College, Portage College's mandate includes regional stewardship. This is achieved through partnership, in-community customized training and direct delivery of Community Adult Learning Programs. The College partners with many organizations to support the learner as close to home as possible.

5. Program Mandates and Credentials Offering

Portage College offers foundational learning programs to meet regional needs. In addition, the College offers certificate and diploma programs in diverse areas, including: Natural Resources, Business, Health and Wellness, Human Services, Indigenous Arts and Culture, University Transfer, Power Engineering and Fine Arts. The College also offers trades and technical training delivered as certificates, diplomas, pre-employment or as apprenticeship

programs. These include Heavy Equipment Operator, Electrical, Welding, Hairstyling and Culinary Arts.

Portage College expands its program offerings through articulation and transfer agreements, program delivery collaborations, brokering arrangements, and strategic partnerships. The College has a history of collaborating with Northern Lakes College to expand Business program streams and is currently working on Culinary Arts and several Continuing Education Programs. In addition, the College collaborates with the University of Alberta, University of Calgary, and NAIT to deliver degree completion programming and anticipates future collaborations with Red Deer College and Norquest College.

6. Special Program Areas/Areas of Specialization

Areas of specialization include: academic upgrading, pre-employment trades training, and continuing education customized training programs delivered in Indigenous communities in the region. Certificate and diploma programs in Indigenous Arts and Culture are unique to Western Canada and are fully transferable to Alberta University of the Arts.

7. System Collaboration and Partnerships

Portage College works to maximize learning opportunities that support the economic growth and human development needs of diverse communities in northeast Alberta. A focus on community-based learning enables the College to partner with municipalities as well as First Nations and Métis communities. In addition, the College partners with training and support agencies, for example: North East Alberta Apprenticeship Initiative, Trades Winds to Success and Canadian Native Friendship Centres. We have extensive networks with the local school divisions for the provision of access to dual credit learning and other experiential activities. In addition, the College partners with local providers for recreation facilities, counselling, recruitment, and learning commons services.

Portage College uses a collaborative approach with communities, institutions and organizations as well as evidence-based demand analysis to prioritize opportunities. The College is focused on maintaining partnerships with other post-secondary institutions to ensure that students have recognized pathways to continue their studies beyond Portage. The partnerships include robust transfer agreements and shared deliveries to allow Portage College's program mix to include degree completion and additional certificates and diplomas.

8. Research and Scholarly Activities

Portage College encourages applied research focusing on improvement of rural education, and supports scholarly activity strengthening our understanding of rural communities.

Portage College embraces every opportunity to collaborate with communities when conducting research identifying economic development and learning needs.

9. System Mandate

Portage College provides education and employment training programs that instill passion for lifelong learning, promote personal wellness, develop appreciation for cultural diversity, and inspire social engagement. A holistic approach to supporting our students is critical to ensure students are fully confident in their journey. “Portaging Students to Success” is a way we see our supportive role in helping students surmount life’s challenges.

10. Other

Portage College’s model of bringing learning to the learner has a direct impact on raising the numbers of Indigenous, single parent, first generation, and rural learners in general in a post-secondary system where these non-traditional learners are typically underrepresented.

Additionally, Portage College is unique in its direct operation of several Community Adult Learning programs (CALPs) throughout the region. CALP-funded foundational learning programming is delivered in three rural communities and all seven First Nation communities in the College’s stewardship region. The CALPs focus primarily on providing foundational literacy, numeracy, and digital skills to support individual employment or educational goals. These informal programs provide non-traditional learners with responsive, community-based learning that bridges learners into further post-secondary training. Our expertise has been recognized and we have been funded to develop and deliver training for CALP operators.

Objectives and Priorities

Government of Alberta

The Government of Alberta (GOA) is committed to post-secondary education as a cornerstone of employment, economic and social development, and overall prosperity for the province. As the province continues to recover from the many challenges caused by the pandemic, post-secondary institutions will play a pivotal role, not only through research, innovation and

commercialization of leading edge technology, but also in providing highly-skilled and job-ready graduates for a recovering and dynamic labour market.

The initial goal of the GOA is to highlight the critical role post-secondary institutions play to prepare students for a future career. While this inaugural Investment Management Agreement reflects that goal, it is also meant to serve as a pilot to guide the development of future iterations that will be broader and more comprehensive for Alberta's post-secondary system. By focusing on students, innovation, efficiency, and accountability, and by working to improve system performance and outcomes, Investment Management Agreements will ensure institutions play a vital role in keeping Alberta competitive on the global stage.

Portage College

In 2020, the Board of Governors renewed the College's strategic Vision, Mission and Values through a comprehensive process that included input from communities, employees and students.

