

# Learner-driven Plan Strategy Implementation

Changing Education,  
Changing Lives

**ALGONQUIN**  
COLLEGE



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CLAUDE BRULÉ  
PRESIDENT AND CEO

# To be the leader in personalized education

What does an exceptional college experience look like? We asked that question repeatedly as we developed our Learner-driven Strategy. The answer from students and College employees, alumni, employers, industry professionals and other external stakeholders was clear and consistent: **personalization**. Since no two learners are exactly alike, there can be no “one size fits all” College experience. It needs to be tailored to each and every individual.

In our context, that experience includes both what happens inside the classroom and outside of it: the full educational, administrative and community experience of Algonquin College. We need to create an environment that responds to individual learners — meeting them when, where and how they wish to achieve their educational goals.

This implementation plan sets concrete steps and targets for making personalization foundational to everything we do so we can realize our learner-driven vision.

## A LEARNER-DRIVEN COLLEGE

Being learner-driven is a core strategic pillar of Algonquin College. It is key to our mission of transforming hopes and dreams into lifelong success. Because every learner has different needs, goals, expectations and life circumstances, we can only be learner-driven if we serve each learner individually.

This isn't just an ideal: it's a competitive necessity. Learners expect personalization. Other colleges are seeking to deliver it as we vie with them for the same shrinking pool of traditional domestic students and seek to attract new kinds of learners. As the Learner-driven Strategy states:

The competition for today's digitally minded, diverse and personalization-craving student body is underway. In no time, learners will have numerous domestic and international options for their post-secondary education. Now is the time to commit to a strategy that will make Algonquin College a leader in personalized learning and a personalized college experience.

With this implementation plan, we are embarking on a multi-year commitment to meet the needs of all the learners in our community: students, employees and employers. Implementation will require us to change some things that have become “business as usual” in our first 50 years. In a way, this places us right alongside our learners. They live in a world of constant change. So must we.

## FLEXIBILITY IS KEY

If there is one thing needed above all to provide a personalized college experience and thrive amid change, it's **flexibility**. That's why our Learner-driven Strategy and

this implementation plan focus on increasing the flexibility of our learning offerings and College operations as a whole.

To support that flexibility and ensure all our activities uphold the highest standards, the Learner-driven Strategy has three **supporting themes**: being **proactive and responsive, forging connections** between learners and the College, and enabling **employee excellence**.

Given its sweeping scope and many dimensions, personalization cannot be achieved wholesale overnight. We need to proceed iteratively and strategically, building on our successes, and approaching this quest for personalization as an ongoing transformative journey — not a task to be completed and checked off a list.

### **A FOCUSED PLAN FOR REAL PROGRESS**

This implementation plan concentrates on three specific and foundational areas of change based primarily on the feedback received from consultation sessions and prioritized by the Algonquin College Leadership Team:

1. Schedules and timetables;
2. Universal Design for Learning (UDL); and
3. Micro-credentials and digital credentials.

### **COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND PARTNERSHIPS**

Achieving our objectives in these areas will contribute to our ability to provide an enhanced, highly personalized learning experience — and help us stand out as the “College of Choice” in Ontario. Over time, we will consider other opportunities identified during the consultation sessions to further evolve our operations and our offerings.

While the objectives and initiatives laid out in this plan take us to 2022, they are just the beginning. With these activities, we are embarking on an exciting journey that will define — and reimagine — the Algonquin College experience for generations to come.

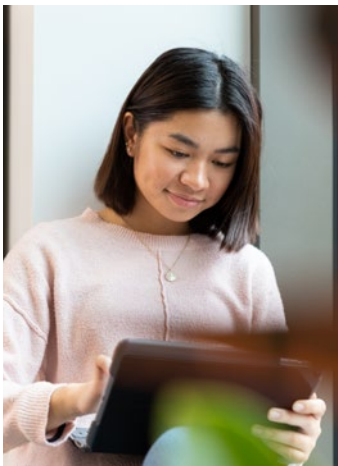
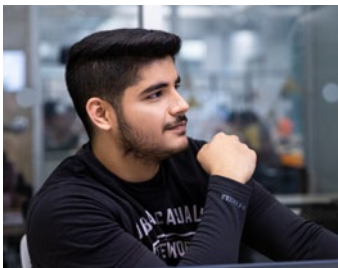


**CLAUDE BRULÉ**  
PRESIDENT AND CEO, ALGONQUIN COLLEGE









## Every learner is unique.

We recognize and value that diversity. We're reshaping our College to revolve around learners' individual needs and preferences so we can deliver truly personalized education rooted in flexibility and choice. By doing so, we will set Algonquin College apart as the provider of a unique post-secondary experience.

We aim to build the strongest relationship with learners of any Ontario college by having the most flexible programming and student services — enriched by robust professional development, support for employees and technologies, and ways of working that are powerfully enabling.

We will add flexibility to our programs and services to deepen relationships with learners and tailor their learning experience whether they are enrolling directly from high school or seeking to continue their learning later in life. We will move toward rewarding competencies instead of “seat time” and promote lifelong learning and career development among all our employees.

Learners will be able to configure and augment their programs of study with different courses, modalities and schedules to suit their individual needs. They'll have the freedom to make meaningful choices about what they learn and which College services they access — as well as when, where and how.

In the near term, this will take the form of flexible schedules, timetables and service hours that shift away from the traditional 9-to-5, mainly in-person weekday model so learners can access education and supports in ways that will fit with their lives.

It will materialize as “universal design for learning” (UDL) principles are applied to every digital and physical interaction between learners and the College — ensuring those interactions are designed to contribute to the personal success of each learner.

It will take the shape of short, focused, just-in-time learning activities that will help learners develop specific competencies or skills that are recognized and valued by industry, and that can stack into other academic programs. These micro-credentials will make use of digital badges to help showcase the learned skills to employers.

These early steps toward transformation will pave the way for a broader, deeper and fuller embedding of flexibility and choice in every aspect of College operations. They will lead to greater learner engagement, more stable enrolment for the College, higher levels of learner satisfaction and ultimately, the reputation of Algonquin College as the leading provider of personalized learning in Ontario.






01.

# How this plan came to be





“For Algonquin College, moving to a personalized education model is a proactive step. ... Colleges and universities are under growing pressure to transform their approaches and go beyond the traditional ‘one-size-fits-all’ model.”

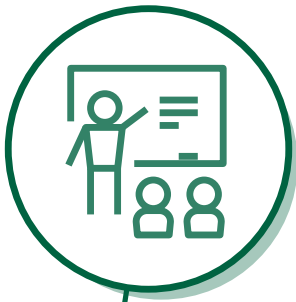
— Algonquin College Learner-driven Strategy

# 1.1

## Guiding principles

This implementation plan is rooted in the same principles that shaped the Learner-driven Strategy overall: commitment to inclusive engagement of the College community and unwavering focus on personalization as the key to being learner-driven.





**PRINCIPLE 1**

# Engagement

Engagement was a critical guiding principle in the development of the Learner-driven Strategy, ensuring that the final plan represented the views, beliefs and aspirations of our entire College community. In 2018, a cross-College working group sought the perspectives of students, employees and external stakeholders. More than 8,000 distinct inputs were received through live meetings, online surveys, town halls and other forums – a strong indicator of interest in the concept of personalized learning and a personalized College experience.

