

Advanced Placement: A Look at Ontario's Landscape

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In partnership, Mohawk College and Hamilton Health Sciences together worked to map an advanced placement opportunity for HHS employees, whereby training in the workplace could be granted credit into a Mohawk College program. Educational programming within the Department of Continuing Education was leveraged for its online and part-time learning opportunities, providing prospective learners with flexible deliveries for individuals looking to progress their careers.

The main focus of the project was to gain a better understanding of advanced placement practices and, using the knowledge gained, identify and map a potential pathway in partnership with a Hamilton employer. The mapped pathway was chosen specifically to address an identified skills gap within the industry, providing value to both the employer and prospective student.

Since the concept of advanced placement is still in its infancy within Canada and in particular, within Ontario, Mohawk relied heavily on the experience and best practices of British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT), who continue to stand as leaders in the industry.

Of the institutions offering advanced placement opportunities, it was found that Business was the most common of the recipient program areas. This was often due to the fact that curriculum delivered within the Business portfolio best aligned with employer training curriculum and informal work experience. The environmental scan also revealed that, of prospective student audiences, advanced placement programming has largely been established with the Canadian Armed Forces. This could be due to established processes by BCIT with the additional existence of National Advanced Placement and Prior Learning (N-APPL), a national body founded by BCIT that provides post-secondary institutions with the opportunity to provide advanced placement to past and current members of the Canadian military.

Together, HHS and Mohawk College were able to identify pathways from the CQI employer training to the Leadership Development Series. Curriculum mapping between the institutions employed a block transfer approach by using program learning outcomes and instructional hours as the primary measure of complementarity. An 80% alignment between program curriculum was required to be considered eligible for transfer credit, as per the college's Policy on Credit Transfer. Curriculum content was reviewed when the research team was presented with gaps or uncertainties in alignment.

The ONCAT project reinforced the importance of educational partnerships with industry. Together, the two institutions were able to address a gap identified in the workplace while providing valuable educational opportunities for HHS employees. Beyond the pathway identified, the partnership opened dialogue for future collaborations. Mohawk and HHS are committed to the implementation of the CQI-LDS credit transfer opportunity while continuing to explore ways in which to benefit the Hamilton workforce.

Without the project funding, this initiative would likely not have carried forward. Mohawk would like to take the opportunity to recognize and acknowledge the support and contribution from ONCAT.