



OntarioLearn

Strategic Plan

2022 – 2025

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Introduction: A Record of Achievement

For twenty-six years, OntarioLearn has been a progressive leader in the collaborative sharing and delivering of quality online education. With close to 1.2 million course enrollments since its inception in 1995, and a learner retention rate close to 90%, OntarioLearn has proven it delivers what learners want and need. Comprised of all 24 Ontario Community Colleges and two Indigenous Institutes, the consortium works as a synergistic, responsive, and dynamic group to develop and deliver flexible, demand-driven online learning. This partnership approach allows participating institutions to optimize resources and deliver one of the largest inventories of collaborative high-quality online programs and courses in North America.

The incorporated Board of Directors along with a Management Committee including representation from each member institution provide OntarioLearn with leadership and oversight.

OntarioLearn's collaborative model has given learners (including those in rural and remote communities) access to a comprehensive suite of asynchronous course offerings ranging from general education, highly specialized and discipline-specific courses, and vocational learning. Our exceptionally large inventory of online courses and programs are provided by colleges across the province and will soon include courses provided by two indigenous institutes, as we leverage our shared strengths and resources. This system approach offers a level of responsiveness and breadth that would not be possible through a single institution. In 2020/21 OntarioLearn continued to grow with 105,864 course registrations in nearly 1,500 courses. Collaborative programs ranging from Micro-credentials, Certificates, to Diplomas, Graduate Certificates and Degrees enhance a robust program inventory. Using their own devices learners access courses at any time from their home, office or elsewhere, at their convenience. Learners connect with their course facilitator and classmates who may be participating from anywhere in Ontario, Canada or internationally.

For many mature learners dealing with family and school schedules, employment hours, day-to-day obligations, or living in a rural or remote location, the flexibility of an online education offers a practical alternative to campus-based class timetables or a long commute to attend classes in person. OntarioLearn's flexible and demand-driven start dates of courses is a distinct advantage for learners. In addition to the three traditional semester intakes in the fall, winter, and spring, OntarioLearn offers many courses at the start of every month throughout the year. The monthly intake option gives learners greater flexibility to begin their courses at a time that suits them and addresses their needs and ability to complete a program at their own pace. These benefits have been particularly relevant as member institutions were faced with the COVID-19 pandemic, lockdowns, and the inability to hold in-person classes.

OntarioLearn is an award-winning model recognized for its innovation by the Canadian Association for Distance Education and offers many benefits for the institutions, their learners and employers. Members of the consortium work collaboratively to provide innovative opportunities for all learners regardless of what perceived or real barriers they have, where they are located, and when they are available to pursue their education. Our work is guided by our academic, administrative, and corporate policies and procedures that are designed to provide

consistent approaches related to the rights and responsibilities of partner institutions, their learners, staff, facilitators and OntarioLearn staff.

We will leverage our past successes and continue to be flexible and pro-active in adapting to the inevitable changes that the future brings. We will expand online training opportunities for learners to develop skills that prepare them for future work environments. We view the future as an opportunity for us to serve the post-secondary system in new and innovative ways, and to continue to provide and support learners regardless of where they are physically located.

Our Mission

OntarioLearn is a consortium of institutions devoted to the development and delivery of high-quality, accessible, learner-centred online learning opportunities.

Our Vision

OntarioLearn is a national leader in post-secondary online education. This leadership will be ensured by maintaining the highest standards of curriculum design and delivery, leveraging our award-winning cooperative model, and pursuing ever-expanding markets.

Our Values

To support, sustain and fulfill our mission, we believe in:

Quality: Learning that adheres to a rigorous quality assurance process to ensure that the design and delivery of every course meets documented standards and complements the online learning environment.

Learner-centred: Learning that is focused on the learner's needs, abilities, interests and learning preferences to empower contemporary learners.

Collaboration: Working with post-secondary institutions, learners, and partners to achieve goals, increase capacity and establish pathways for success.

Innovation: Creating unique and effective courses, programs, processes, services, technologies, and ideas.

Sustainability: Maintaining a consortium that is financially sustainable, fosters complementary partnerships, retains and advances enrollment, and provides high-quality, accessible, learner-centred online learning opportunities.

Our Strategic Priorities

Advancing Quality

- Advance Quality Assurance processes and leverage the expertise of the QA community of practice
- Focus on course review and quality improvement through the lenses of decolonization and equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- Advance the consistency of the learner experience, developing a rigorous review and renewal cycle for courses and programs.

Advancing Digital Strategies

With the learner experience at the forefront, OntarioLearn will use this strategic priority to support our business model(s) to enhancing processes through the use of sustainable technology that enables and supports our collaboration.

Our digital strategy will strengthen our approach to quality assurance and security where our policies, practices and processes will support these priorities in all that we do.

Goals:

Through OntarioLearn, we will:

- Improve and accelerate business and technology efficiencies through investment in systems infrastructure supported by a technology expertise resource.
- Establish analytics and metrics to support decision making
- Review of Learning Management Systems and website/portal to ensure continued efficacy and adoption of new tools and enhancements.
- Leverage effective practices, teaching innovation, and lessons learned through post-secondary responses to the global pandemic.

Advancing Innovation

OntarioLearn will embrace innovation and create flexible opportunities for learners, supported by the strength we draw from collaborating with each other.

With a renewed commitment to improving communication within the consortium we will boldly move forward to ensure all members are provided with clear communication, shared technology, and high-quality programming.

Goals:

Through OntarioLearn, we will:

- Continue to be the leader in high quality, flexible and accessible online course offerings in Canada
- Renew our commitment to improving communication across the consortium by providing frequent information, updates and best practices, shared technology, and responsive support for high-quality online programming.
- Lead the conversation by strengthening our provincial network and telling our story nationally and internationally.
- Develop a compelling value proposition presentation to improve awareness and support across member institutions
- Expand our delivery model to include options for diverse learning activities and learner engagement channels, and leverage technology to enable multiple options operating simultaneously
- Encourage programming that anticipates employer needs and future skills, meeting learners where they are and helping them achieve their learning and career goals

Advancing Sustainability and Growth

OntarioLearn will continue to build on its collaborative model and develop more opportunities for all partners as they onboard or look to expand. We will grow our operating model by identifying efficiencies for individual institutions as well as the OntarioLearn ecosystem as a whole. Our policies, practices, and processes will continue to evolve to enable and encourage opportunities to support all members of the consortium in a variety of ways, empowering members to reach even more learners.

Goals:

Through OntarioLearn, we will:

- Focus on our member institutions and growth within the system as we emerge from the global pandemic.
- Focus on strategic business development and partnership opportunities
- Enable and support opportunities for growth within our membership
- Assure financial stewardship and sustainability for OntarioLearn
- Explore opportunities to offer additional shared services to members
- Leverage government relations and seek opportunities for funding to support OntarioLearn strategic initiatives and goals.

Conclusion

The global pandemic has accelerated learner uptake of online learning in ways that were unimaginable. Post-secondary institutions have similarly embraced online and hybrid learning to meet learner needs, preferences, and demand. The effectiveness of online learning has been deeply studied over the past four decades, and it's exciting to see this critical avenue for learner learning and engagement come front-and-centre across the PSE sector. As a longstanding and high-caliber provider of online learning to learners from across Ontario, as well as nationally and internationally, OntarioLearn is exceptionally well-situated to continue to grow and thrive as a

valued partner and collaborator. Our philosophy of meeting learners where they are by providing just-in-time learning has never been more relevant, and we look forward to serving our learners and member institutions through this strategic roadmap for our collective future.