**PARTICIPATION**



**IDEAS, COMMENTS & SUGGESTIONS**

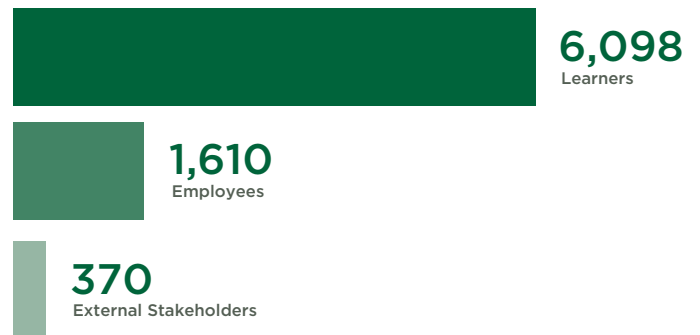


Figure 1. Learner-driven Strategy development at a glance

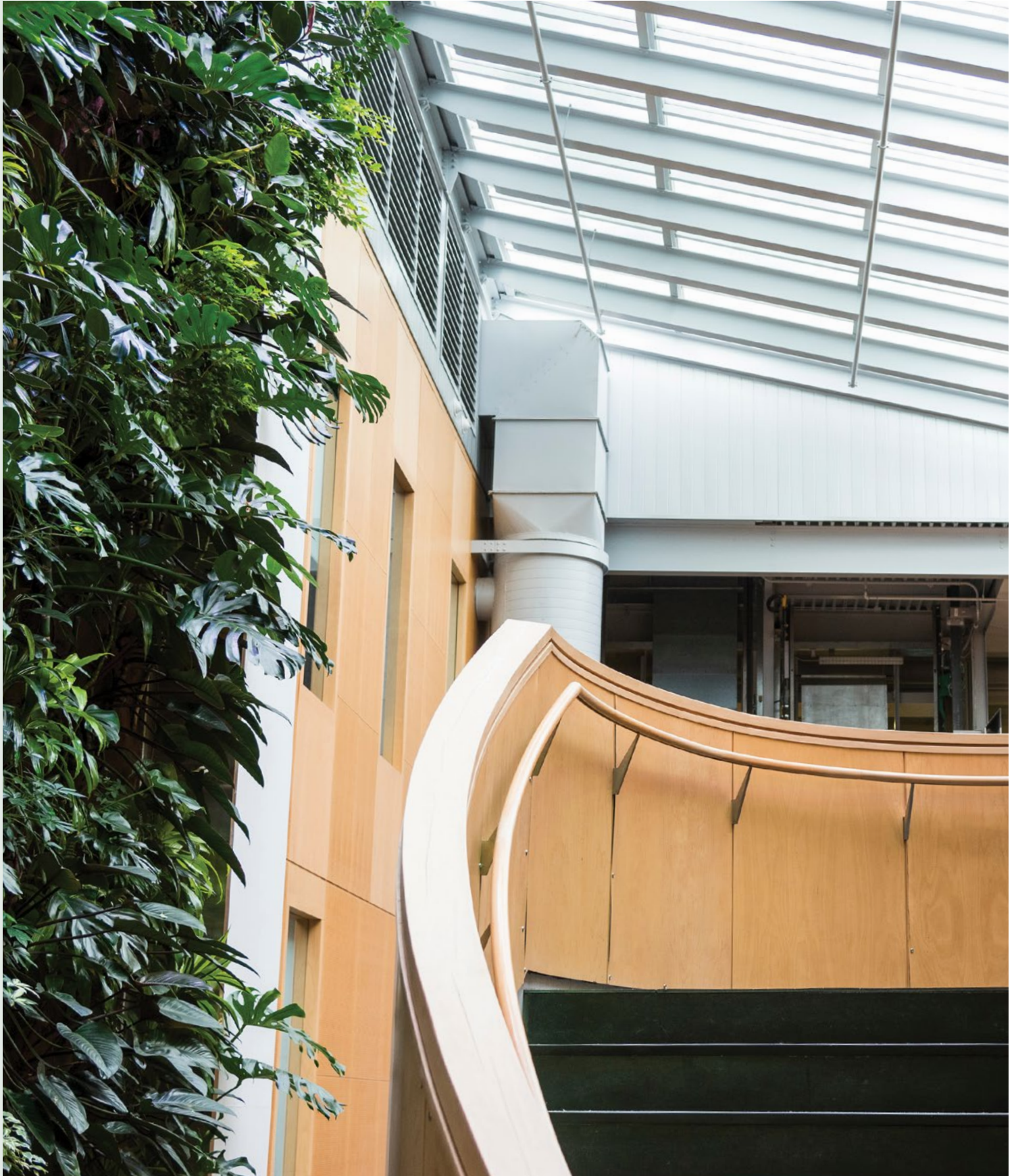


**INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS:**

Faculty, support staff, administrators, Board members and learners

**EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS:**

Alumni, employers, industry professionals, program advisory councils, prospective students and parents, students who left the College without graduating, high school teachers and counsellors, high school boards, other post-secondary institutions







## ENGAGING ON THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

To develop this plan for implementing the strategy, we carried the engagement approach forward — reaching out to stakeholders across the College for input. We solicited learner feedback and comments to help prioritize the direction of the implementation plan. We engaged them in visioning exercises to better understand what learners would value as improvements to their student experience.

Outreach to learners and employees included numerous information and playback sessions, surveys, focus groups, town halls and weekly updates. Awareness articles documenting the summer student experience and featuring interviews with Learner-driven Plan working group leaders (“Explainers”) were posted on MyAC (the College’s internal communication portal), the Learner-driven Plan website and social media<sup>1</sup>.

Our three implementation working groups, one for each focus area (Schedules and Timetables, Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Micro-credentials and Digital credentials), reviewed the total input collected from 162 employees, 319 current Algonquin students and 79 high school students to guide and validate the development of their plans.

Ongoing and regular stakeholder feedback, playback and engagement sessions will continue to be sought throughout the short- and long-term implementation of the Learner-driven Plan.

<sup>1</sup>You can find details on the various consultation sessions here: [www.algonquincollege.com/learnerdriven/files/2019/11/LDP-Stakeholder-Feedback-summary--V6.pdf](http://www.algonquincollege.com/learnerdriven/files/2019/11/LDP-Stakeholder-Feedback-summary--V6.pdf) and [www.algonquincollege.com/learnerdriven/files/2019/12/Summer-Student-Report-Summer-2019.pdf](http://www.algonquincollege.com/learnerdriven/files/2019/12/Summer-Student-Report-Summer-2019.pdf)

## PRINCIPLE 2

# Personalization

Engagement is how we developed this Learner-driven Strategy implementation plan. Personalization is the why: the overarching goal we aim to realize. But what exactly do we mean by “personalization”? At Algonquin College, we continue to use the definition from the Learner-driven Strategy<sup>2</sup>:

“[Personalization is] a diverse variety of educational programs, learning experiences, instructional approaches, and academic-support strategies that are intended to address the distinct learning needs, interests, aspirations or culture backgrounds of individual students — for the purpose of achieving exceptional learner, employer and community success.”

The bold phrase at the end is significant. It clarifies that personalization has a value not only for learners by enhancing programs, credentials, delivery, content, services, policies and enrolment, but also for employees — creating new opportunities for development, new modes of teaching, new ways to deliver services and more.

Personalization has been part of our thinking for many years. Our academic advisors and student success specialists guide individual student experiences. Learners in several programs have options such as modularized math courses, accelerated or flexible delivery, monthly intakes and online learning opportunities. Faculty can see how often their learners log into the College’s learning management system and can send personalized check-ins to those who have been offline for a while. The College provides personalized outreach and messaging during the admission process, as well as customized learner orientations.

These examples show that we are on the right path. But this kind of personalization is not yet available College-wide. Through this Learner-driven Strategy implementation plan, we will begin to embed personalization in every aspect of our operations — strategically and with focus.

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from the Glossary of Education Reform, as quoted in the Algonquin College 2017-2022 Strategic Plan, 50+5.



