
The Board of Governors of NorQuest College Mandate and Roles Document

Preamble

This Mandate and Roles Document for the Board of Governors of NorQuest College ("NorQuest") has been developed collaboratively between the Minister of Advanced Education ("Minister") and NorQuest. This document is in furtherance of the parties' legal obligations under the *Alberta Public Agencies Governance Act* (APAGA) to reflect a common understanding of respective roles and responsibilities in governance of NorQuest.

1. Mandate

NorQuest College's mandate is set out in the Investment Management Agreement entered into by the Board and the Minister.

1. Type of Institution, Sector, and Governance

NorQuest is a board-governed public post-secondary institution operating in Alberta as a Comprehensive Community College under the authority of the *Post-secondary Learning Act* (PSLA).

2. Outcomes

- **Learner:** NorQuest is the first choice for an inclusive and seamless educational experience.
- **People:** NorQuest is a purpose-driven employer of choice.
- **Connection:** NorQuest is a values-driven partner in advancing societal and economic growth.
- **Investment:** NorQuest is adaptable, sustainable, and has the resources to develop and offer solutions and create stronger communities.
- **Transformation:** NorQuest leverages technology and resources to maximize service delivery, amplify our impact, and support learners.

3. Clients/Students

At NorQuest, adult learners with varying levels of education, from diverse educational, cultural, and social backgrounds can achieve their personal and career goals and enhance their lives.

NorQuest programming is sensitive to the diverse cultural experiences of all learner populations represented including Indigenous learners, and learners for whom English is a second language. The college is a leader in meeting the needs of learners with disabilities.

4. Geographic Service Area and Type of Delivery

NorQuest engages community partners to meet literacy and foundational learning needs and ensures access to a full spectrum of post-secondary learning opportunities. In rural and urban communities throughout the region, the college collaborates with other post-secondary partners and opens pathways for lifelong learning.

As a community college, through innovative distributed learning alternatives, the college serves students across Alberta, throughout Canada, and around the world. Flexible delivery methods are offered to learners including full- and part-time studies as well as open studies. These course loads are delivered in-person, online (real time or anytime), and in hybrid combinations of face-to-face and online delivery.

5. Program Mandates and Credentials Offering

NorQuest delivers educational opportunities to people where they live, learn and work. The college provides flexible alternatives in both credit and non-credit programming, including transfer credits, career laddering, recognition of prior learning, bridging, general studies, part-time study, and professional development.

A leader in enhancing access to post-secondary education, the college is widely recognized for its foundational learning opportunities in academic upgrading, adult literacy, employment readiness, and English as a Second Language education.

Credentials granted by the college include certificates, diplomas, apprenticeship, and undergraduate degrees, as defined in the PSLA.

Through agreements with other post-secondary partners, the college shares curriculum and collaborates to offer advanced credit and educational pathways for learners.

6. Special Program Areas/Areas of Specialization

NorQuest provides credentialed high-quality learning opportunities that prepare graduates for careers and further studies in business, industry, indigenous studies, health sciences, human services, early learning and education, energy and environment, apprenticeship and emerging technologies.

NorQuest provides non-credentialed and micro-credentialed offerings in areas such as business leadership and management, hospitality, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, project management, process improvement and clean and green economies.

7. System Collaboration and Partnerships

As a Comprehensive Community College, NorQuest collaborates with other post-secondary institutions and community and industry organizations to support regional access to foundational learning, diploma, certificate and undergraduate degree programs.

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communities throughout the region, the college collaborates with other post- secondary partners and opens pathways for lifelong learning.

8. Research and Scholarly Activities

NorQuest is committed to enhancing teaching and learning through applied research that informs its academic programming and builds capacity in the communities it serves. The college engages nationally and locally with partners in business, industry, government, and communities to develop innovative solutions to social and technological challenges.

NorQuest's applied research and scholarly activities support the development, innovation, and economic diversification of local business and community organizations. Our research focuses on:

- Improving operational functions of businesses and community organizations by facilitating workforce engagement and success among underemployed and traditionally marginalized populations.
- Identifying, developing, and validating healthcare innovations, both technological and person-based, in order to improve the health and wellbeing of all Albertans, thereby reducing the cost of healthcare services and education while maintaining high quality of life.
- Improving teaching and learning through the application and assessment of new methodologies and approaches.

9. System Mandate

NorQuest students experience unique educational opportunities in a vibrant and supportive environment that is responsive to changing learner needs and dedicated to learner access and success.

Workforce training is developed with and customized to meet specific needs in communities and workplaces.

NorQuest offers comprehensive student supports and services ranging from advising, to financial aid, learning, and health and wellness supports for learners to facilitate learner success. Additionally, NorQuest learners benefit the community and economy while developing workforce relevant skills that prepare them for a successful transition into the workplace through community service and work-integrated learning programs. These two areas include opportunities such as practicums, co-ops, applied research participation, volunteering, and providing services to local businesses and non-profits.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

The Board

The Board manages and operates the institution in accordance with its mandate and carries out the other duties and responsibilities legislated by the PSLA.

The Board sets strategic direction and monitors implementation.

The Board participates with the Minister in setting its long-term objectives and short-term targets, if any.

Board Members

All board members, regardless of the manner of their appointment, have the fiduciary duty to act in the best interest of the institution.

Board Chair

The Chair is the interface between NorQuest and the Minister and provides leadership to the Board.

