

Strategic Mandate Agreement (2014-17)

Between:

The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities

&

Western University

ONTARIO'S VISION FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Ontario's colleges and universities will drive creativity, innovation, knowledge, and community engagement through teaching and research. They will put students first by providing the best possible learning experience for all qualified learners in an affordable and financially sustainable way, ensuring high quality and globally competitive outcomes for students and Ontario's creative economy.

WESTERN UNIVERSITY'S VISION/MANDATE

Mandate

As the leading full-service, research-intensive, residential university known for its commitment to the Best Student Experience, discovery research and innovation, and transforming lives through knowledge mobilization across a broad array of disciplines, Western's mandate – derived from its Act and historical developments over more than 130 years – is to provide the highest quality learning environment to help students, staff, and faculty achieve their full potential which, in turn, will drive Ontario's competitiveness and prosperity and Ontario's contribution to our global society. The Western community aims to deliver an exemplary university experience by engaging the best and brightest people, attracting strategic resources, and by continuously elevating ourselves to ever higher global standards.

Vision

Our vision is an extension of our mission and mandate: to be one of Canada's leading universities known nationally and internationally for its commitment to the Best Student Experience, the outstanding calibre and contributions of its students, graduates, and faculty, and the intensity and impact of its world-class research and service. Western will be a globally recognized destination for academic distinction delivering transformational learning and research with impact.

PREAMBLE

This Strategic Mandate Agreement between the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (the Ministry) and Western University outlines the role the University currently performs in the postsecondary education system and how it will build on its current strengths to achieve its vision and help drive system-wide objectives articulated by the Ministry's Differentiation Policy Framework.

The Strategic Mandate Agreement (SMA):

- Identifies the University's existing institutional strengths;
- Supports the current vision, mission, and mandate of the University within the context of the University's governing legislation and outlines how the University's priorities align with Ontario's vision and Differentiation Policy Framework; and
- Informs Ministry decision making through greater alignment of Ministry policies and processes to further support and guide the University's areas of strength.

The term of the SMA is from April 1, 2014, to March 31, 2017. The SMA proposal submitted by the University to the Ministry has been used to inform the SMA and is appended to the agreement.

The Ministry acknowledges the University's autonomy with respect to its academic and internal resource allocation decisions, and the University acknowledges the role of the Ministry as the Province's steward of Ontario's postsecondary education system.

The agreement may be amended in the event of substantive policy or program changes that would significantly affect commitments made in the SMA. Any such amendment would be mutually agreed to, dated, and signed by both signatories.

WESTERN UNIVERSITY'S KEY AREAS OF DIFFERENTIATION

Western University is a comprehensive, research-intensive university, with a full spectrum of undergraduate and graduate programs. Western's interdisciplinary research strengths are in the areas of: Imaging; Materials and Biomaterials; Philosophy of Science; Bone and Joint; Sustainability and Harsh Environments; Neuroscience/Brain and Mind; Big Data; Management; and Finance.

ALIGNMENT WITH THE DIFFERENTIATION POLICY FRAMEWORK

The following outlines areas of strength agreed upon by the University and the Ministry, and the alignment of these areas of strength with the Ministry's Differentiation Policy Framework.

1. JOBS, INNOVATION, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

This component highlights institutions' collaborative work with employers, community partners, and regions, or at a global level, to establish their role in fostering social and economic development, and serving the needs of the economy and labour market.

1.1 Areas of Institutional Strength

Western University supports jobs, innovation, and economic development by:

Student and Graduate Employment

- The greatest contribution to the provincial economy is Western’s graduates. Western’s graduate employment rate after two years at the undergraduate level is 93%, above the provincial average of 92%, and the rate is 100% in a number of second entry programs.
- Through partnerships, Western creates employment opportunities for students, and develops specific programs that provide direct student experience and training with a large group of companies, including 3M and Trojan Technologies.

Commercialization and Innovation

- Global partnerships such as the Fraunhofer Project Centre for Composites Research.
- Western Research Parks, one of Canada’s largest Research Park networks and currently home to over 70 companies and nearly 1,100 employees, provides an array of incubation, business development, and commercialization services.
- WORLDiscoveries ranks among the top commercialization offices in Canada, and has generated nearly \$25M in returns to local researchers and their home institutions. It has also led to the formation of 18 net new spin-off companies, including the first joint venture established between a Chinese industrialist and a North American university.
- WORLDiscoveries has executed ten commercial agreements with Asian based industry and institutions, by far the most of any university in Canada, collectively generating nearly \$4M in returns to the University through research contracts, licensing royalties, and spin-off company investment.
- Other key projects (e.g., the Southern Ontario Water Congress, the WindEEE Wind Engineering, Energy and Environment Research Institute, the Institute for Chemicals and Fuels from Alternative Resources (ICFAR), the Centre for Imaging Technology Commercialization (CIMTEC)).