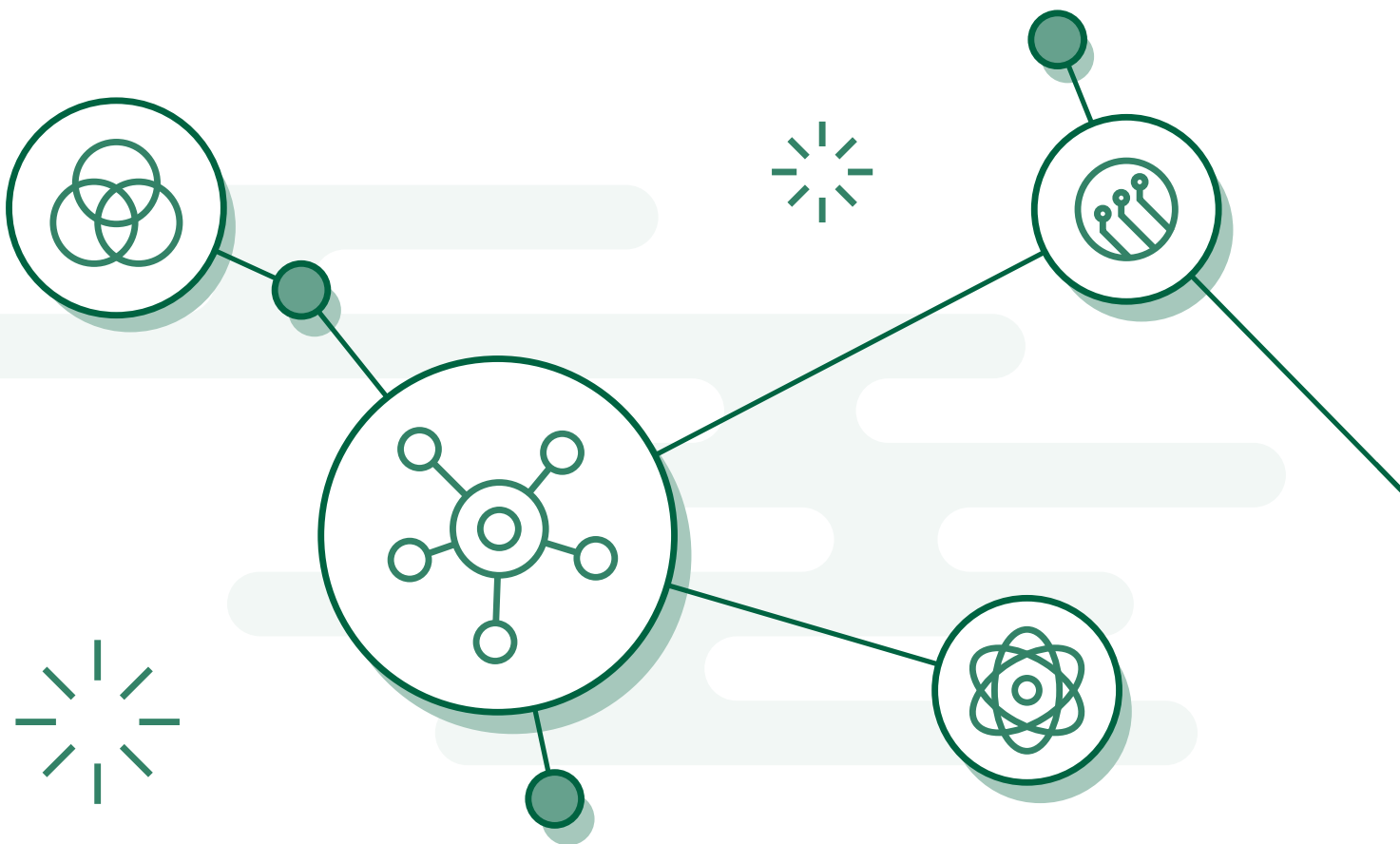
### **STRONGER TOGETHER**

The Learner-driven Strategy is just one piece of a larger strategic framework. Our 2017-2022 Strategic Plan enshrines being learner-driven as a core belief. Our People Plan, International Strategy, Transforming Indigenization Initiatives Plan, Discovery, Applied Research and Entrepreneurship Plan and Information Technology Modernization Plan each promote personalized, learner-driven approaches. In the Indigenous way of knowing that the College is committed to honour and respect, each of these strategies is its own “arrow”: a tool to use, a direction to follow. Just as arrows bundled together are stronger than they are alone, these strategies in combination provide a much stronger foundation for the College’s learner-driven goals.

## 1.2

# About our Learners

At no time in history have people had more choice or control over how they communicate, bank, shop, travel and access entertainment — all tailored to their preferences by data analytics and artificial intelligence. As a result, learners don't just welcome personalized experiences: they expect them.



## New expectations

Colleges and universities are under increased pressure to transform their approaches and go beyond the traditional “one-size-fits-all” model. The Learner-driven Strategy quoted a Gartner study that stated this about as bluntly as can be:

Students... are less tolerant of mass-market, generic and industrialized services (which are the norm on many campuses). They will no longer be satisfied or even comply with antiquated processes and mass target services.... The academy can no longer hide behind the gates of the institution, but rather must meet students where they are, whether that is in the digital or virtual world, or at the local coffee shop. The institution must now do business on the students' terms, not its own<sup>3</sup>.

This is especially true of “digital natives” — the generation who grew up with digital platforms, devices and tools — who expect easy access to services, information and the latest technologies. These learners crave engaging experiences and want to be empowered to make their own decisions<sup>4</sup>.



<sup>3</sup> *The Future of the Student Experience Is Personal*. Gartner, 2017.

<sup>4</sup> *Getting to Know Gen Z: Exploring Middle and High Schoolers' Expectations for Higher Education*. Barnes & Noble College, 2017.



## Changing demographics

At the same time, demographics are changing. In Ontario, the number of people aged 25 to 44 will grow by one to two percent a year over the next 10 years<sup>5</sup>. The number of people aged 15 to 24 (our traditional cohort) will hold steady or possibly decline<sup>6</sup>.

That means even as we adapt to meet the expectations of digital natives we also need to offer personalized experiences to older learners with very specific career goals. Students in this older group are often seeking to upskill or reskill or move into a new occupation and may have less-flexible schedules than recent high-school graduates (working, family obligations, etc.). Personalization can help us take factors such as these into account and “meet students where they are” — for example, offering more evening or weekend courses, hybrid/online learning, and worksite training.



<sup>5</sup> Ontario's Long-Term Report on the Economy. Ontario Ministry of Finance, 2017.

<sup>6</sup> Ontario's Long-Term Report on the Economy. Ontario Ministry of Finance, 2017.

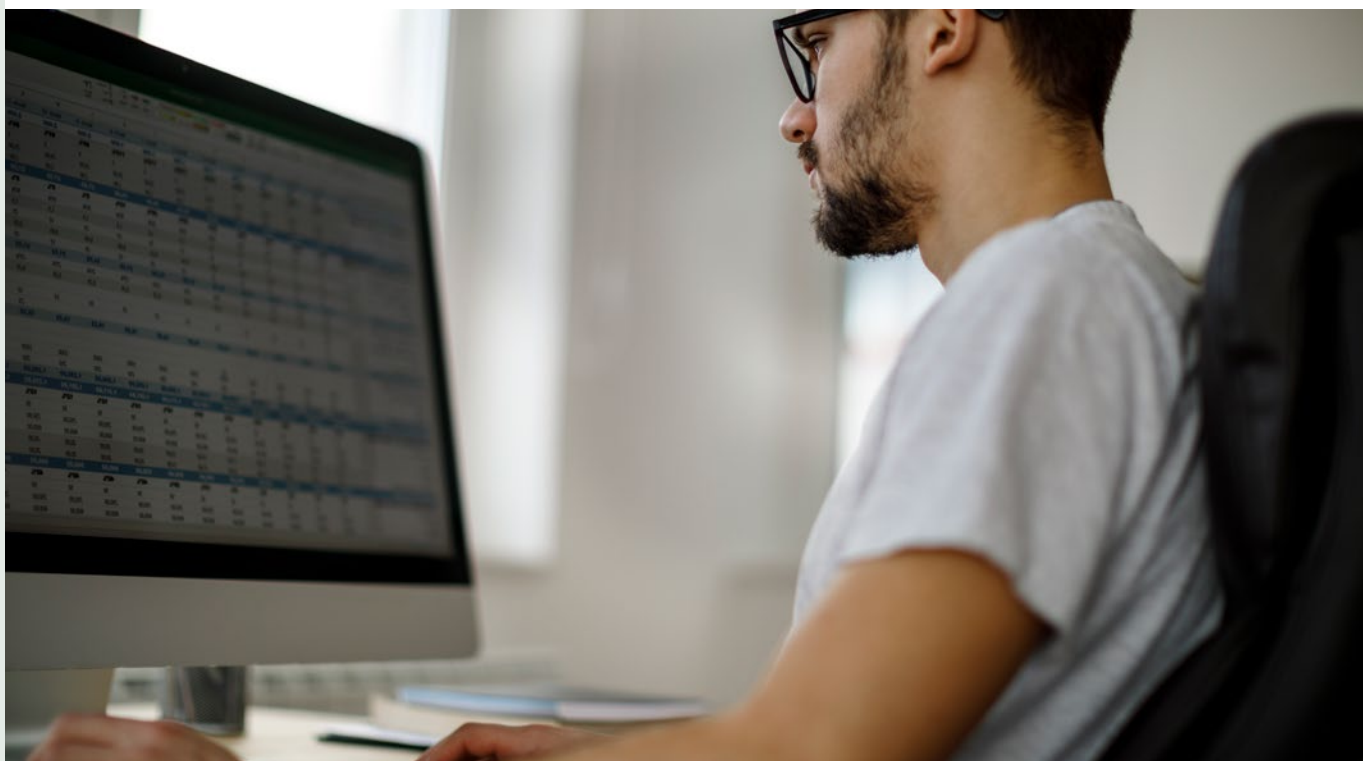




## A diverse, growing student population

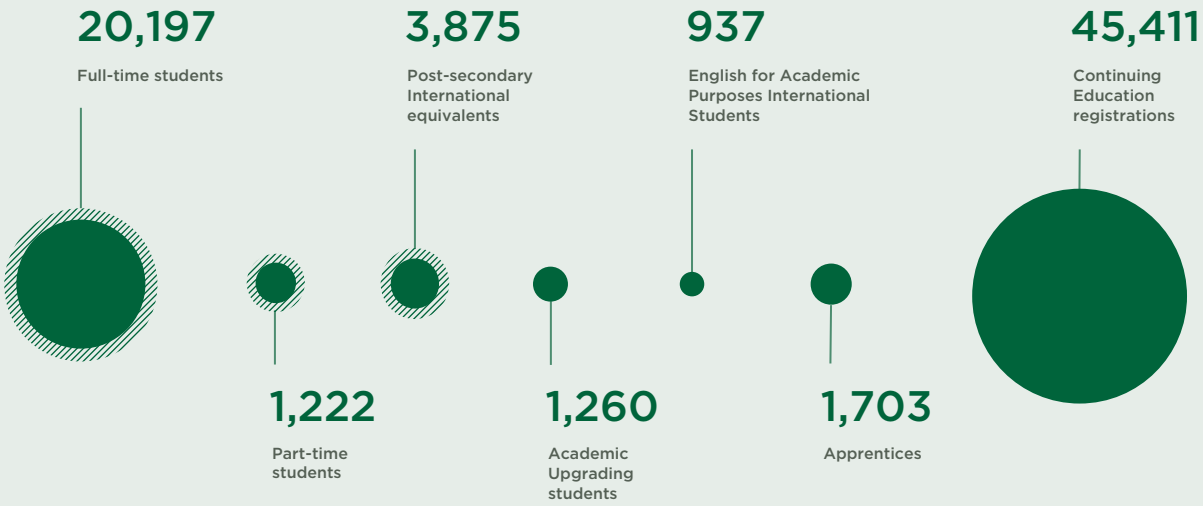
Despite the demographic shifts, Algonquin College is thriving. Full-time enrolments passed a record-breaking 20,000 in the 2018-2019 academic year. We have the highest number of online registrants amongst all colleges in Canada: approximately 33,000. International students from more than 100 countries have chosen Algonquin College as their study destination, and the number of international students on campus continues to increase every year.



