



STRATEGIC PLAN *2014 - 2017*



Growth through Employment, Strength in Diversity, Dignity by Inclusion

Message from the Minister



In accordance with my responsibilities under the *Transparency and Accountability Act*, I present this amended strategic plan for the Department of Advanced Education and Skills covering the period April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2017. The Department of Advanced Education and Skills is a category one public body and this

strategic plan was prepared in accordance with the applicable guidelines.

In September 2014, Premier Paul Davis introduced his first Cabinet and unveiled significant changes to several provincial government departments. As a result, the Department of Advanced Education and Skills was restructured to further support the creation of natural synergies in key social and economic activities.

I see the department's services and supports as being on a continuum that provides a safety net for those who need it, strengthens the linkages between training, post-secondary education and employment and provides a range of pre-employment incentives and supports to help the province meet labour supply needs.

The restructuring allows the department to focus on supports and to streamline the delivery of programs and

services. The amended plan reflects this restructuring while carrying on with the previously identified goals; namely, aligning labour supply and demand, promoting a more responsive post-secondary education system and supporting people in their pursuit of employment and career opportunities.

The Department of Advanced Education and Skills remains committed to supporting the trend that sees more Newfoundlanders and Labradorians working and fewer Newfoundlanders and Labradorians receiving Income Support benefits.

This amended plan was prepared under my direction and the Strategic Directions of the Provincial Government were carefully considered in its preparation. I look forward to working with departmental employees along with other partners in the province, to implement this strategic plan.

My signature below attests to my accountability for the preparation of this plan and the achievement of the specific goals and objectives identified.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin O'Brien". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Kevin O'Brien
MHA

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In accordance with the *Transparency and Accountability Act*, the strategic plan for the Department of Advanced Education and Skills identifies three key priority areas, also described as strategic issues. The issues will be addressed over the life of the strategic plan, to help meet the social and economic needs of the province.

The strategic issues are outlined below:

- alignment of labour market supply and demand
- responsiveness of post-secondary education and training, and
- supports for people to participate in employment opportunities

Using specified measures and indicators, an Annual Report will be tabled in the House of Assembly each year. This performance report will provide a summary of the progress in achieving the goals and objectives set out in this plan, and will outline performance indicators for the years ahead.

Vision

Growth through employment, strength in diversity, dignity by inclusion

Mission

By March 31, 2017, the Department of Advanced Education and Skills will have improved the quality and the delivery of supports and services.

Goals

Goal 1

By March 31, 2017 the Department of Advanced Education and Skills will have improved supports to promote the alignment of labour supply and demand

Goal 2

By March 31, 2017 the Department of Advanced Education and Skills will have enabled provincial post-secondary education and training to become more responsive to labour market demands

Goal 3

By March 31, 2017 the Department of Advanced Education and Skills will have improved supports for people to participate in employment opportunities

Overview of the Department

The Department of Advanced Education and Skills helps people access post-secondary education, develop basic skills, plan their careers, find and keep jobs, obtain financial assistance, and immigrate to the province.

The department undertakes strategic initiatives to align labour supply and demand, including working with education and training partners to help prepare people for job opportunities in the province and ensure the responsiveness of post-secondary training institutions.

The department supports employers in accessing and keeping skilled workers, works with organizations to deliver employment and career supports, and assists people affected by wide-scale emergencies.

The department also leads corporate-wide strategies and approaches to promote immigration and multiculturalism, develop the provincial workforce and support sustained population growth.

Structure

The Department of Advanced Education and Skills is composed of:

4 Branches:

- Post-Secondary Education
- Regional Service Delivery
- Workforce Development and Immigration
- Corporate Services (Executive and Support)