1.2 Metrics

Institutional Metrics	System-Wide Metrics ¹
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Graduate employment rates• Number of graduates employed full-time in a related job

¹ Additional system-wide metrics focused on applied research, commercialization, entrepreneurial activity, and community impact will be developed in consultation with the sector.

2. TEACHING AND LEARNING

This component will capture institutional strength in program delivery methods that expand learning options for students, and improve the learning experience and career preparedness. This may include, but is not limited to, experiential learning, online learning, entrepreneurial learning, work integrated learning, and international exchange opportunities.

2.1 Areas of Institutional Strength

Western University supports teaching and learning by focusing on the student experience, experiential learning, and technology-enabled learning. Initiatives and outcomes in this area include:

Student Experience and Outcomes

- As measured through the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), Western outperforms peer institutions in Ontario and across Canada, particularly in indicators related to student-faculty interaction, enriching educational experiences, and supportive campus environment.
- Western has more alumni with undergraduate degrees among Canada's Top 40 under 40 than any other university in Canada.
- Western has among the highest entering grades, retention rates, and graduation rates in the country.

Experiential Learning

- Experiential learning opportunities are 'part and parcel' of the learning environment across the full spectrum of disciplines. This includes student involvement in research and international learning opportunities.
- In 2012-13, 4.5% or 1,230 students gained some form of international experience through activities that spanned six continents and included formal exchange programs, research placements, community service learning, internships in international businesses, and international development programs.

Technology-enabled Learning

- Western's commitment to promoting excellence and innovation in teaching and learning encompasses a broad range of options and opportunities, including a strategy to enrich pedagogical innovation through technology-enabled learning.

2.2 Additional Comments

- 2012-13 system-wide data indicates that Western had 13,210 registrations across 306 eLearning courses and 22 eLearning programs.

Institutional Strategies

- Through the planning period to 2018-19, Western will focus on measures associated with the ten new Engagement Indicators, with an emphasis on the High-Impact Practices, which include the learning community, internship or field experience, study abroad, and research with a faculty member. This focus reflects Western's leadership within a peer group of research intensive universities.

2.3 Metrics

Institutional Metrics	System-Wide Metrics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student Satisfaction Survey results• Graduation rates• Retention rates• Number of students enrolled in a co-op program at institution• Number of online course registrants, programs, and courses at institution

3. STUDENT POPULATION

This component recognizes the unique institutional missions that improve access, retention, and success for underrepresented groups (Aboriginal, first generation, students with disabilities) and francophones. This component also highlights other important student groups that institutions serve that link to their institutional strength. This may include, but is not limited to, international students, mature students, or indirect entrants.

3.1 Areas of Institutional Strength

Western University's focus and outcomes in this area include:

High Achieving Students

- Data indicates that 98.9% of Western's main campus entering class had admission averages over 80%, the highest in Ontario.
- Western's graduate admission averages have remained constant even as enrolment has increased.
- The average funding per domestic and international graduate student is above the average for Ontario universities and peer institutions across Canada.

Students with Disabilities

- In 2012-13, over 1,700 students required academic accommodation at Western, an increase of 35% in five years.
- In addition to outreach services to support disabled students' transition from high school to university, Western provides networking opportunities for students with disabilities and employers.

3.2 Additional Comments

Institutional Strategies

Western will continue to direct efforts to increasing Indigenous and first generation student enrolment in the entering class.

3.3 Metrics

Institutional Metrics	System-Wide Metrics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number and proportion of Aboriginal, first generation, students with disabilities, and francophone students at an institution• Number and proportion of international students enrolled in Ontario (as reported in annual institutional enrolment reporting)• Proportion of an institution's enrolment that receives OSAP

4. RESEARCH AND GRADUATE EDUCATION

This component identifies the breadth and depth of institutional research activity (both basic and applied), and will identify institutional research strengths from niche to comprehensive research intensity.