Implementing the Learner-driven Strategy will allow us to leverage our position of diversity and strength and maintain it for years to come.



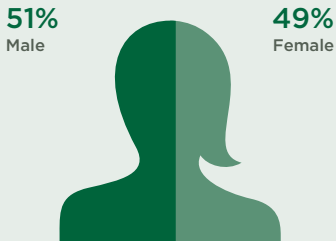


# Learner Demographics

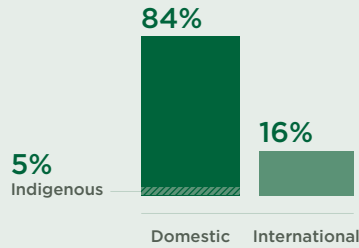


 These categories reflect the Fall term only due to the amount of student overlap in Spring 2017, Fall 2017 and Winter 2018 terms.
  Due to lack of student overlap, these categories reflect the entire fiscal year and include Spring, Fall and Winter terms

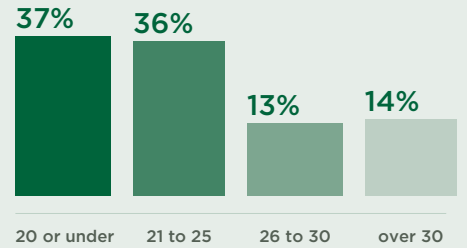
## GENDER



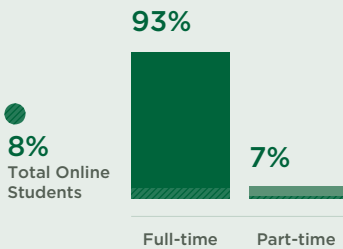
## ORIGIN



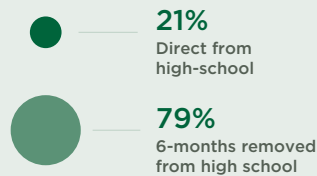
## AGE



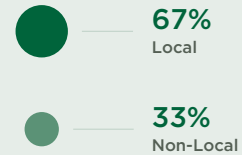
## STATUS



## ENTRY



## GEOGRAPHY



**Base:** Gender, Status, Country, Age, Type, Catchment: total students 2018-19 n=21,663  
**Data set:** Fall 2018, terms, full-time or part-time registrations as of Day 10 (September 17, 2018). Excludes collaborative programs and apprenticeship programs.



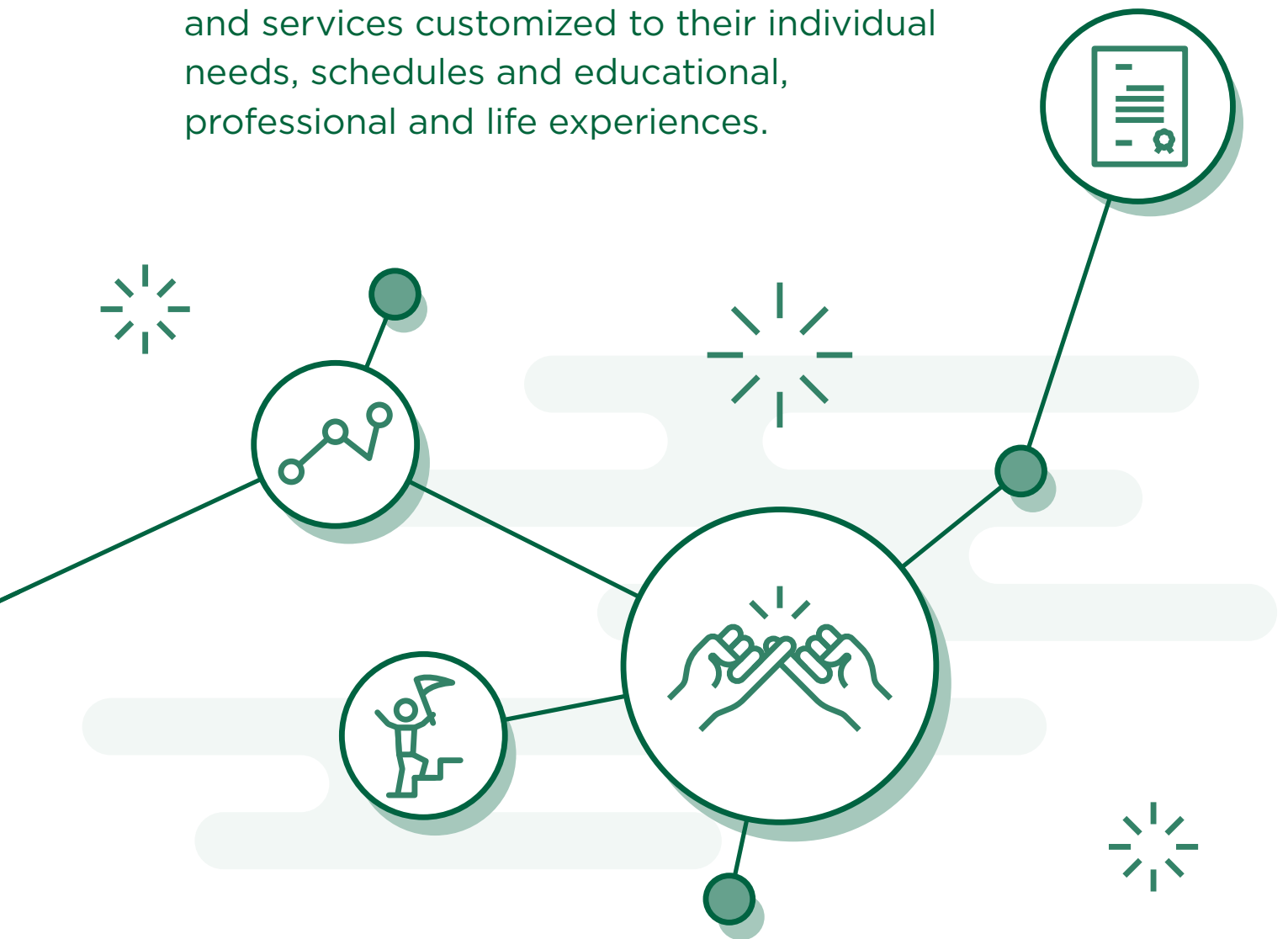
# 1.3

“Students will be more engaged [when the College] becomes [truly] learner-driven...”

— Faculty member during the Learner-driven Strategy consultation process

## What we promise our learners

Algonquin College will be the College of choice for learners who want programs and services customized to their individual needs, schedules and educational, professional and life experiences.





## Flexibility is the goal

The culminating insight of the Learner-driven Strategy is that being learner-driven demands personalization — and personalization demands flexibility.

This is true in academics, in support services, in College administration and operations functions. In other words, flexibility must be holistic. As identified through the strategy development process, three key themes support and reinforce flexibility for personalization:

- Being proactive and responsive — using technology to instantly and remotely determine when learners need support across the College population
- Forging connections — helping learners navigate complex and (sometimes) intimidating College processes and making them feel supported inside and outside the classroom
- Enabling employee excellence — encouraging and supporting professional development and lifelong learning so that employees are fully equipped to deliver an unparalleled, personalized College experience

Together, these themes helped to develop the identification of specific initiatives that the College would pursue in the next few years to embed flexibility in key aspects of the learner experience: flexible schedules and timetables, universal design for learning (UDL) and micro-credentials and digital credentials. These were chosen as starting points for implementing the Learner-driven Strategy, with separate working groups established to define detailed approaches to each. The steps and targets in the following sections of this implementation plan document are the outcomes of their efforts.

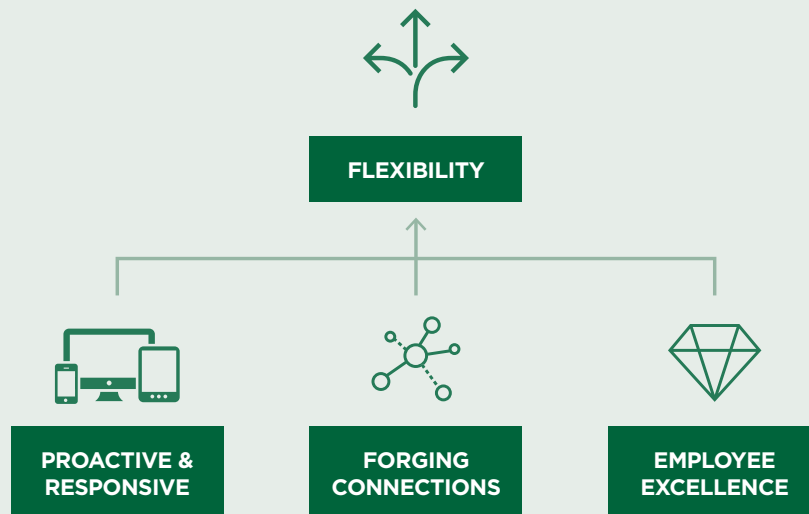


Figure 2. Flexibility is the ultimate enabler of learner-driven personalization



## The future learner's experience of lifelong learning

It's 2050. Chaaya exits her holo-con with the hiring manager of the international trade firm and indulges in a momentary — highly dignified, of course — “happy dance”.

