

**Continuing and Distance
Education Guide**

Learning: A Lifelong Proposition

Twenty years ago, the hot ticket in education was an Executive MBA. Back then students either had to take night classes at the local university or do a correspondence course. Fast forward to the 21st century, where education is more fluid. Today, keeping up with technology, industry developments and global trends means more of us are going back to school in our spare time.

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"It's all about lifelong education," says Dr. Alan Middleton, Executive Director, Schulich Executive Education Centre (SEEC) at York University's Schulich School of Business. "We tell our MBA students that after three years their knowledge will be out of date. That's why they need to continually upgrade."

The Internet has shaped the way distance and continuing education are delivered. No longer do students need to be on campus to learn. They can simply log on to their courses. E-learning has been a boon for those living in remote areas without access to a college or university. Mentoring and peer interaction have made online education as effective as in-classroom learning.

Whether it's for professional development, finishing a degree, doing graduate work or simply for personal interest, Canadians have embraced continuing education.

Take F-18 military pilot Captain Steve Valko of Cold Lake, Alta., as an example. He keeps a busy schedule, sometimes flying out at the spur of the moment. That's why online education is a must. A graduate of the Royal Military College's online Leadership & Ethics course, Valko found himself logging on to do his assignments in Ontario, Tennessee and North Carolina. "For guys who have to travel, online is great. I know people posted in Afghanistan who are doing the course," he says.

Valko has nothing but praise for the three-month credit course. "It should be mandatory for all officers. You may think you're a good leader, but this course makes you better and teaches you how to be more efficient." The course has been so popular with the military that it has now been opened up to civilians.

"The next generation of students is very tech-savvy, so we want to make sure we accommodate their learning needs."

No matter where you live...

Accessibility is a watchword at Athabasca University. In fact, the school's motto cites its commitment to removing all barriers to education, regardless of location, income, lifestyle or prior academic achievement. A leader in distance education, Athabasca provides opportunities for students who can't attend a university campus. Fees are among the lowest in Canada, with books and other materials included in tuition costs. The open admissions policy means students can start a course when it's convenient, rather than wait for the beginning of a semester.





Close attention is paid to student demand when it comes to course delivery. “We use any method that suits the learner,” says Dr. Frits Pannekoek, President of Athabasca, “Our students are older (26 to 29) and they learn differently, more independently. The next generation of students is very tech-savvy, so we want to make sure we accommodate their learning needs.”

To that end, Athabasca’s entire library is PDA-compliant. Students can load and access information on their cell phones, iPods, BlackBerries, Palm Pilots and other Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) devices. They’re also able to interact with each other and their instructors via mobile text messaging. “Mobile learning is something we are pursuing very aggressively and it will go a long way to removing barriers,” says Pannekoek.

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Distance offerings include university certificates, diplomas, three-year or four-year Bachelor's degrees, and Master's degrees. Athabasca serves 34,000 students, a number that has doubled in six years.

The University of Waterloo's first online course was created in 1995 by an instructor in the English department. But there was little involvement from the distance education department, recalls Catherine Newell Kelly, Interim Director, Distance and Continuing Education. By fall 1998, it was clear that the Internet was the future of distance education and Newell Kelly's department had four online courses. The first web developers were hired that year, and today the development team has grown to 10 web developers and two online learning consultants. Currently Waterloo has close to 100 fully online courses with 40 more planned for the coming year.

"The move to an online environment has been very positive for students. It gives them opportunities to interact with each other, with their instructors, and with the content in much more significant ways. As technologies evolve, so will we," says Newell Kelly.

OntarioLearn.com

Education at your Fingertips

Ontario Community Colleges Working Together

OntarioLearn.com is a consortium of **22 community colleges** providing online learning opportunities for Canadian students. Currently registering approximately **35,000 students** annually, Ontario Learn.com is based on an award-winning cooperative model for sharing course development and maximizing quality and accessibility. This model gives students a hub from which they can access many more courses as well as the particular areas of expertise offered by various colleges.