- **Our Vision: Learners are empowered to transform and make a difference**
- **Our Mission: Connecting people with knowledge, skills and opportunities**
- **Our Values: Collaboration, Inclusion, Success and Accountability**

As a Comprehensive Community College with a unique clientele and mandate, we recognize that retention and success rates are not only important to meet government mandated performance measures but also to help students transform and create ripple effects in the communities where they live. Our strategic plan which aligns with the needs of employers, students and the Alberta 2030 vision, includes three strategic goals:

- **Improving Graduate Success,**
- **Increasing Operational Efficiency and**
- **Increasing Partnerships.**

For the 2021-22 year the College will be focused on recovering from the impacts of the pandemic and supporting economic recovery. Due to lagging impacts of Covid, our budgets and operational plans are cautious in terms of our ability to generate ancillary income. While we intend to be back on campus as much as possible for programs and students that need it. We will be adapting some programs and services where we have had successes with the online experience, and students have enjoyed the flexibility of blended delivery.

Program Changes:

Several changes are called for in our 2021-22 program plan to support economic recovery. The most prominent driver for change is the call for increased emphasis on experiential learning including work integrated learning:

- Development and launch of four new micro credentials
 - **Permaculture** –This program is approved with funding from Advanced Education. Our enrolment target is 25 students, starting in September.
 - **Autoclaved Aerated Concrete** –This program is approved with funding from Advanced Education. Our enrolment targets are 12 students in the installer program and 12 students in the master builder program by September 2021.
 - **Supportive Care Assistant** – This program is approved with funding from the Government of Canada and coordinated by College and Institutes Canada. Our goal is to have 32 students complete their placement in a private facility over the next 12 months.
 - **Community Adult Learning-** This program is funded by Advanced Education. For 2021-22 our goal is to have 35 students complete a pilot delivery of each of the two streams: Instruction in Foundational Literacy and Instruction in Foundational Numeracy.

- Launch of Work Integrated Learning components in Aboriginal Art Certificate and Pathways to Employment.
- Develop Work Integrated Learning in at least three programs for delivery in the 2022-23 year.
- Redevelop the existing Office Administration Certificate to a new program with focussed on upskilling existing office professionals.
- Launch the Professional Cooking Certificate program with Work Integrated Learning which will provide advanced standing into the Culinary Arts Diploma. Delivery will include students at Northern Lakes newly constructed campus in High Prairie.
- Launch of Barber Certificate. Delivery will include Work Integrated Learning. Portage is the only post-secondary to launch this training and students will be eligible for advanced standing.
- Increased options in Business Administration though the relaunch of the partnered delivery with Northern Lakes College.

Other Priorities In 2021-22:

- Working with Advanced Education and Norquest College, Bow Valley College and Northern Lakes College on improvements to foundational learning.

- Continued integration of Indigenous knowledge and experience into our programs and services including the development of a specialized student service model.
- Increasing administrative efficiency through shared services.
- A focus on increasing earned revenue through stakeholder mapping, increased grant applications and focused campaigns to support work integrated learning activities and scholarships.

Operating and Program Support and Performance Based Funding Allocations

Table 1: 2021-22 Allocations for Portage College

Total Operating and Program Support grant	\$20,787,178
Proportion tied to Performance	5%
Performance based funding allocation	\$1,039,359

Performance-based Funding Methodology

This inaugural Investment Management Agreement for Portage College, and the performance-based funding it represents, is based on one metric: the proportion of approved programs at Portage College that have a Work Integrated Learning component.

Table 2 below provides the specifics on the performance metric that will be used to calculate any funding impacts. A baseline result has been established at the beginning of the 2021-22 fiscal year using data housed in the Provider and Program Registry System (PAPRS). A target and tolerance band has been negotiated with Portage College.

Over the next 12 months, as Portage College prepares for the 2022-23 academic year, it will provide updates into PAPRS about new or existing programs that have a Work Integrated

Learning component. The existing metric will be updated on March 31, 2022. If the result meets or exceeds the target, there will be no adjustments to 2022-23 OPS funding.

If the result fails to meet the target, and is lower than the tolerance threshold, then an adjustment will be applied against the 2022-23 funding that is proportionate to the achievement from the expected result (to a maximum identified in Table 1).

Table 2: Performance Metric

Work integrated learning: Proportion of approved programs that have work-placements identified as part of the program.				
Core Area: Skills and Labour Market Outcomes	<u>Baseline Established</u>		<u>Target</u>	<u>Tolerance Threshold</u>
	March 31, 2021	61%	65%	2.5%
Using the program matrix, the College will strategically target programs without practicums and look for opportunities to create them, systematically shifting learning objectives from academic to experiential learning. New programs will be developed with Work Integrated Learning as a mandatory component. In addition, the College is an active member of the Talent Development Task Force and as such will be strongly advocating for the provincial portal to connect employers with students seeking work integrated learning opportunities as well as full time employment.				