She got the job.

It was the micro-credential from Algonquin College that made it possible. And as Chaaya reflects on that, she realizes just how many times Algonquin has contributed to her success in the past 20 years, going right back to that first program when she was 19...

She remembers that year vividly. She had the opportunity after high school to do a placement with a UK company through a family friend. But that was going to push back her ability to start school in the fall — by a whole month. Fortunately, Algonquin's flexible schedules and timetables allowed her to take the placement and begin her studies in October, without missing a beat. She was able to firm up all of her registration and timetabling while overseas.

That work experience proved invaluable. Chaaya graduated from her first program and got a job almost immediately. About eight years later, she decided she was ready for a change and went back to Algonquin College to shift her professional focus.

By that point, she was engaged and living downtown with her fiancé: they both needed to work to pay for their condo. Once again, Algonquin's flexible, learner-driven approach made it possible for Chaaya to have her educational experience her way. She was able to structure her learning around ongoing work commitments and take full advantage of digital learning options whether she was at the College or at her job.

Best of all, she was in constant communication with her Universal Design for Learning certified instructor, who helped her stay focused on her learning goals, came up with creative ideas when there were conflicts between Chaaya's work demands and school, and facilitated the most constructive group work Chaaya had ever done.

With her new diploma, Chaaya pursued her updated career path. Along the way, when opportunities arose, she picked up micro-credentials to bolster her resume.

And that's how she got to be here today. Now a mom with two awesome kids and a once-in-a-lifetime global professional opportunity, Chaaya knew she had all the right skills for this new job: she just needed the proof.

There was just a month until the posting closed. No time for a full course of study. Chaaya returned once again to Algonquin College and in the space of three weeks was able to obtain not only the requisite micro-credential but also a digital credential that she could share instantly with her prospective employer and add to her virtual employability portfolio (VEP) for her network to see.

She and the hiring manager had clicked on holo-cons before, but today, with the news that she got the job, Chaaya was made to feel like she was already part of the team. She couldn't wait to embark on this newest chapter of her professional life.

# 1.4

## Three areas of focus

The three focus areas of this implementation plan for the Learner-driven Strategy bring flexibility to different aspects of the College experience and create new opportunities to deepen relationships with learners, ultimately differentiating the College from other Ontario institutions.





## FOCUS AREA 1

# Schedules and Timetables

While our learners have diverse backgrounds, goals and personal and professional lives, they also have something in common: a path that led them to Algonquin College. As a learner-driven institution, we want to be a place that welcomes them and supports them in building the future they want. That kind of personalization centres on providing flexibility and choice so that learners can select the program streams, courses, workshops, modalities and schedules that best suit their individual needs.

This has a few important implications for schedules and timetables, one being a shift away from the Monday-to-Friday delivery of (mostly) in-person services during “business hours” to a more “anytime, anywhere” on-demand model that lets learners access the education and supports they need in ways that fit within their lives instead of disrupting them.

Through this implementation plan, we will identify opportunities to increase flexibility in our general education electives, explore the feasibility of expanding weekend academic activities and support services, and enable learners to have more control over their timetables. The depth and intensity of these efforts will increase over time with the incremental addition of more flexible learning experiences, modes of delivery, and scheduling options as well as access to services outside of traditional business hours.

By shifting our culture toward a more personalized education, we will ensure the experience of being an Algonquin College learner is like no other — and every learner will shape their own path.



### MEASURES OF SUCCESS

- % of learners familiar with requirements for their program of study
- Learner satisfaction with timetable and program flexibility
- Learner satisfaction with evening and weekend courses and College services
- % of learners who receive credit for prior learning, experience and academic course work

**“It would help to be able to personalize your schedule. Being a working student and not having any options makes it very difficult to work and go to class.”**

— Student during the Learner-driven Strategy consultation process



## FOCUS AREA 2

# Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

UDL is an approach to teaching and learning that intentionally, from the outset, structures programs and services to contribute to every learner's success. Across the stages of this implementation plan, we will embed UDL principles in key areas of College activity, supported by a robust, people-centred change management strategy. We will provide flexible learning opportunities to all our learners — employees, students, alumni and partners — allowing them to receive services and support, and to experience learning and growth, in ways that are personally meaningful.

We will also work to establish a Flexible Learning Centre of Excellence that brings together representatives from across the College to challenge existing perceptions of flexibility — based on input from the Algonquin community.

As we offer more flexibility, we will connect learners with learning coaches and mentors to help them navigate their choices, recognizing that every learner is at a different level of preparation for doing so. Every learning or support space, physical or digital, will eventually be the product of a concerted, iterative, intentionally designed learning experience that aims to make success personal for each learner.

### MEASURES OF SUCCESS

- % of employees who complete UDL training
- Achievement of preliminary steps toward flexible learning through full compliance with Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) requirements
- % by which Algonquin College exceeds the annual goal of learner satisfaction

**“I want the learning environment (of the future) to be conducive (to learning) and technologically updated. I'd like classes that are ecofriendly with adjustable furniture, where the teacher can be connected to all the students through any given device. For online courses, people should be able to remotely connect wherever they are!”**

— Student in the focus group on Universal Design for Learning

### FOCUS AREA 3

## Micro-credentials and Digital Credentials

The goal of micro-credentialing and digital badging is to design learning experiences that focus on the acquisition of discrete competencies or skills — delivered either in person and/or online through focused, convenient, short-term activities. Learners who demonstrate mastery of the specific learning or performance objective in question will acquire a micro-credential that carries the weight of Algonquin College as a provincial authority for the appraisal of skills and knowledge. The micro-credential could be awarded as a digital badge, or as another form of digital credential that is issued and hosted by the College (including online diplomas, degrees, certifications and licenses).

Micro-credentialing is expected to have strong appeal for more mature learners with specific career or professional development goals as they upskill and reskill with the changing labour market. It is inherently:

- Skills focused – responsive to industry-identified demands by equipping learners with discrete skills and competencies for employment
- Personalized – tailored to learners' personal and professional histories and goals, incorporating credit for prior experiences and allowing access to courses across programs
- On-demand – offered with flexible start/end dates and self-paced assessments, online and/or in blended settings to fit learners' timelines
- Recognized – valid and transferable across programs and institutions, and accepted by industry partners or potential employers
- Flexible – combinable with other credentials for advanced standing or into a larger credential over time (e.g. as “stackable” credentials that could lead to higher-level programs such as diploma programs or be recognized as “minors” for learners who gain knowledge outside the vocational field of their program)







As part of the micro-credentialing initiative, we will explore ways for learners to define their own educational pathways, build their own credentials, and pursue academic interests that are not necessarily aligned with a prescribed pathway.

Developing micro-credentials will create value for the College's alumni and employer partners by reinforcing our position as a provider of skilled, labour-ready, lifelong learners. It is also expected to generate new revenue streams by offering high-value, accessible credentials to a wide range of non-traditional students (including returning alumni), and it also presents opportunities for innovative industry partnerships.

As there is no provincial standard or common definition of micro-credentials in academia or in industry, Algonquin College drafted its own Micro-credentials Framework in 2018, adapting the Ontario Qualifications Framework to situate micro-credentials in the continuum of credit and non-credit academic programs offered by the College. The framework will help guide the design, evaluation, and operationalization of micro-credential programming going forward.



#### MEASURES OF SUCCESS

- # of micro-credentials that serve as direct pathways into the College's larger credential offerings (e.g. diplomas, advanced diplomas and degrees)
- Recognition of digital credentials by employers (including Algonquin College) for hiring and professional development
- % of learner satisfaction with micro-credentials issued by Algonquin College
- % of employer satisfaction with micro-credentials issued by Algonquin College

**"As a mature student who works full-time, I have lots of experience but still need ways to demonstrate my skills. A micro-credential would be perfect: it's small, flexible, on-demand and relevant for employment. I could get the training I need right away and prepare for interviews with an official micro-credential validated by the College."**

— Part-time student member, micro-credentials and digital credentials working group

02.

# Accomplishments

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“I feel like I’ve been leading to this moment ever since I first started here. I can’t wait!”

- Faculty member during the Learner-driven Strategy consultation process

## 2.1

# Setting accomplishments

The three implementation working groups have planned accomplishments across four timeframes. Those planned for the first two years are firm commitments. As the College progresses and deepens implementation into 2021-2022, the accomplishments listed are flexible — to incorporate lessons learned by that time. The accomplishments proposed for 2022 and beyond are considered fluid, to give the College freedom to adapt based on experience to date and the availability of resources required to complete the work.



## The future learner's experience of schedules and timetables

It's mid-winter, 2030. Santiago is driving home to Carleton Place from Algonquin College's Perth Campus, where he recently started re-training for a career change. The last 18 months have been a blur. So much has changed, and so quickly.

