

COMMS: An Overview



COMMS (Course Outline Mapping and Management System) is a web-based application that allows faculty and staff at Algonquin College to create, edit, approve, and store course outlines on a College-wide basis. The application also enables users to map course curriculum to program outcomes and provides reports in the form of curriculum maps.

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Selecting a Role in COMMS

There are four common roles in COMMS:

Course Outline Writer is identified by the Coordinator to enter or revise the content of a course outline and to map the course to program outcomes.

Coordinator is assigned by the Chair to identify course outline writers. Coordinators also review outlines submitted by the Course Outline Writer before they are submitted to the Chair for approval.

Chair assigns coordinators as well as reviews, approves and/or unapproves course outlines. A Chair can also add departmental information to an outline.

Chair Designate is identified by the Chair. Chair Designates do not approve course outlines, but can perform all other tasks available to the Chair.

Performing Tasks in COMMS

This section provides instructional information for the tasks associated with three of the common roles in COMMS.

Course Outline Writer

Once you are notified that a course outline is ready to be entered/revise, log into COMMS and click on Course Outline Writer. Then click on Write/Edit Course Outlines. Click on Edit beside the outline you want to enter/revise.

You may preview your course outline at any time by clicking on Preview.

Coordinator

Once you are notified that you have been assigned the role of COMMS Coordinator, you can then identify course outline writers. First, log into COMMS and click on Coordinator. In the next window, click on Identify Course Outline Writers.

Using the menus, choose (1) your program, (2) the course you wish to assign, (3) enter the name of course outline writer using his/her College User ID, and then (4) click on Add Writer. The writer will be notified by email that the outline is ready for entering.

Once you are notified that a course outline has been sent for review, go to the COMMS Home Page, click on Coordinator and then on Review Course Outlines. Click on Preview to look at the outline. Once you've reviewed the outline, you can then return to the Coordinator's page and click on Review/Return for Editing. At the bottom of the window, you can click on Forward for Approval or Return for Editing. When you have released the outline, it will go to the Chair for approval. If the outline is not ready for the Chair, use the textbox to explain where further work is required. By choosing Return for Editing, the outline goes back to the Course Outline Writer along with your comments.

Chair

Chairs have three tasks in COMMS: (1) identifying coordinators, (2) approving course outlines, and (3) adding department-specific information.

To identify coordinators

From the COMMS home page, click on Chair. Then click on Identify Coordinators. Select the department and in the next window, click on Identify Coordinator beside the desired program. Enter the coordinator's College User ID in the textbox.

To approve course outlines

From the COMMS home page, click on Chair. Then click on Approve Course Outlines. Use the drop-down menu to choose the appropriate department and program. Click on Preview beside the outline you wish to review. Once you have reviewed the outline, return to the window and click on Approve/Return for Editing. The textbox in the following window allows you to add comments if you are returning an outline for further work.

Professor Of The 21st Century

The content of this Lifesaver is related to the following Professor of the 21st Century Teaching Competencies:

