MAP Unit 4 Course Outline (Management in the Municipality)

Last Updated
November 27, 2025

Course Description

MAP Unit 4 provides a multi-faceted view of how municipalities can operate strategically to manage staff and resources and serve their communities. It introduces management concepts and issues that apply to the municipal environment, followed by tools, practices, processes, and legislation across different aspects of municipal operations: human resources, communications, asset management, records management, and land use planning. The unit is tied together with a walkthrough of strategic planning, which informs management priorities and decisions across the municipal organization.

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

- Examine municipal management from multiple perspectives, including a manager's functional role, their influence on employee motivation, and their potential in leading a municipal organization through change
- Identify recommended human resource management practices while recognizing legal considerations and the unique needs of the municipal sector
- Apply a strategic lens to determine appropriate ways to communicate with the public and with council in different scenarios
- Identify actions that municipal managers need to take to maintain and protect the municipality's infrastructure and information assets
- Recognize the complexities of land use planning and how they affect a municipality's management of its resources and long-term objectives
- Contribute to strategic planning in your own organization with an understanding of its purpose, process, and benefits

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

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

Assessment	Weight
Assignment 1: Municipal Management	15%

Assessment	Weight
Assignment 2: Human Resource Management	15%
Assignment 3: Communications Management	15%
Assignment 4: Asset and Records Management	15%
Assignment 5: Land Use Planning	15%
Final Assignment: Strategic Planning	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 4 Topic Outline

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

Chapter 1: Municipal Management and Leadership

- Management functions and concepts commonly applied in the public sector
- Leadership theories and styles that are applicable in the municipal context
- The challenges associated with managing, leading, and motivating in the municipal context
- Formal and informal sources of power within an organization
- Considerations for managing change in an environment of accountability regimes and fiscal stress

Chapter 2: Managing Human Resources

- The scope of HR management activities in the municipal environment and the challenges that come with them

- The legislative and labour relations framework governing employer–employee relations in Ontario municipalities
- The talent-acquisition process as a series of inter-related activities
- Ways to recognize and retain municipal employees in a competitive environment
- Best practices related to performance management and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)

Chapter 3: Managing Municipal Communications

- The means of communicating and the communication flows found in organizations
- The key components of a municipal public communications strategy
- Factors that affect the effectiveness of a municipality’s public communications and community engagement efforts
- Ways to improve the flow of information from staff to council through the use of agendas, staff reports, minutes, and procedure by-laws
- What it means to apply an IIDEA “lens” to communications

Chapter 4: Managing Municipal Assets

- The legislative framework for municipal asset management in Ontario
- The core components of a municipal asset management plan
- The role of geographic information systems (GISs) and other technologies in the asset management process
- The lifecycle stages of an asset
- Procurement principles and best practices
- Considerations for risk management, financial sustainability, and community engagement in asset management strategies

Chapter 5: Managing Municipal Records

- The legal framework that governs municipal records
- The roles and responsibilities of municipal staff and leadership in managing records
- The key components of a records management program
- The importance of privacy protection and access to information

- How records practices support good municipal management

Chapter 6: Land Use Planning

- The provincial involvement in land use planning, especially provincial planning statements and approval powers
- The purpose of an official plan and the process by which it is adopted
- The purpose of a zoning by-law, its legal significance, the process by which it is adopted, and the zoning relief options available
- The process of subdivision control in Ontario through both subdivision plans and consents (severances), and the process by which they are approved
- The importance of public participation in setting the vision for a community's future

Chapter 7: Strategic Planning

- The purpose of strategic planning and the key steps that form the process
- The key factors that contribute to a successful municipal strategic planning exercise
- The link between strategic management and the other management activities in the municipality
- How the municipality can engage the organization and community meaningfully during the strategic planning process
- How to keep the plan alive throughout the strategic planning cycle

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The Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario

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