MAP Unit 1 Course Outline (Introduction to Local Government)

Last Updated
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Course Description

MAP Unit 1 traces the historical evolution of local government in Ontario, its adaptations to the pressures of growth and change, and the complex inter-governmental and international world in which local governments operate. You will gain insight into the challenges and opportunities that shaped their evolution since Confederation and how these have set the stage for today's municipal governments.

By the end of this unit you will be able to:

- Identify the characteristics, categories, and purpose of local government in its various forms
- Explain the structure and responsibilities of Ontario municipalities, as well as their legal, functional, and financial position in relation to the province and the federal government
- Recognize situations in which municipalities must manage the conflict between their administrative and representative roles
- Relate the historical evolution of local government to the challenges and opportunities that exist for Ontario municipalities today, and use this knowledge to examine the state of your own municipality
- Apply research and report-writing skills to your current or future work in local government

The MAP certificate of completion will be issued upon completion of four units within three years:

- Unit 1: Introduction to Local Government
- Unit 2: Municipal Administrative Structure

- Unit 3: Municipal Financial Management
- Unit 4: Management in the Municipality

MAP can be taken on its own or as part of AMCTO's Diploma in Municipal Administration (DMA). It is also the education pre-requisite for AMCTO's Certified Municipal Officer (CMO) and Accredited Municipal Professional (AMP) designations.

Course Delivery Formats

AMCTO offers MAP in two formats: correspondence format and Zoom format.

- If you are taking the course in **correspondence format**, you will complete the assigned readings and submit assessments according to a given schedule. There are no classes to attend. Your work is graded by a marker.
- If you are taking the course in **Zoom format**, you will attend interactive online classes led by an instructor in addition to completing readings and assessments. Your work is graded by the instructor, unless otherwise indicated.

All course materials and assessments are provided through AMCTO's online learning platform, AMCTO Connect.

A syllabus with assessment due dates is provided when the course opens each term.

Assessment Expectations

MAP is an academic program that requires time commitment to read the textbook, conduct additional research, and complete written assessments. The assessments in each course may include different written response formats such as essays, council reports, memos, case analyses, and short answer. Guidelines and expectations will be provided in each course.

The assessments in MAP Unit 1 are listed in the following table, but they are subject to change.

Assessment	Weight
Assignment 1: The Role of Local Government	15%
Assignment 2: The Provincial Government	15%
Assignment 3: Local Service Challenge	15%

Assessment	Weight
Assignment 4: Municipal–Provincial Relationship	15%
Assignment 5: Federal and International Connections	15%
Final Assignment: Challenges and Opportunities Report	25%

Course Grade Policy

To successfully complete the unit, students must earn a minimum grade of 51% on the final assignment and an overall average grade of 60% or higher for the entire unit.

Students who do not achieve 51% but score at least 35% on the final assignment will be given the opportunity for a re-write. This re-write must take place on the date(s) chosen by AMCTO.

Students who score less than 35% on the initial final assignment or under 51% on the re-write will be required to re-register to take the course in its entirety.

Time Commitment

The amount of time required to read the course materials and complete the assessments varies widely between individuals because they bring different levels of prior knowledge, reading/research/writing skills, and professional experience. This makes it difficult to provide a precise amount of time that will be required to complete the course work. However, we recommend preparing to spend a minimum of 35 to 40 hours over the course of the term for each MAP unit.

Due Dates

There will be a schedule of assessment deadlines in the course. It is the student’s responsibility to keep track of the deadlines and understand the penalties for late submissions under Section 3 of the Education Programs Policy. The policy will be provided in the course syllabus.

Academic Integrity

Students in AMCTO’s education programs are expected to abide by the association’s policy on academic integrity (section 4 of the Education Programs Policy). Academic misconduct discovered in an assessment submission will result in a zero on the entire assessment. Severe and/or repeated instances of misconduct will result in more significant penalties such as failure, suspension, and expulsion.

Sources used in assessments must be properly cited according to the instructions and policies in the course. Using artificial intelligence (AI)- or large language model (LLM)-based tools or other automated tools to rewrite, paraphrase, or generate content (including but not limited to text, images, audio, and video) and representing it as one’s own work is not permitted.

It is the student's responsibility to be informed about the definitions and consequences of academic misconduct. The full policy will be provided in the course syllabus.

MAP Unit 1 Topic Outline

(The specific chapters, topics, and their sequence are subject to change.)

Chapter 1: The Basics of Local Government

- What local governments are and why they exist
- Classifications and characteristics of municipalities
- Agencies, boards, and commissions (ABCs): what they are and what they do
- Pros and cons of ABCs

Chapter 2: Provincial and Federal Governments

- The constitutional hierarchy in Canadian government
- The structure, function, and responsibilities of provincial and federal governments
- The process of enacting legislation in Ontario

Chapter 3: The Evolution of Local Government

- The historical pressures that triggered reforms to local government in Ontario
- The functional, structural, financial, and political adaptations to these pressures

- The current state of the local government structure that has resulted from the reform initiatives of the past

Chapter 4: The Municipal-Provincial Relationship

- The nature and significance of the subordinate constitutional position of local government
- How the provincial–local government relationship—both general and financial—has evolved over time

Chapter 5: Intergovernmental and International Relationships

- The impact of reforms to regional and county upper-tiers on lower-tier municipalities
- The federal–local relationship, both general and financial
- The effect of international economic developments, trade agreements, and agencies on local governments

Chapter 6: Challenges and Opportunities for the Future

- The impacts of past and present challenges on municipal operations
- Potential solutions and opportunities for the future of local governments
- Current realities and trends affecting all levels of government

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