He lost his partner suddenly and unexpectedly — a shock to his whole family. He knew right away he couldn't support the kids as a single parent doing only freelance and contract work. While his relatives are emotionally “there” for him, they all live out of town. He thought of moving closer to them but didn't want to put the kids through another upheaval. He knew he needed to go back to school.

His first thoughts lead him to think of Algonquin College: it was where he earned his first diploma. But he was hesitant. When he attended Algonquin 20 years ago, the schedule was so rigid. He couldn't just adapt to whatever calendar might be handed to him each semester, and he'd never taken well to online learning (though maybe it would be different now after all his years of freelancing from home). He also knew being with people, having a supportive sense of community, would probably be better for his mental health.

He decided to find out how or if Algonquin might be able to help him on his road to lifelong success.

One night, he got a babysitter for the kids and drove to Algonquin College's Ottawa campus. Even though he could connect with an advisor via live chat or web call, he preferred to go in person — to the campus he was most familiar with. He hardly recognized the place. It was after 6 pm but the College was a hive of activity. The employees in Student Central could not have been more welcoming or knowledgeable. Santiago was overjoyed he wouldn't have to go from department to department trying to get things sorted out. Things certainly were different.

The best surprises were still to come. His visit had been in late September, and he expected to have to wait for the winter term to get started. But he found out he could begin in October — or November or December or whenever worked best for him. There were abundant opportunities for online learning and hybrid learning that included streaming classes and access lectures on-demand from home.





Santiago learned he could complete his own course registration and create and change his timetable at the push of a button. He had the option to attend classes in either Ottawa or Perth because his program was offered at both campuses. And he'd get credit for two courses by demonstrating his prior learning and life experience — reducing his courseload and allowing him to complete the program more quickly.

Most unexpectedly, he discovered he could take elective courses on coping with grief and children's literature to help him in his personal life. These were about as far away from his new career as you could get, but so valuable.

And so tonight, driving home after class and a virtual learning coaching session, Santiago is grateful for the flexibility Algonquin College has been able to provide him. Not even six months since his first visit to the Ottawa campus, he's already into the second set of courses for his program — getting ahead without making sacrifices at home. He finds himself looking forward to the online nutrition course set to start next week.

This time around, the learning experience is so much better: not because he's 20 years older but because he gets to drive the pace and schedule of his learning, something he could not do the last time he studied at Algonquin.





## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

2019-2020 (FIRM) SCHEDULES AND TIMETABLES	
 <p><b>Flexibility</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define requirements that would allow learners to make timetable adjustments to more courses via the Student Portal using existing functionality.</li> <li>• Explore opportunities to increase flexibility in general education electives and degree-breadth courses.</li> <li>• Define what needs to be true to offer more weekend course sections and access to services on evenings and weekends.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Proactive &amp; Responsive</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify opportunities to improve instructions, guidance and parameters for making timetable changes in the student portal by reviewing all communications and assessing the portal user experience.</li> <li>• Identify ways to increase awareness of general education and the opportunities for learning and essential employability skill development it provides.</li> <li>• Quantify learner and employee pain points related to weekend activities and identify top-priority services to offer outside traditional business hours.</li> <li>• Benchmark the current quality and other metrics related to timetables.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Forging Connections</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure all learners are familiar with the requirements of their program of study based on a review of all communications and the student portal user experience related to program progression.</li> <li>• Remove barriers and encourage learner agency re: general education options based on a review of existing general education policy, offerings, system practices and processes as well as delivery and associated PLAR/exemption processes and policies – with clear guidance and communication to help learners discover opportunities.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Employee Excellence</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document instructions and use cases to train faculty on making courses available for learner changes in the student portal.</li> <li>• Identify programs where teaching schedules with weekend courses would be appealing, and plan for piloting.</li> </ul>









**2020-2021 (FIRM) SCHEDULES AND TIMETABLES**





 <p><b>Flexibility</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve functionality so learners can preview timetable adjustments in the Student Portal.</li> <li>• Pilot expanded weekend academic activity and monitor learner demand and access.</li> <li>• Introduce a new Electives Framework and explore opportunities to create more flexibility and alignment for programs and courses.</li> <li>• Explore and develop new delivery channels and service models for Campus Services and Student Support Services.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Proactive &amp; Responsive</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to enhance the user experience of changing timetables in the student portal, ensuring program progression and the potential impacts of changes are clear.</li> <li>• Research and develop a plan to leverage technology and artificial intelligence to augment traditional service delivery.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Forging Connections</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner with Academic Advising and Academic Orientation to continue building awareness with learners about how to make timetable changes.</li> <li>• Identify general education courses for piloting face-to-face delivery and for additional offerings of seven-week compressed delivery.</li> <li>• Identify common courses that can be aligned to give learners more choice of schedule and delivery.</li> <li>• Communicate PLAR/exemption opportunities to learners and promote general education as an opportunity to provide agency and choice.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Employee Excellence</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner with the Academic Success Centre to provide timetable flexibility training and coaching to all academic employees who support learner progression (Student Success Specialists, Program Coordinators, Academic Advisors).</li> <li>• Identify gaps, barriers and opportunities related to improving and standardizing academic processes.</li> <li>• Develop a new support and training model for administering general education Courses.</li> </ul>



## 2021-2022 (FLEXIBLE) SCHEDULES AND TIMETABLES

 <p><b>Flexibility</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximize functionality to make as many courses in the Student Portal available for learners to preview and make timetable adjustments.</li> <li>• Continue expanding weekend academic activity and monitor learner demand and access.</li> <li>• Continue developing and begin launching revised, flexible programs and courses.</li> <li>• Pilot new delivery channels and service models for Campus Services and Student Support Services.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Proactive &amp; Responsive</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilot new technologies and/or artificial intelligence to augment traditional service delivery.</li> <li>• Provide learners with a program progression dashboard.</li> <li>• Make it easy for learners to communicate and/or book appointments with his/her “support team” (Program Coordinator, Student Success Specialist, Academic Advisor, Client Service Officer, Financial Aid Office, etc.).</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Forging Connections</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce more programs with common core/streams and minors, expanding learner options and pathways.</li> <li>• Pilot new ways of giving learners access to lectures (streaming, downloads, playback).</li> <li>• Create more targeted, personalized PLAR/exemption communications.</li> <li>• Assign all general education electives to multiple themes and standardize all pools across all programs.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Employee Excellence</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce a communication/awareness strategy for general education electives.</li> <li>• Monitor employee satisfaction with their experience working evening and weekends.</li> </ul>

## 2022 AND BEYOND (FLUID) SCHEDULES AND TIMETABLES

 <p><b>Flexibility</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide learners with easy-to-use systems and tools for self-registration and timetable creation, with full visibility into program progression.</li> <li>• Continue expanding weekend academic activity and monitor learner demand and access.</li> <li>• Develop programs and courses with inherent flexibility and alignment (common core courses, program streams, minors and maximum choice of electives).</li> <li>• Give learners the opportunity to alter their time to completion and mode of course delivery.</li> <li>• Ensure students have access to the services they need when they need it for academic and personal success.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Proactive &amp; Responsive</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand the use of new technologies and/or artificial intelligence to augment traditional service delivery.</li> <li>• Enable learners to review program progression, preview the impact of potential decisions, and forecast completion via an app.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Forging Connections</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow classes to be streamed, downloaded and played back anytime, giving learners real-time flexibility and the ability to adapt their schedules without sacrificing their learning.</li> <li>• Provide learners with credit transfer and PLAR services during recruitment and admission to maximize recognition of their previous education and experience.</li> <li>• Add new course options to the general education elective pool: self-study and Ontario Learn.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Employee Excellence</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to align and standardize Academic and Registrar's Office processes to support learner flexibility.</li> </ul>



# The future learner's experience of Universal Design for Learning

Spring Convocation, 2030. Dom enters the National Arts Centre looking for the student robing area. It still hasn't totally sunk in that an hour from now will come that walk across the stage to collect a diploma — especially after so many years of frustrated post-secondary attempts and bouncing between part-time jobs.

It had been a tough decision to take yet another chance at school. It might not even have been attainable without the severance package. But everything that seemed impossible all those times before suddenly wasn't when Dom came back to Algonquin two years ago.

That first day on campus was still a vivid memory. Dom walked into a room set up more like a coffee shop than a classroom. The instructor began to explain the audio/video recording system and how learners could stream classes in real-time or watch them later for review. Dom had the immediate sense things might end differently this time around.

The first "A" grade confirmed it. It came not long after Dom's College-assigned learning coach facilitated a consultation with a psychologist that led to Dom's attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) predominantly inattentive diagnosis — which turned years of self-doubt and self-blame on its head. Dom wasn't "bad at school": something else had been at work at this time.

The A was a turning point. Dom hadn't been putting in the fullest effort before because success seemed so unlikely. While jotting down notes for the video self-reflection debrief on the assignment, Dom had one of those a-ha moments that had been happening a lot lately. Getting an A meant things were working. The flexibility of the courses plus the tools and strategies available — combined with real, consistent effort — could easily lead to more results like this.