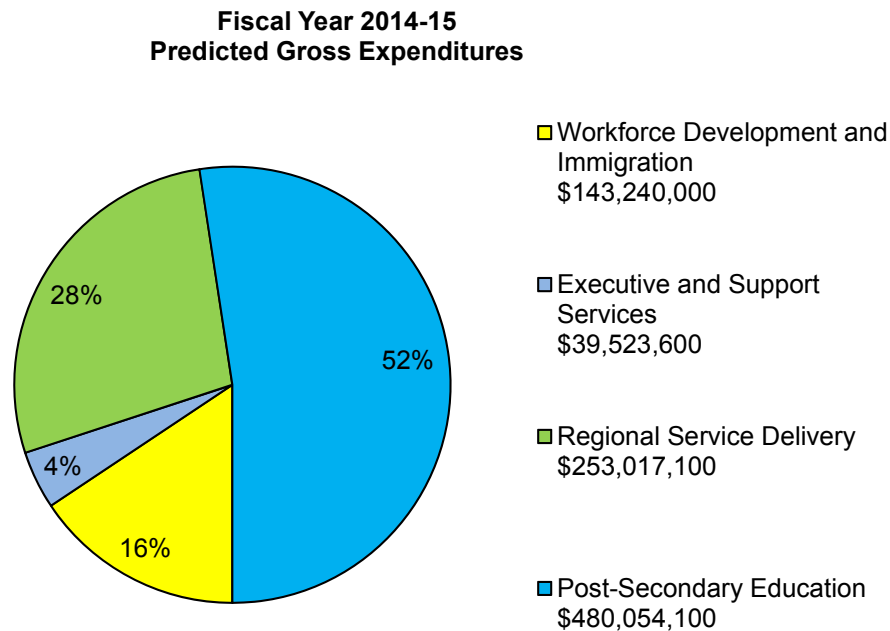
Staff

Staff	
Males	185 (26%)
Females	534 (74%)
Total	719 (100%)

Approximately 52 per cent of employees are located in offices in the St. John's Census Metropolitan Area. The remaining 48 per cent are located in offices throughout the province.

Budget

For 2014-15, the Department of Advanced Education and Skills has a budget of \$915.8 million. The top three expenditures in the department are in support of post-secondary education at \$480.1 million followed by regional service delivery at \$253.0 million and workforce development and immigration at \$143.2 million.



Legislative Authority

Legislative authority for the department's programs and services is provided by the following 13 pieces of legislation:

- *Apprenticeship and Certification Act*
- *College Act, 1996*
- *Council on Higher Education Act*
- *Degree Granting Act*
- *Emergency Services Act, shared with the Department of Justice and Public Safety*
- *Income and Employment Support Act*
- *Labour Mobility Implementation Act*
- *Memorial University Act*
- *Memorial University Pensions Act*
- *Private Training Institutions Act*
- *Student Financial Assistance Act*
- *Canada Student Loans Act*
- *Support Orders Enforcement Act, 2006, shared with the Department of Justice and Public Safety*

Mandate

The Department of Advanced Education and Skills helps citizens obtain the necessary educational, financial, and social supports to achieve the greatest benefit from the opportunities that exist in the province.

To ensure the province has a skilled workforce and highly educated graduates to participate in and contribute to their communities, the department works with employers and collaborates with private post-secondary institutions, Memorial University and College of the North Atlantic.

The department also provides supports to meet labour market demands, increase labour force participation, facilitate immigration, promote multiculturalism, support adult literacy to strengthen individual self-reliance.

Lines of Business

The department provides a spectrum of programs and services, in 30 offices around the province, in the following four areas to support attachment to the labour force, to meet the province's labour market needs or to support individuals when they require assistance:

1. Employment supports and career services (such as career counseling, wage subsidies, apprenticeship and trade certification supports, job searching, pre-employment readiness and training and increasing skills)
2. Income supports and basic benefits (such as monthly benefits, earning supplements and one-time benefits)
3. Labour market development and immigration (such as supporting employers with recruitment and retention, human resource planning, and providing individuals with labour market information and trend analysis on labour market opportunities)
4. Post-secondary education (supports to individuals such as training, tuition supports, apprenticeship, trade certification, student financial assistance, student assessment, adult learning and literacy, and support to post-secondary institutions)

Further details on current programs and services can be obtained from the department's website at www.aes.gov.nl.ca.

Employees within the Department of Advanced Education and Skills support the following values:

- 1. Diversity** – Appreciating the individuality of others by words and actions
- 2. Leadership** – Empowering staff to guide and inspire others
- 3. Service Excellence** – Providing timely access to responsive programs and services that are delivered by knowledgeable and friendly staff
- 4. Innovation** – Encouraging new and efficient ways of responding through programs and services
- 5. Respect and Dignity** – Showing acceptance and sincerity for the beliefs and behaviours of individuals
- 6. Teamwork and Partnership** – Working together with colleagues and partners to develop and deliver appropriate supports and services

Primary Clients

The department has expanded its client base over recent years to provide people with a broad range of services – be it providing financial supports, career counseling, training allowances, wage subsidies or disaster relief. We support employers with attracting and retaining employees. We work with post-secondary institutions, community agencies and service providers to help people prepare for, obtain and keep employment. We also work together with other departments, governments and their agencies to support citizens to participate fully in the life of the province. Accordingly, the Department of Advanced Education and Skills currently serves eight broad groups:

- Apprentices and tradespersons
- Community organizations and service providers
- Employers and industry groups
- Governments and government agencies
- Individuals (requiring benefits and adult basic education)
- Immigrants
- Job-seekers
- Post-secondary students
- Post-secondary educational institutions

Vision

A vision is the outcome which would be achieved if the department's mandate is completed. It is a short statement describing the ideal state an organization is striving to achieve in the long-term. Accordingly, the department's vision is:

“Growth through employment, strength in diversity, dignity by inclusion.”