6. Using Technology.
7. Designing Courses and Programs

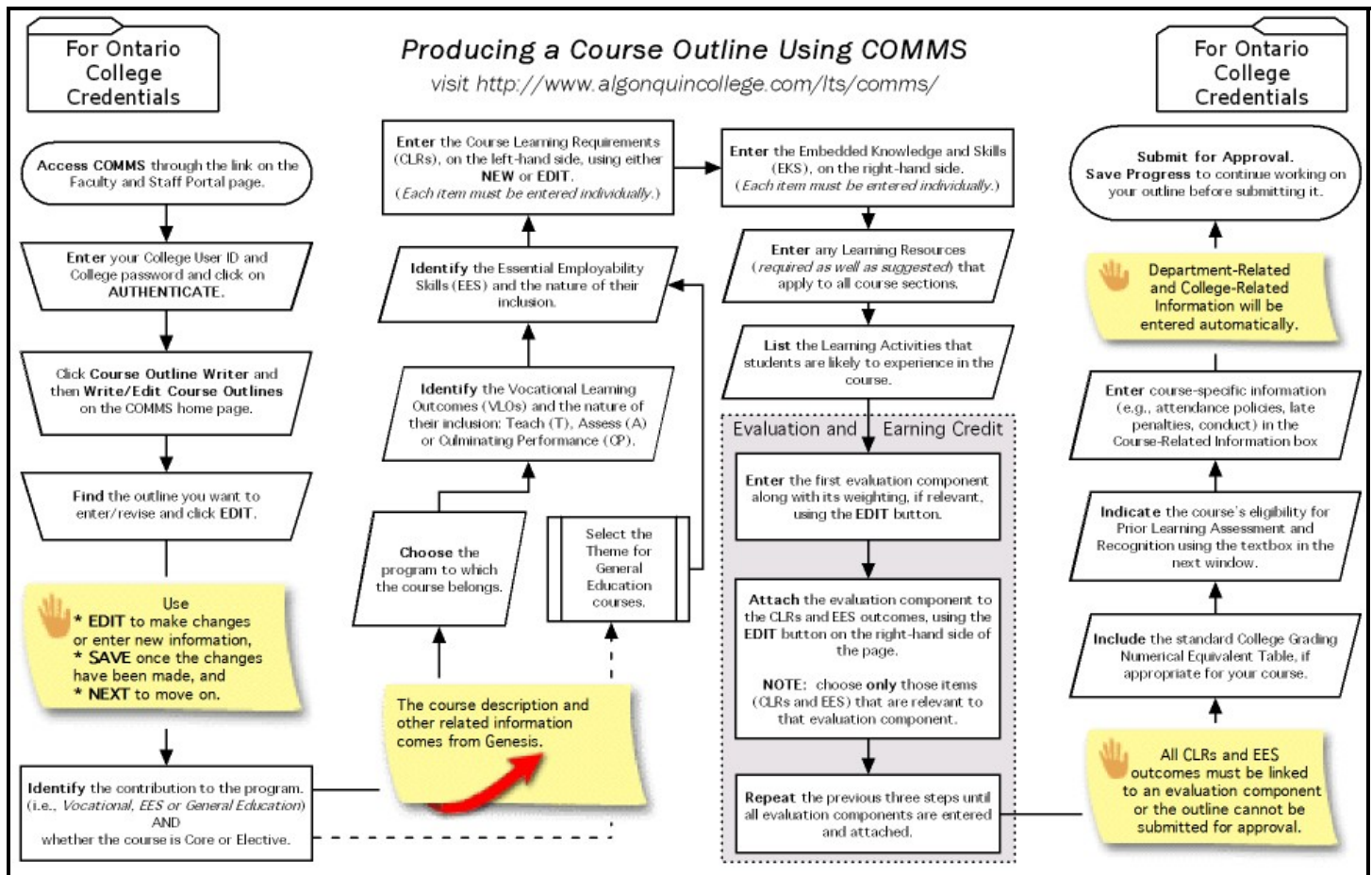
Preparing a Course Outline for COMMS

For courses that are part of a program leading to an Ontario College Credential, there are a few items to keep in mind as you prepare your course outline. There is the option to indicate the inclusion of the program learning outcomes in your course, as determined by the program mapping. There is also the opportunity to indicate how evaluations link to the course learning requirements and the Essential Employability Skills Outcomes.

(continued on the back)

The following checklist provides a summary of the questions that will need to be answered as COMMS is being used:

- Is your course a Vocational, Essential Employability Skills (EES), or General Education course?
- Is your course core or elective?
- Have you indicated the course's contribution to the program? (i.e., Vocational Learning Outcomes (VLOs), EES Outcomes or General Education Theme)
- Have you written strong Course Learning Requirements (CLRs) that reflect the Program Learning Outcomes.
- Have you identified the Embedded Knowledge and Skills for each CLR that clearly show the stepping stones to content mastery?
- Have you identified what Learning Resources will be useful, appropriate, accessible and affordable for the learners?
- Have you identified a variety of Learning Activities to meet the needs, interests and abilities of the learners?
- Have you clearly identified what kinds of evaluation activities students must do to earn credit?
- Where relevant, have you listed the weight of each learning activity?
- Can you identify which CLRs and which EES each evaluation activity addresses?
- Have you indicated the course's eligibility for Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition?



For a larger, hard-copy version of this chart, requests can be sent to vibertt@algonquincollege.com.

Producing a Report Using COMMS

The following reports are available in COMMS:

- VLO Program Summary
- EES Program Summary
- Course VLOs by Level for Given Program
- Course EES by Level for a Given Program
- Gen-Ed Map

QUESTIONS??

For more information, visit the COMMS web page:
<http://www.algonquincollege.com/lts/comms/>.

The COMMS working group member for your School is also available to answer questions. The contact list can be found on the COMMS web page: <http://www.algonquincollege.com/lts/comms/>.

To print a report, go to the COMMS home page and click on **GENERATE REPORTS**. Using the four drop-down menus, select an academic year, a department, a program code and a type of report. Click **RUN** and your report will appear.