MAP Unit 2 Course Outline (Municipal Administrative Structure)

Last Updated
May 15, 2026

Course Description

MAP Unit 2 builds on Unit 1, which examines the history, tri-level government structures, and external forces of change that have shaped local government in Ontario. In this unit, the focus shifts to the internal structure and organization of municipal government. The two complementary units help you develop a holistic understanding of the local government environment and how your municipality operates within that context.

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

- Compare the benefits and drawbacks of different municipal governing structures
- Identify legal, organizational, and political factors that affect municipal elections, council– staff relations, and council decision-making processes in your municipality
- Explain how key players in local government influence local political processes
- Outline the legal and policy framework that governs municipal ethics, accountability, and transparency
- Analyze a municipality’s policy outputs from theoretical and practical perspectives

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 2 are listed in the following table, but they are subject to change.

Assessment	Weight
Assignment 1: Role of Council and Administration	15%
Assignment 2: Governing Structures	15%
Assignment 3: Ethics Framework	15%
Assignment 4: Municipal Elections	15%
Assignment 5: Policy Analysis	15%
Final Assignment: Scenario Analysis	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 2 Topic Outline

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

Chapter 1: The Basic Municipal Governing Structure

- How Ontario municipalities are organized at the council and administration levels
- How the *Municipal Act, 2001* and the *City of Toronto Act, 2006* define the roles of municipal council, head of council, and administration
- Factors that contribute to the ability of heads of council to provide political leadership, including the introduction of strong mayor powers
- Rules for voting and candidacy in Ontario municipal elections
- The respective merits of short-term versus long-term terms of office, election-by-ward versus by general vote, and direct versus indirect election
- The role of committees in council decision-making

Chapter 2: Modifications to the Municipal Governing Structure

- The pressures that led to modifications of the traditional municipal governing structure
- Challenges within the traditional municipal structure at both the political and administrative levels
- Modified structures for governance and administration that have been in practice in Ontario municipalities, and their relative strengths and weaknesses
- What strong mayor powers are in the Ontario context and the initial impacts that have been seen since their introduction in 2022

Chapter 3: Ethics, Accountability, and Transparency

- The reasons behind the increased focus on ethics, accountability, and transparency in local government in recent years
- The legislated accountability and transparency regime for Ontario municipalities, including codes of conduct, integrity commissioners, and conflict-of-interest disclosure rules
- The importance of underlying values (the organizational culture) in supporting ethical behaviour

Chapter 4: Principal Players at the Local Level

- Factors that influence participation rates in municipal elections and referendums
- The key players (both official and unofficial) in the local political process and the impact of these players on the local political process
- The roles and inter-relationships of councillors and staff

Chapter 5: Municipal Policy-Making

- The complexities and challenges of developing and implementing municipal policies
- Models and theories that help explain how public policy decisions are made
- How individual policy decisions are made
- How staff, council, and the public interact during different stages of the policy-making process

---

AMCTO
THE MUNICIPAL EXPERTS

The Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario

5090 Explorer Drive, Suite 510, Mississauga, ON L4W 4T9
905-602-4294 | Email Us