Mission

By March 31, 2017, the Department of Advanced Education and Skills will have improved the quality and the delivery of supports and services.

Measure

Improved the quality and the delivery of supports and services.

Mission Indicators

- Enhanced access to services
- Improved timeliness of services
- Streamlined the delivery of programs and service

The mission statement identifies the focus area for the Minister over the six-year period (2011-12 to 2016-17). It represents the key longer-term result that the Minister and the department will be working towards as progress is made on government's strategic direction: Skilled, Educated and Employed Citizens. Refer to Appendix A for details on focus areas and outcomes of this strategic direction.

The mission statement also identifies the measures and indicators that will assist both the department and the public in monitoring and evaluating success.

Strategic Issues, Goals, Objectives, Measures and Indicators

Strategic issues represent the most significant internal or external changes that a department must realize to achieve its mandate, vision and mission. The goals identified for each issue, reflect the results expected in a three-year time frame (2014-15 to 2016-17). The objectives provide an annual focus.

Measures and performance indicators are provided for both the three-year goals and the first year's objectives (2014-15). All of these elements assist both the department and the public in monitoring and evaluating progress.

After considering the strategic direction, along with the mandate and financial resources of the department, the following issues have been identified as key priorities for the department over the three years of the strategic plan:

- Alignment of labour market supply and demand
- Responsiveness of post-secondary education and training
- Supports for people to participate in employment opportunities

Strategic Issue 1 - Alignment of labour market supply and demand

The provincial economy has significantly expanded since 2003, primarily due to development in the natural resources sector. Between 2003 and 2013, real GDP expanded by 16.5 per cent.

Major project investment and related employment have contributed to this growth. Strength in the labour market as a result of this growth is reflected in rising wages and participation rates.

The growing economy has contributed to a host of new opportunities for provincial residents. As a result of economic growth and strategic labour market actions, more Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are working and the province has the lowest unemployment and income support rates since 1976.

In some sectors of the economy, labour supply has not kept up with labour demand. Skill shortages have been cited as the major impediment to businesses in the province by some organizations. Employers and employer organizations are citing skill mismatches as key concerns and major impediments to their sustainability and growth. To help address these concerns, efforts need to continue to maximize labour force participation in the province.

The Department of Advanced Education and Skills plans to respond to these concerns by reshaping public policy and programming to the evolving needs of the labour market. This alignment of labour supply and demand is critical to ensure the department can support maximized growth in sectors of opportunity; drive an innovative, productive and knowledge-based economy and ensure all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians can benefit from the province's economic growth.

Over the three years of the strategic plan, the department will work with partners to enhance the alignment of labour supply with demand and in doing so, foster and reinforce the growth and prosperity that the province has been experiencing. In this way the department will address the strategic direction: Skilled, Educated and Employed Citizens. The relevant component areas of this strategic direction include: labour market development; supports for individuals and employers; and immigration – attraction, promotion, retention and integration.

Issue 1

“Alignment of labour market supply and demand”

Goal 1 (3-year)

By March 31, 2017 the Department of Advanced Education and Skills will have improved supports to promote the alignment of labour supply and demand

Measure

Improved supports to promote the alignment of labour supply and demand

3-Year Performance Indicators:

1. Improved the collection, dissemination and access to labour market information for planning purposes
2. Tailored employment and training programs to respond to labour market demands
3. Increased employer access to skilled immigrants
4. Incorporated regional and sector labour market opportunities into employment planning, skills development and training processes.