OntarioLearn.com brings quality learning and interaction right into living rooms and workplaces making it possible for students and teachers to use their time expeditiously. Over **850 courses** are now available to students through local community colleges across Ontario. Please visit our website for more information.

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- Sir Sandford Fleming
- St. Clair
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Visit our website at: www.ontariolearn.com

For more information, please contact **Heather Ryan** at heather@ontariolearn.com.

It's easy to sign up

The Canadian Virtual University (CVU) has made online education easier for students since 2000. A single website—www.cvu-uvic.ca—provides information about the 12 member schools' online and distance university courses. More than 2,500 courses and over 300 degree/diploma/certificate programs are offered, and CVU has 100,000 students, 10,000 of whom are at the graduate level.

Vicky Busch, CVU's Executive Director, says many course offerings reflect the needs of business, citing the growth of specialized Executive MBA programs. "Students want to tailor their MBAs for leadership in health care, education and the government sector." Another sign that education is meeting the needs of business is the 800 per cent enrolment increase in the University of New Brunswick's Health and Safety certificate program, she adds.

In Ontario, 22 community colleges have partnered to develop and deliver online courses. This partnership, called OntarioLearn.com, now allows students access to over 800 different courses. According to Linda Rees, Chair of OntarioLearn.com and Dean, School of Part-time Studies at Algonquin College: "This cooperative approach

Conferences

Canadian Association of Distance Education and AMTEC 2007 distance educator conference will be held in Winnipeg, Manitoba, May 13 - 16, 2007. For more information, visit www.cade-aced.ca.

The Canadian Association for University Continuing Education (CAUCE) annual conference will be held at University of Alberta in Edmonton, May 30-June, 2007. For more information, visit www.cauce2007.ca.

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Resources to Get You Started

www.cade-aced.ca -

Canadian Association for Distance Education

www.cauce-aepec.ca - Canadian Association for University Continuing Education

www.cvu-uvc.ca - Canadian Virtual University

www.OntarioLearn.com - OntarioLearn.com

www.econcordia.com - eConcordia

www.mcgill.ca/conted - McGill University

www.nait.ca - Northern Alberta Institute of Technology

www.sait.ab.ca -

Southern Alberta Institute of Technology

www.athabascau.ca - Athabasca University

www.extension.ualberta.ca - University of Alberta

www.conted.ucalgary.ca - University of Calgary

www.cstudies.ubc.ca - University of British Columbia

www.sfu.ca - Simon Fraser University

www.bcit.ca - British Columbia Institute of Technology

www.uvcs.uvic.ca - University of Victoria

www.siastr.sk.ca - Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science & Technology

www.environment.utoronto.ca - Centre For The Environment at University of Toronto

www.schulich.yorku.ca - Schulich School of Business, York University

www.uoguelph.ca - University of Guelph

www.dce.uwaterloo.ca - University of Waterloo

www.ryerson.ca/continuing - G. Raymond Chang School of Continuing Education

www.queensu.ca - Queen's University

lets member colleges optimize their resources and increase the number of courses available. Because there is no duplication of courses, colleges can focus on their particular areas of expertise and still offer a rich variety of programs.”

Students can sign up for a single course or a college certificate or diploma. Learning is done at their convenience and instructors are available to answer questions, encourage discussion on course topics, and provide feedback. More than 35,000 students signed up for courses last year, a 21 per cent increase over 2004, says Rees.

There's something for everyone

Serving a widely distributed population, including rural and northern areas, the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIASST) needs to offer flexible online courses that are highly interactive and engaging for students. This makes instructional design a priority, says David Francis, Academic Director of SIASST's Virtual Campus. SIASST's efforts have been recognized nationally: in 2004 and 2006 it won Canadian Association of Distance Education (CADE) awards for excellence in instructional design for its nursing programs.