4.1 Areas of Institutional Strength

Western is a research-intensive university, with a focus on interdisciplinary research in the following six signature areas: Imaging; Materials and Biomaterials; Philosophy of Science; Bone and Joint; Sustainability and Harsh Environments; Neuroscience/Brain and Mind; Big Data; Management; and Finance. Examples include:

- The Ivey Business School's interdisciplinary scope manifests itself through a variety of centres and institutes such as its Energy Policy and Management Centre, its International Centre for Health Innovation, and its Cross-Enterprise Leadership Centres.
- The Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry, the Robarts Research Institute, and the Lawson Health Research Institute are world-renowned centres of excellence known for advanced training and cutting edge research.
- In the social sciences, Western has acknowledged world-class strength in core disciplines such as economics and psychology.
- Economics, for example, is recognized as one of the top three departments in the nation, and is characterized by award winning faculty, top notch engaged students, and prominent alumni.
- In the arts and humanities, Western's strengths shine in disciplines such as English literature, music, information and media studies, and philosophy.

4.2 Additional Comments

- System-wide metrics reflect Western's strength in this area.

4.3 Metrics

Institutional Metrics	System-Wide Metrics
	<p>Research Capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total sponsored research • Number of research chairs • Number of graduate degrees awarded • Number of graduate awards/scholarships <p>Research Focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduate degrees awarded to undergraduate degrees awarded • Graduate to undergraduate ratio • PhD degrees awarded to undergraduate degrees awarded <p>Research Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normalized Tri-Council funding (total and per full-time faculty) • Number of publications (total and per full-time faculty) • Number of citations (total and per full-time faculty) • Citation impact (normalized average citation per paper) <p>International Competitiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ratio of international to domestic graduates [used by Times Higher Education Rankings] • Aggregate of international global rankings

5. PROGRAM OFFERINGS

This component articulates the breadth of programming, enrolment, and credentials offered, along with program areas of institutional strength/specialization, including any vocationally oriented mandates. This component also recognizes institutions that provide bilingual and/or French-language programming for students.

5.1 Areas of Institutional Strength

Current program areas of strength include:

1. Liberal and Creative Arts in the Digital Age
2. Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Disciplines
3. Business, Management, Finance, and Law
4. Medical, Health, and Behavioural Sciences
5. Education

Proposed program areas for growth include:

1. STEM Disciplines
2. Business, Management, Finance, and Law
3. Medical, Health, and Behavioural Sciences
4. Education

5.2 Additional Comments

- The Ministry notes that a large number of new engineering degree programs are proposed province-wide, which will have an impact on the Ministry's review of new engineering program proposals.

5.3 Metrics

Institutional Metrics	System-Wide Metrics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Institution-specific and provincial Key Performance Indicators, including employment rate after two years, percentage of students completing the degree, and OSAP default rates for each area of strength• Program enrolment

6. INSTITUTIONAL COLLABORATION TO SUPPORT STUDENT MOBILITY

This component profiles partnerships between institutions that ensure students have access to a continuum of learning opportunities in a coordinated system. This may include, but is not limited to, credit transfer pathways and collaborative or joint programs between or within sectors.

6.1 Areas of Institutional Strength

Initiatives and outcomes to support student mobility include:

- Western has seen a significant increase in the number of articulation agreements with Fanshawe College in recent years. Currently numbering 15, the agreements span disciplines from Computer Science and Foods and Nutrition to Accounting and First Nations Studies.
- Western and Fanshawe offer collaborative programs in Nursing, Media Theory and Production, and Music Recording Arts.
- Western is also a participant in the Environmental Science multilateral agreement, whereby students graduating from one of 16 different colleges are eligible for upper-year registration in Western’s Bachelor of Science program.
- Western is a partner in the University Credit Transfer Consortium, a group of seven Ontario universities working to automate key aspects of the credit transfer process.

6.2 Additional Comments

Building on the University Credit Transfer Consortium and existing partnerships with colleges, the Ministry encourages Western University to continue to develop partnerships with other Ontario universities and colleges to facilitate student mobility.

6.3 Metrics

Institutional Metrics	System-Wide Metrics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of college and university pathways and/or articulation agreements (college-college, college-university, university-college)• Number of transfer applicants and registrants• Number of college graduates enrolled in university programs

ASPIRATIONS

The Ministry recognizes the importance of supporting institutions to evolve and acknowledges the strategic aspirations of its postsecondary education institutions; the SMA is not intended to capture all decisions and issues in the postsecondary education system, as many will be addressed through the Ministry's policies and standard processes. The Ministry will not be approving any requests for capital funding or new program approvals, for example, through the SMA process.

ENROLMENT GROWTH

The strategic enrolment and planning exercise is in the context of a public commitment in the 2011 Budget to increase postsecondary education enrolment by an additional 60,000 students over 2010-11 levels. This government has demonstrated a longstanding commitment to ensuring access to postsecondary education for all qualified students.