President

The President has general supervision over the direction of the operation of the institution and has other powers, duties, and functions that are assigned to the President by the Board.

Minister of Advanced Education

The Minister is responsible for the performance of all public agencies under Advanced Education, including NorQuest.

The Minister's responsibilities as legislated by the PSLA and APAGA include:

- appointing, or recommending the appointment of, the Board members and the Chair;
- monitoring whether the institution is acting within its mandate and achieving its long-term objectives and short-term targets;
- advising the institution respecting any government policies applicable to the institution or its activities or operations; and
- reviewing the mandate and operations of the institution at least every seven years.

Department of Advanced Education

The Department supports the Minister and NorQuest in meeting their legislated responsibilities.

Subsidiaries

The NorQuest College Foundation (the "Foundation") is incorporated separately from NorQuest, and is established to conduct the operations of a charity dedicated to the promotion and provision of educational services and assistance to NorQuest. All services and programs of the Foundation are administered through NorQuest, as outlined in the Service Agreement between the two entities, which is reviewed and updated every 2 years. The Foundation administers and operates services including leadership and major gift solicitation, special event management, annual fund and family campaign coordination, receipting and administrative services, stewardship and donor recognition, and undesignated donation allocation. The Foundation also conducts charity operations dedicated to the promotion and provision of educational services.

3. Accountability Relationships of the Public Agency

The flow of accountability relationships at the agency is as follows:

- The President is accountable to the Board.
- The Board is accountable to the Minister through the Chair.
- The Chair is accountable to the Minister for the mandate and conduct of the public agency.

4. Process for Administering the Code of Conduct

NorQuest's Code of Conduct is reviewed and approved by the Ethics Commissioner, and the Board ratifies and makes public the Code of Conduct. Updates to the Code of Conduct are submitted to the Ethics Commissioner for review. The Chair administers the Code of Conduct for board members. The Governance Committee Chair administers the Code of Conduct for the Chair.

5. Mutual Expectations – Communication, Collaboration, and Consultation

The relationship between NorQuest and the provincial government is an important one. Boards are accountable to the Minister, who has primary responsibility for the PSLA.

The Minister oversees strategic planning and direction setting for Alberta's advanced learning system, policy development, funding for general operations and specific purposes, and the promotion of transparency and accountability. The Minister is responsible for providing clear mandate direction to boards, establishing clear expectations for oversight and accountability, and for participating in an ongoing dialogue with boards on important issues.

The board has a governance oversight role in relation to the institution it governs. Because the chair serves as the voice of the board, and is directly accountable to the Minister, the relationship between the Minister and the chair is critical.

Other officials, such as the Deputy Minister who oversees the operations of Advanced Education, will typically be in closer contact with institution presidents and vice-presidents. Similarly, department staff may be in regular contact with staff of the institutions on areas of mutual interests.

6. Committee Structure

Committees of the Board include:

- **Finance and Audit Committee** – The Finance and Audit Committee monitors, evaluates and makes recommendation for decisions by the Board with respect to strategic matters, significant financial and capital infrastructure matters, and significant policies of NorQuest.
- **Governance Committee** – The Governance Committee oversees and provides direction to the Board in the areas of Board governance and operations; Board appointments and evaluation; regulatory compliance; and strategy.

- **Human Resources Committee** – The Human Resources Committee oversees and provides direction to the Board in the areas of human resource strategy and the appointment, performance evaluation and compensation of the President and CEO.

7. Financial, Staffing, and Administrative Arrangements

NorQuest receives funding from the Government of Alberta via its Operating and Program Support Grant.

The Auditor General is the auditor of NorQuest College.

NorQuest is subject to sections 1, 2(5), 5, 6, 7, 13(3), 57.1, 80, and 81 of the *Financial Administration Act*.

While the *Post-secondary Learning Act* gives the Board of Governors broad authority to appoint employees, the President is the only employee that reports to and is directly accountable to the Board.

Compensation of senior executives is determined by the Board in accordance with any legislation, policies or guidelines governing compensation applicable to the institution as a public agency.

8. Planning and Reporting Requirements

The Board is required to enter into an Investment Management Agreement with the Minister that includes

- the mandate of the institution,
- performance metrics for the institution, and
- anything else determined by the Minister.

Annually, NorQuest provides the Department with a Capital Plan and a Budget Plan.

Each year the Board must prepare and submit to the Minister a report that includes the audited financial statements for the preceding year.

The Board is also required under the PSLA to submit to the Minister any reports or other information required by the Minister.

9. Administration

Three Year Renewal or Revision

The Mandate and Roles Document must be reviewed and renewed, amended or replaced within three years after the day on which the document or the most recent amendment to the document was signed.

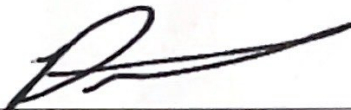
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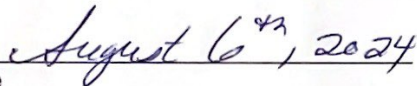
Copies of the Mandate and Roles Document will be filed with the Minister and the Public Agency Secretariat. This document will also be made publicly available on the Board's website and the Government of Alberta's website.

His Majesty the King in right of
Alberta, as represented by the
Minister of Advanced Education

The Board of Governors of NorQuest
College


Minister


Rob Heron, Board Chair


Date

June 4, 2024
Date