Objective 1 (2014-15)

By March 31, 2015 the department will have commenced initiatives to improve supports to promote the alignment of labour supply and demand

Objective 2 (2015-16)

By March 31, 2016 the department will have continued initiatives to improve supports to promote the alignment of labour supply and demand

Objective 3 (2016-17)

By March 31, 2017 the department will have furthered initiatives to improve supports to promote the alignment of labour supply and demand

Issue 1 continued

“Alignment of labour market supply and demand”

Objective 1 (2014-15)

By March 31, 2015 the department will have commenced initiatives to improve supports to promote the alignment of labour supply and demand

Measure

Commenced initiatives to improve supports to promote the alignment of labour supply and demand

Performance Indicators:

1. Released a revised labour market supply and demand forecast
2. Increased immigration efforts to recruit skilled workers to meet employer demands
3. Increased the promotion of employment opportunities in the province
4. Released a Population Growth Strategy for Newfoundland and Labrador

Strategic Issue 2 - Responsiveness of post-secondary education and training

Demand for skilled workers continues to increase as the vast majority of job growth is in occupations that require a university degree or college diploma. Continued investment in programs, equipment and infrastructure at Newfoundland and Labrador's public post-secondary education institutions ensures that students have access to in-demand, relevant training in renovated and newly constructed state-of-the-art facilities. Public post-secondary institutions have embarked on efficiency reviews to ensure that their programming and operations meet the needs of students and employers. Learning opportunities in this province have never been greater. Students have access to long-term and short-term program options that can lead to labour market attachment. Students in this province are also contributors and leaders in innovative research and technology projects. The success of post-secondary education is measured by the thousands of graduates as well as the institutions' faculty and staff, who through research and teaching activities, contribute to the social and economic development of this province.

The department will continue to focus on, and make progress in, increasing the educational attainment of the people of this province while breaking down barriers to employment and education that are faced by certain groups. To address the financial barrier, Newfoundland and Labrador continues to be a leader in the delivery of affordable and accessible post-secondary education and remains a model for the rest of Canada, thanks to low tuition rates at Memorial University and College of the North Atlantic dating back to the early 2000's. Additionally, needs-based grants, interest-free student loans and debt-reduction initiatives ensure that students graduate with less debt than ever before.

Over the three years of the strategic plan, the department will work with partners to improve the responsiveness of post-secondary education and training systems so that students, their families and their communities continue to benefit from an affordable and accessible education system and employers benefit from a ready supply of highly skilled workers. In this way the department will address the strategic direction: Skilled, Educated and Employed Citizens. The relevant component areas of this strategic direction include: post-secondary infrastructure; affordability and student access; programming; and apprenticeship policy and training.

Issue 2

“Responsiveness of post-secondary education and training”

Goal 2 (3-year)

By March 31, 2017 the Department of Advanced Education and Skills will have enabled provincial post-secondary education and training to become more responsive to labour market demands.

Measure

Enabled provincial post-secondary education and training to become more responsive to labour market demands

3-Year Performance Indicators:

1. Strengthened the effectiveness of apprenticeship operations in meeting labour market needs of the province
2. Strengthened the capacity of post-secondary education and training to be more innovative and responsive
3. Improved efficiency and accountability in the NL Student Financial Assistance Program

Objective 1 (2014-15)

By March 31, 2015 the department will have commenced initiatives to enable provincial post-secondary education and training to become more responsive to labour market demands

Objective 2 (2015-16)

By March 31, 2016 the department will have continued initiatives to enable provincial post-secondary education and training to become more responsive to labour market demands

Objective 3 (2016-17)

By March 31, 2017 the department will have furthered initiatives to enable provincial post-secondary education and training to become more responsive to labour market demands

Issue 2 continued

“Responsiveness of post-secondary education and training”

Objective 1 (2014-15)

By March 31, 2015 the department will have commenced initiatives to enable provincial post-secondary education and training to become more responsive to labour market demands

Measure

Commenced initiatives to enable provincial post-secondary to become more responsive to labour market demands

Performance Indicators:

1. Reviewed phased-in approaches from MUN and CNA to operationalize the efficiency reviews
2. Introduced and maintained financial solutions to remove barriers to participation in post-secondary education
3. Improved efficiency and responsiveness of provincial apprenticeship operations

Strategic Issue 3 - Supports for people to participate in employment opportunities

The restructuring of the department in 2014 was done with a view to increasing supports and improving coordination along the full spectrum of services it offers; whether it is increasing shelter rates for people receiving income support benefits, providing more flexibility for pre-employment programs or strengthening incentives to get people working. Providing supports in a clear, streamlined and timely way means the department needs to improve how it delivers programs and services, as outlined in the six-year mission.

The Department of Advanced Education and Skills is better able to provide people with the skills, education and training opportunities they require to foster employment and secure a bright future right here in Newfoundland and Labrador. A key focus is to enhance the department's efforts to support people to participate in employment opportunities. Fundamental to supporting Newfoundlanders and Labradorians is the development and implementation of an Adult Literacy and Essential Skills Plan that will include initiatives to help people prepare for employment opportunities and support career choices.