Baseline Projected Eligible Full-Time Headcounts

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Undergraduate	26,896	27,437	28,157

Western University's planned enrolment forecast as expressed in this baseline eligible enrolment scenario is considered reasonable and in line with Ministry expectations, based on the current and projected demographic and fiscal environments.

GRADUATE ALLOCATION

The Province committed to allocate an additional 6,000 graduate spaces in the 2011 Budget. The allocation of the balance of the 6,000 graduate spaces is informed by institutional graduate plans, metrics identified in the differentiation framework, and government priorities. Based on these considerations, the allocation for Western University is provided below.

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Masters	2,764.61	2,868.75	2,937.51
PhD	1,291.25	1,329.90	1,344.45
Total	4,055.86	4,198.64	4,281.96

Note: For a detailed breakdown of graduate space allocations, see Appendix.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

The Ministry and the University recognize that financial sustainability and accountability are critical to achieving institutional mandates and realizing Ontario's vision for the postsecondary education system. To this end, it is agreed that:

- It is the responsibility of the governing board and Senior Administrators of the University to identify, track, and address financial pressures and sustainability issues. At the same time, the Ministry has a financial stewardship role. The Ministry and the University agree to work collaboratively to achieve the common goal of financial sustainability and to ensure that Ontarians have access to a full range of affordable, high-quality postsecondary education options, now and in the future; and
- The University remains accountable to the Ministry with respect to effective and efficient use of provincial government resources and student resources covered by policy directives of the Ministry, or decisions impacting upon these, to maximize the value and impact of investments made in the postsecondary education system.

The Ministry commits to engage with the sector in spring 2014 to finalize the financial sustainability metrics to be tracked through the course of the SMAs, building on metrics already identified during discussions that took place in the fall of 2013.

MINISTRY/GOVERNMENT COMMITMENTS

Over time, the Ministry commits to aligning many of its policy, process, and funding levers with the Differentiation Policy Framework and SMAs in order to support the strengths of institutions and implement differentiation. To this end, the Ministry will:

- Engage with both the college and university sectors around potential changes to the funding formula, beginning with the university sector in 2014-15;
- Update the college and university program funding approval process to improve transparency and align with institutional strengths as outlined in the SMAs;
- Streamline reporting requirements across Ministry business lines with the goals of (1) creating greater consistency of reporting requirements across separate initiatives, (2) increasing automation of reporting processes, and (3) reducing the amount of data required from institutions without compromising accountability. In the interim, the Multi-Year Accountability Report Backs will be adjusted and used as the annual reporting mechanism for metrics set out in the SMAs;
- Consult on the definition, development, and utilization of metrics;
- Undertake a review of Ontario's credential options; and
- Continue the work of the Nursing Tripartite Committee.

The Ministry and the University are committed to continuing to work together to:

- Support student access, quality, and success;
- Drive creativity, innovation, knowledge, and community engagement through teaching and research;
- Increase the competitiveness of Ontario’s postsecondary education system;
- Focus the strengths of Ontario’s institutions; and
- Maintain a financially sustainable postsecondary education system.

SIGNED for and on behalf of the Ministry
of Training, Colleges and Universities by:

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY

Deborah Newman
Deputy Minister

April 15, 2014

Date

SIGNED for and on behalf of
Western University by:

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY

Dr. Amit Chakma
Executive Head

April 24, 2014

Date

APPENDIX

Western University - Summary of Graduate Space Allocations to 2016-17, FTEs

	Master's	PhD	Total
<i>2013-14 Graduate Space Target</i>	2,604.00	1,331.18	3,935.18
Adjustments to Graduate Targets (pre 2015-16)	160.61	-39.94	120.68
Graduate Allocation Envelopes			
General Allocation Envelope	147.90	53.21	201.11
Priorities Envelope	25.00	-	25.00
Graduate Spaces Allocated to 2016-17, over 2013-14	333.51	13.27	346.78
<i>2016-17 Graduate Space Target</i>	<i>2,937.51</i>	<i>1,344.45</i>	<i>4,281.96</i>

Notes:

1. Adjustments to Graduate Targets (pre 2015-16) include: (i) 2013-14 approved fungibility requests; (ii) 2014-15 final Master's allocations; (iii) resets of graduate targets, if any; and, (iv) other Ministry commitments, including further conversions.
2. General Allocation Envelope includes all metrics-based space allocations for 2015-16 and 2016-17.
3. Priorities Envelope includes: (i) Ministry and institutional priorities; and, (ii) approved spaces for identified niche programs.
 - a. The 25 Master's spaces allocated as part of the Priorities Envelope are provided to Western University in 2016-17, to support the growth of Western University's Master of Management in Applied Science.