Faculty development is a critical component of online course delivery, Francis says. “New SIASK faculty members not only learn how to teach online, they learn what it means to be an online student by taking part in a faculty certificate program that includes online courses. We also provide workshops for existing faculty on how to use technology in teaching.”

Are you interested in a flexible option for professional & educational development?

The Centre for Environment at the University of Toronto provides leading edge training in environmental management strategies via distance learning. The Certificate & Advanced Certificate online programs include:

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- Certificate in Environmental Management
- Certificate in GIS
(Geographical Information Systems) for Environmental Management
- Certificate in Renewable Energy
(September 2007)

For more information, visit www.ies.utoronto.ca/DistanceEducation or contact:

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Toronto, ON, M5S 3E8
Phone: 416.978.7077
Email: d.workman@utoronto.ca

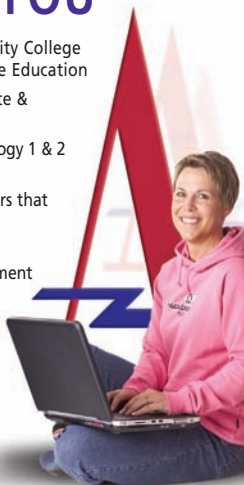


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SIAST has four campuses throughout the province with 12,000 students in programs that touch every sector of the economy. SIAST offers 130 courses online and creates some 35 new ones each year.

Among the University of Alberta's continuing education offerings is Canada's only Master of Arts degree in Communications & Technology. Since it began in 2000, the program has attracted students from such high-profile organizations as Microsoft Corporation headquarters and the United Nations in New York City. "The program focuses on the principles of human communication and explores how and why we use technology to expand audiences and intensify messages," says Dr. Marco Adria, the program's director. Not surprisingly, the program makes strong use of technology. The program provides a web-based teaching and learning environment.

Students use MSN and text-based chat to facilitate student-instructor exchanges. Podcasts let students access audio examples and lectures at their convenience, explains Adria. The two-year part-time program is delivered in a blended format, combining online and in-classroom courses.

Concordia launched eConcordia in 2000 as a new venture in distance education. From one online engineering course, the university now offers 10 courses, with four new ones planned for January. The goal for eConcordia is 35 new courses in the next two years.

The idea of eConcordia, says Kaoru Matsui, Director, Business Development, is not to compete with the university, but to complement it with its completely online offerings. The response has been phenomenal, with an average growth in enrolments of 64 per cent from year to year. During the past academic year, enrolment reached 9,500. "Because our courses are 100-per-cent web-based, students can travel and some even return to their home countries for the summer and finish their courses there. Students can also arrange to write their final in-class exams there."

In some instances, in-classroom instruction will never go out of style. Many students in The Insurance Institute of Canada's Chartered Insurance Professional (CIP) program still choose to take their courses in a classroom, rather than electronically, although, distant education is popular with those students who want more flexibility in their scheduling.

What's Hot for 2006/2007

- Biomedical Ethics at eConcordia
- Justice and Public Safety Leadership certificate at University of Victoria
- Forensic Investigation degree option at British Columbia Institute of Technology
- Orientation to Nursing in Canada for Internationally Educated Nurses at Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science & Technology
- Master of Public Health (MPH) degree at University of Waterloo
- Introduction to Forensic Psychology at Memorial University through www.cvu-uvc.ca
- Sustainable Enterprise Academy at Schulich School of Business, York University
- Certificate for Emerging Leaders at University of Calgary.
- Calculus II course for Electronic Engineering using flash animation, through NAIT
- Master of Engineering in Design & Manufacturing, developed by a partnership of engineering and business schools at Ontario universities. Visit www.admicanada.com

Videoconference students are joined by others who can hear and see the instruction.



Says Carey-Ann Greenham, the Institute's Director, Business Development: "Insurance is all about building relationships, so the students like the opportunity to exchange ideas and to network."