And they did. Each course — whether online, in collaborative learning spaces or itinerant — was full of flexibility, flowing between digital and physical learning. The learning materials almost always included a mix of video, audio and digital options. When there was group work, it focused on the development of interpersonal skills: the instructor was a member of each group, and all members participated in flexible ways that moved the project forward.





Dom's instructors kept the learners focused on learning goals and were always willing to talk about alternate ways to submit assignments. In fact, having so much choice had been a little overwhelming at first, but Dom's learning coach introduced new physical and digital tools to help with that. Very soon, Dom was collaborating with instructors to find ways of engaging more fully with material, taking advantage of the option (available to all learners) to do more challenging versions of assignments.

So many things about the Algonquin College experience had been helpful, but maybe most of all were the self-reflection and future goals debriefs that made it feel like learning was something Dom was doing, not passively receiving. Sure, there had been rough days over the past two years, but Dom had developed resilience as a learner and never gave up.

Lined up with the other grads waiting to enter the main theatre, Dom realizes it's not just a diploma that's been earned but also the ability to learn — and to keep on learning. It suddenly occurs to Dom that this learning journey may be far from over, with more courses and credentials still to come. The music processional music begins and Dom suddenly feels very comfortable in these academic robes — and looks forward to the chance to wear them again. Soon.







## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

2019-2020 (FIRM) UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING (UDL)	
 <p><b>Flexibility</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examine the feasibility of measures to remove barriers from learning spaces where learners most commonly request accommodation. This would draw on existing data from the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) to determine best practices for building barrier-free materials and assessments into courses. This will proactively reduce the need for thousands of students to register with CAL to request these as “academic accommodations”.</li> <li>• Model UDL principles in the Faculty Learning Program (FLP), as professional development in applying UDL will be an essential, ongoing requirement for sustained implementation of the Learner-driven Strategy. Modelling UDL in the FLP will ensure this professional development begins with new hires and embed a UDL mindset in all new faculty cohorts to come.</li> <li>• Align the learning materials of 10 courses offered by both the Centre for Continuing and Online Learning (CCOL) and academic departments to increase flexibility. Beyond the attempts to mediate barriers of time and place, the concept of a learner cohort will expand beyond the narrow confines of a program-specific and level-specific cohort. Learners can benefit from a broader range of voices within the learning space.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Proactive &amp; Responsive</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove barriers from learning spaces in response to learner needs as a proactive measure.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Forging Connections</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate learners' ongoing connection to the College so they can complete courses even when attending physical classes is difficult.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Employee Excellence</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foster an appreciation of UDL principles among our employee learners and enable best practices for all learners as part of the onboarding process to contribute to employee excellence.</li> </ul>







2020-2021 (FIRM) UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING (UDL)

 <p><b>Flexibility</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review non-academic learner interactions against UDL principles to ensure we do not inadvertently withhold services as a result of unidentified barriers. UDL principles will allow us to embrace learner variability (both visible and invisible) as a component of continuous improvement in service and support areas and design intentionally for that variability from the outset vs. retrofitting after an oversight or issue is identified.</li> <li>• Embed UDL requirements in ongoing academic quality assurance processes.</li> <li>• Start to fine-tune ongoing academic processes (PQR and program development) with UDL principles to “activate” intentional design, remove barriers early in the program lifecycle, and continue to iterate as programs are delivered and renewed, with multiple formal opportunities for engagement, representation, action and expression for all learners.</li> <li>• Identify, share and propagate existing and emerging best practices throughout the organization with existing policies and procedures related to program development, review and modification as well as those related to program and course update and renewal.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Proactive &amp; Responsive</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove barriers proactively from support and service spaces so learners can receive support and services in ways that work for them.</li> <li>• Build foundational principles for flexible learning into existing academic processes to make intentional design a part of the fabric of our decision making.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Forging Connections</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the comfort of learners in our physical and digital support and service spaces to encourage them to connect and stay connected with us throughout their learning journey.</li> <li>• Reduce the number of learners who feel compelled to leave and disconnect from their learning due to barriers beyond their control by committing to strategies for multiple means of engagement, representation, action and expression.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Employee Excellence</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruit for a UDL mindset to further enhance ongoing collaboration in flexible learning — bringing new ideas that will benefit all learners.</li> <li>• Formalize conversations about UDL in academic and non-academic processes to generate opportunities for supportive communities of practice within and across departments and campuses.</li> </ul>









2021-2022 (FLEXIBLE) UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING (UDL)

 <p><b>Flexibility</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the number of timed and closed-book assessments with progressive targets, which present barriers for learners and are inconsistent with experiential learning and multiple means of action and expression. Based on data gathered by the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL), it is time to respond meaningfully and directly to learner feedback on these kinds of assessments.</li> <li>• Catalogue courses with descriptions of the learning experiences available in each offering of a course or section and make this information available to learners at the time of registration instead of disclosing it afterward. Learners will have a sense of the delivery mode, the resource requirements, the learning space experience, as well as the educational technology tools being used.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Proactive &amp; Responsive</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate we have heard our learners by acting on their feedback to remove barriers from the achievement of their learning goals.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Forging Connections</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow learners to self-select into learning experiences that align with their variability and their needs.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Employee Excellence</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide supported opportunities for employees to enhance their professional practice with a wider range of tools and strategies to demonstrate and evaluate learning — strengthening the applied education we offer with authentic assessment.</li> </ul>

2022 AND BEYOND (FLUID) UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING (UDL)

 <p><b>Flexibility</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a Flexible Learning Centre of Excellence with ongoing funding and resources, bringing together a team from the Academic area, Human Resources, Student Services, Facilities Management and Information Technology to unify the work of developing expert learners and remove barriers from our physical and digital spaces.</li> <li>• Connect learners with learning coaches and mentors with the support of the Flexible Learning Centre to provide personalized advice around tools and strategies and guide learners to relevant supports within the College. Employees will also have access to learning coaches and mentors.</li> <li>• Roll out a formal Universal Design for Learning (UDL) professional development program to support the development of expert learners throughout the College following the model of communities of practice.</li> <li>• Begin a multi-year effort to refurbish physical and digital learning spaces to ensure that we are removing barriers instead of replacing them as infrastructure is upgraded.</li> <li>• Introduce digital and physical itinerant learning that lets learners personalize their learning by flowing through learning experiences in a way that is meaningful for them.</li> <li>• Begin a multi-year effort to refurbish support spaces. Based on the review conducted previously, we will be able to target services in a meaningful, incremental fashion that is sustainable and a “win” for learners at every stage of the process.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Proactive &amp; Responsive</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring intentional design into future College plans and initiatives such as Integrated College Development Planning (ICDP) principles and the Campus Master plan through the Flexible Learning Centre of Excellence.</li> <li>• Create opportunities for all learners to participate in barrier-free learning and service experiences.</li> <li>• Meet learners where they are across learning contexts throughout their learning journey.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Forging Connections</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give learners the opportunity to personalize their learning experience with a coach or mentor, and to transition into coach or mentor roles themselves in future.</li> <li>• Demonstrate commitment to inclusivity and diversity with intentionally designed experiences that encourage a sense of community and safety.</li> <li>• Use and model practices and spaces that nurture the development of expert learners who consider Algonquin “home” for their learning needs and as a place where they belong.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Employee Excellence</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embrace and encourage ongoing employee learning through the availability of learning coaches for all learners.</li> <li>• Develop cross-College professional development initiatives through the Flexible Learning Centre of Excellence.</li> <li>• Develop all employees’ knowledge, skills and attitudes for a UDL mindset.</li> <li>• Recognize advocates and champions who have emerged in the previous years: give them opportunities to develop workshops and resources that promote the UDL mindset.</li> </ul>

## The future learner's experience of micro-credentialing

December 3, 2030. Ashlyn swings her digital stylus in the air as she stands in her office, pretending to conduct the livestreaming orchestra that is currently being beamed to her holopad. She closes her eyes and mentally reviews today's schedule. "Emails. Meeting. Minutes. Budget. Coffee." A long sigh. She opens her eyes and looks out the window at the soggy fall sky. She makes a note to move coffee up earlier on the list.

Six short years ago, Ashlyn received her college diploma in office administration. After graduation, she started a full-time job as an administrative clerk at a local real estate office. The job had been exciting and engaging at first, and she was good at it. But with few opportunities for advancement or higher wages, she's wondering if it's time to explore other career opportunities.

Truth be told, graphic design was always her passion. As a single mom, she uses art to entertain her two kids, who are both still under 10 but growing up fast. She knows the booming virtual advertising industry is constantly seeking designers for apps, websites and holographic ads. But going back to school full-time is not an option — not with her job and two young kids to feed.

"I have a bit of time," Ashlyn reasons, turning to her computer to review the training opportunities that her virtual learning coach has been suggesting for the past few weeks.

One of the offerings that was brought to her attention based on her profile was a competency-based micro-credential in Basic Graphic Design offered by Algonquin College. It's different from a traditional college course or from free, online courses Ashlyn has taken before. With the Algonquin College micro-credential, Ashlyn's previous skills will be assessed, validating what she already knows. She'll then learn new concepts based on her level of expertise.