As part of the department's shifting focus on enhancing employment services to individuals and employers, offices across the province will transform into Employment Centres that will focus on responding to the labour needs of individuals and employers. The department will also focus on improving access to services through telephone, email, online and outreach services.

Over the three years of the strategic plan, the department will work to improve supports for people, implement program and delivery improvements and implement services to support adult literacy and essential skills development. In this way the department will address the strategic direction – “Skilled, Educated and Employed Citizens”. The relevant component areas of this strategic direction include: supports for individuals and employers; adult literacy; and income support policy.

Issue 3

“Supports for people to participate in employment opportunities”

Goal 3 (3-year)

By March 31, 2017 the Department of Advanced Education and Skills will have improved supports for people to participate in employment opportunities

Measure

Improved supports for people to participate in employment opportunities

3-Year Performance Indicators:

1. Improved supports for individuals that are having difficulty finding and keeping employment
2. Implemented program and service delivery improvements to increase access to opportunities in the province
3. Commenced implementation of an Adult Literacy and Essential Skills Plan to help people find employment and effectively manage their career choices

Objective 1 (2014-15)

By March 31, 2015 the department will have initiated activities that improve supports for people to participate in employment opportunities

Objective 2 (2015-16)

By March 31, 2016 the department will have continued initiatives that improve supports for people to participate in employment opportunities

Objective 3 (2016-17)

By March 31, 2017 the department will have furthered initiatives that improve supports for people to participate in employment opportunities

Issue 3 continued

“Supports for people to participate in employment opportunities”

Objective 1 (2014-15)

March 31, 2015 the department will have initiated activities that improve supports for people to participate in employment opportunities

Measure

Initiated activities to improve supports for people

Performance Indicators:

1. Commenced an incremental approach to establishing service standards
2. Reviewed the income support program to guide the development of solutions for individuals that are unable to attach to the work force
3. Oversaw the development of an Adult Literacy and Essential Skills Plan

Appendix A: Strategic Directions

Strategic directions identify desired physical, social or economic outcomes. They normally require action by more than one government entity. These directions are generally communicated by the Provincial Government through public commitments, Throne and Budget Speeches, policy documents and other communication activities.

The *Transparency and Accountability Act* requires departments and public bodies to take into account these strategic directions in the preparation of their performance-based plans. This requirement assures the integration of planning practices across Government and ensures that all entities are moving forward on key commitments.





The direction related to the Department of Advanced Education and Skills and its public entities (for example: boards, corporations, Memorial University, and College of the North Atlantic) is provided in the following table. The strategic direction is comprised of a number of components or focus areas. In reference to the department, these component areas will be addressed through the various planning processes (strategic, operational or work planning). Only the highest order of planning is indicated in the strategic direction table.

In reference to other public bodies reporting to the Minister, the strategic direction table notes with a check mark, those component areas that are applicable to entities reporting to the Minister.

1. Title: Skilled, Educated and Employed Citizens

Outcome: Skilled, educated and employed citizens contributing to the social, cultural and economic development of the province.

Components of Strategic Direction	Applicable to Other Entities Reporting to the Minister	This Direction is addressed:		
		in the department's strategic plan	in the department's operational plan	in the branch/divisional work plans of the department
1. Labour market development		✓		
2. Supports for individuals and employers		✓		
3. Immigration and multiculturalism – attraction, promotion, retention and integration		✓		
4. Adult literacy		✓		
5. Population growth initiatives		✓		
6. Post-secondary infrastructure		✓		

Components of Strategic Direction	Applicable to Other Entities Reporting to the Minister	This Direction is addressed:		
		in the department's strategic plan	in the department's operational plan	in the branch/divisional work plans of the department
7. Affordability and student access to post-secondary education				
8. Post-secondary programming				
9. Apprenticeship policy and training				
10. Income support policy				

Appendix B: Public Entities

The following public entities reported through the Minister and prepared separate annual reports in 2013-14:

- Memorial University of Newfoundland
- College of the North Atlantic
- Student Loan Corporation of Newfoundland and Labrador
- Private Training Corporation
- Memorial University Pension Plan
- Provincial Apprenticeship and Certification Board
- Student Financial Assistance Appeals Board
- Income and Employment Support Appeal Board
- The Council on Higher Education has not been active in recent years; however, there are plans to revive this entity. At that time, this entity will be subject to the planning and reporting requirements of the *Transparency and Accountability Act*.

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