She loves the thought of earning an official digital credential endorsed by an expert design company to add to her digital resume and share with potential employers. Most importantly, the on-demand nature of the course allows her to start and finish on a shorter, personalized schedule.

In just a few clicks, Ashlyn enrolls in the micro-credential, paying a fraction of the cost of a full college course. She'll be done within weeks and ready to earn a second digital badge at a supplementary design boot camp offered on campus over the weekend. Ashlyn thinks of the projects and contracts she'll be able to pursue to augment her income. She plans to use these micro-credentials to get advanced standing for a graduate certificate in graphic design offered by AC Online, Algonquin's virtual campus.

A notification message interrupts the music from her livestreaming orchestra, reminding Ashlyn of her busy schedule. As she logs out of her personal email to get back to work, she sees a new message from Algonquin College already inviting her to leverage her portfolio to enroll in the learning units she needs to complete the micro-credential. It's turning out to be a very good day.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

2019-2020 (FIRM) MICRO-CREDENTIALS AND DIGITAL CREDENTIALS	
 <p><b>Flexibility</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and engage with at least three local industry partners and conduct research to identify skills gaps.</li> <li>• Test the micro-credentials framework.</li> <li>• Select five micro-credential ideas to pilot.</li> <li>• Develop a marketing and communications plan.</li> <li>• Develop a framework to evaluate the quality of the micro-credentials.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Proactive &amp; Responsive</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore digital credentialing — i.e., credentials issued and hosted entirely digitally including online diplomas, degrees, certifications and licenses.</li> <li>• Research technologies such as blockchain as well as platforms to support digital credentials and augmented transcripts.</li> <li>• Explore and evaluate platforms for issuing digital badges for the first round of pilot projects.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Forging Connections</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure micro-credentials will be recognized, valued, and transferable to industry and other academic institutions by developing pilot projects in partnership with employers and/or institutions.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Employee Excellence</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage employees in discussions and familiarize them with the concepts of micro-credentials and digital credentials. The first pilot projects will help to identify future resources required for expansion of micro-credential delivery.</li> </ul>









2020-2021 (FIRM) MICRO-CREDENTIALS AND DIGITAL CREDENTIALS

 <p><b>Flexibility</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and engage with national and global industry partners for micro-credential endorsements.</li> <li>• Design and develop at least 10 additional micro-credentials.</li> <li>• Evaluate and report on the impact of the micro-credentials with recommendations, opportunities and challenges for expansion.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Proactive &amp; Responsive</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to research platforms for issuing digital badges and digital credentials, including technologies such as blockchain.</li> <li>• Identify business requirements for admission, enrolment, completion tracking and issuing micro-credentials.</li> <li>• Identify a process for lifecycle management of micro-credentials including academic quality assurance and cost analysis.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Forging Connections</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to develop relationships and partnerships with employers and industry sectors to identify skills and competencies that would be recognized and valued through micro-credentialing.</li> <li>• Create personas to help define the learner journey for micro-credentials, including re-skilling or up-skilling for a particular industry, validating “human” or “soft” skills, and stacking micro-credentials into academic courses and/or programs.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Employee Excellence</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a training plan for curriculum specialists and instructors in the design and delivery of micro-credentials.</li> <li>• Develop a plan with Human Resources to support the recognition of micro-credentials for College employees in hiring decisions, professional development, and/or career advancement.</li> </ul>







## 2021-2022 (FLEXIBLE) MICRO-CREDENTIALS AND DIGITAL CREDENTIALS

 <p><b>Flexibility</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct an evaluation to support the future direction of micro-credentials and digital credentials at Algonquin College.</li> <li>• Identify areas for further development of micro-credentials. Use labour market research and program enrolment data to identify pathways to further study and options for stackable credentials.</li> <li>• Identify theme areas and related courses that can be bundled into “minors”.</li> <li>• Create an expansion plan for the development and delivery of micro-credentials.</li> <li>• Identify and initiate any policy changes required to support the development and quality assurance of micro-credentials.</li> <li>• Pilot the issuance of a digital credential in at least one Ontario College Credential program.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Proactive &amp; Responsive</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the pilot evaluation results to identify modalities for micro-credential design and delivery, including modular, on-demand, self-paced, face-to-face, online and/or hybrid.</li> <li>• Support lifelong learning and ensure that the College is a provider of choice by tracking and predicting learner needs for future micro-credentials and/or traditional programs. This data will also support the College in identifying future micro-credentials and formal program pathways.</li> <li>• Select programs for piloting the issuance of digital credentials based on the outcomes of the research into digital credentials and on technological requirements.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Forging Connections</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore how experiential or work-integrated learning can be embedded within micro-credentials so that employers recognize them.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Employee Excellence</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operationalize the plan with Human Resources by embedding micro-credentials into a platform that enables skills recognition for Algonquin College employees during hiring and for professional development.</li> </ul>



## 2022 AND BEYOND (FLUID) MICRO-CREDENTIALS AND DIGITAL CREDENTIALS

 <p><b>Flexibility</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create “minors” through the general education or breadth requirements of diploma, advanced diploma and degree programs.</li> <li>• Develop pathways that stack micro-credentials into larger credentials such as diplomas, advanced diplomas and degrees.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Proactive &amp; Responsive</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a platform to support the selection of micro-credentials and the identification of pathways that meet the personalized needs of learners.</li> <li>• Enable PLAR opportunities through the design of micro-credentials.</li> <li>• Explore opportunities to develop a platform to help learners define their own pathways as part of the expansion plan for micro-credential delivery. This platform could take the form of an algorithm-based micro-credential “match-maker” that learners use to build a profile and be “matched” to different micro-credentials.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Forging Connections</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate experiential learning or work-integrated learning into micro-credentials.</li> <li>• Use micro-credentials to connect learners to specific employers or industry partners.</li> <li>• Partner with industry to recognize and validate in-house professional development training in the form of micro-credentials.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Employee Excellence</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to embed micro-credentials into a platform for employees to support recognition of skills during hiring processes and for professional development.</li> </ul>



## The future learner's experience for employees

It's 2030 and the speed of change is faster than ever. There have been times it's been hard for Ann — a Gen Xer and longtime employee of Algonquin College — to keep up. But things are different now.

The learner-driven mindset that's been embedded into the culture of the College over the past 10 years has resulted in a workplace that lives and breathes continuous learning, collaboration, innovation, flexibility, employee engagement and excellence, wellness and institutional morale. That's given Ann and her team of millennials, Gen Zs and freelance zoomers the ability to acquire and evolve skills to solve emerging challenges and keep up with the pace of change.

It's also given them amazing freedom to pursue their individual professional development goals.

Today, Ann and her team choose what, when and how they want to learn — along with the resources and information they want to pull from. That experience is tailored, continuous and multi-channel: social, personal, scheduled or on-demand, instructional or delivered through coaching and mentoring.

It's easy for Ann to seek, find and gain new knowledge and expertise. She's been able to create a personalized learning path powered by her own choices, connected to her personal, professional and organizational goals.

As Ann guides her own development and her team's, she still marvels at the change from just eight years ago, when the College had only a centralized learning management system for online and self-directed learning combined with live classroom training. She's proud of how learning and development at the College have become things employees genuinely want to invest time in. And the flexible workspace environment makes it easy to collaborate with other employees — further reinforcing the College's flexible, learner-driven nature.

This particular sunny October morning, Ann is looking forward to connecting with one of her Gen Z team members, Ashton, in the Employee Learning Exchange (ELX). They're booked for a "reverse mentoring" session on how to use some new technology tools and share their informal learning from the week. Ann is especially excited to hear about the virtual reality and gamification training Ashton recently completed.

In the past 10 years, the ELX has become a hub for innovation, work and learning. It is made up of flexible, multi-purpose spaces for individual and collaborative work as well as coaching and mentoring, classroom-style instruction, events, workshops and more. Advice Hubs enable the delivery of just-in-time personalized guidance and support on any matter employees need help with — enabling everyone to innovate, learn, share, coach, mentor, offer advice, support and ideas. On-demand 'hot desk' workspaces for freelance and remote employees abound — with 24/7 access — as do dedicated desks for those in need of reserved, permanent workspace.

Given it's a lovely day, Ann uses her mobile to order drinks and a bite to eat from the College's newly acquired delivery bots. She heads out into one of the College's beautiful gathering spaces and gets ready for her session with Ashton.



03.

# Conclusion



This plan marks the end of a fulsome, inclusive process to define what being learner-driven means to us at Algonquin College and how we can stand out as the Ontario leader in delivering the kind of personalization that being learner-driven demands.

At the same time, it is just the beginning of a shift that will see personalization take root in every facet of our programs, services and administrative functions. While the initial accomplishments laid out here will become hallmarks of the Algonquin College experience for our students and employees, the “and beyond” sections are vitally important. The quest for personalization is an ongoing one. It will occupy us as a College for decades to come. And by achieving each of our goals along the way, we will ensure that Algonquin College is known as the college of choice for personalization in this province.



**“It feels really good that the College is asking me for my input! This is a great place and it’s good to see you want to get better.”**

— Student during Learner-driven Implementation Plan consultation

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