The Institute is a pioneer in distance education, having offered some form of it since its inception in 1899, Greenham says. Currently, it has 18,000 active students studying for the CIP, which is the property/casualty industry's professional premier education program. Recognized internationally, the 10-course CIP offers courses in-class, distance education with on-line tutorials, as well as some courses completely online. The Institute, in partnership with universities, also offers the more advanced Fellow, Chartered Insurance Professional (FCIP) designation program.

You're guaranteed quality

Distance education is only as good as the quality of its programs and courses, says Dr. Alan Shepard, Associate Vice-President, Academic, University of Guelph. "It's not enough to keep building new courses and never revisit them. We spend an enormous amount of money re-investing in our existing courses to make sure they're up to date and maintaining their quality."

Guelph has some 50,000 distance and continuing education students. Credit courses are obtained through distance education, while continuing education courses are non-credit and certificate training. Guelph's Open Learning Program offers students "a second chance" to obtain or finish a degree part-time. After completing four credits through distance education, they can apply for a regular degree program.

One of Guelph's goals is to internationalize its campus, says Shepard. "We're using distance courses to get our domestic students involved with our international ones. A 'twinning project' next year will use different technologies to pair up professors teaching the same course here and in another country. At the same time, their students will team up to work together online or via teleconferencing. We see this as a low-cost and innovative way of getting students to interact internationally."



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Let technology bring learning to life

The Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT) has a long history of using technology in program delivery. So much so that it's built into the institute's mandate. NAIT's eLearning strategy ensures that online students receive a quality education in an activity-based environment, says Eleanor Frandsen, Dean, Technology and Curriculum Innovation. "Learners are looking for options, and we provide opportunities for them to acquire a NAIT diploma or degree." Whether online or blended (partially delivered in a classroom), course design is based on student need, yet mindful of business and industry requirements.

As Canada's leading apprenticeship trainer—it has 35 programs—NAIT has pushed the envelope by using multimedia and interactive technology for training. Students can view 3D animations covering subjects from fire safety to building codes to operating a boom truck.

Because the "human touch" is an integral part of the learning experience, NAIT uses technology like videoconferencing to reach remote areas. NAIT D.A.T.E. (Distance Apprenticeship Training and Education) is an experiment using videoconferencing over Alberta's SuperNet to deliver the theory portion of trades training. Says Bill Fricker, NAIT's Technology Integration & Marketing Innovation Consultant: "Students can live and work in their home communities and avoid the financial and social costs associated with moving to a campus. Online distance education allows us to respond more quickly to the skills shortage. We don't need to worry about bricks and mortar."

A diagnostic image viewer, created by NAIT Multimedia Services, allows students in the online Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) course to view high quality X-ray images as fast as the click of a mouse.



NAIT | DISTANCE LEARNING

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- Health Sciences
- Trades
- And more
- Engineering Technologies
- Environmental Management

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Skills training even goes on the road with NAIT in Motion. Two state-of-the-art mobile units deliver electrical, pipe trades and welding training to remote areas. NAIT is also working with a corporate client to bring distance courses to workers at the oil sands projects in Fort McMurray.

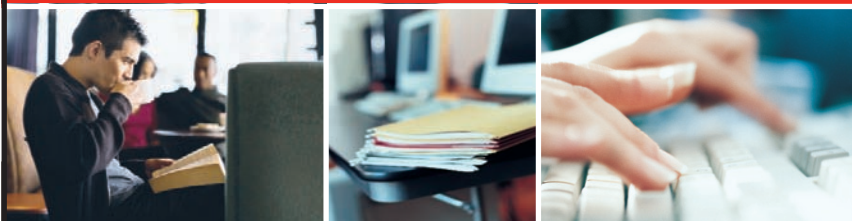
Work at your own pace

The University of Toronto's Centre for Environment had requests from around the world for its environmental distance education courses. In 2003 the Centre responded with a Certificate in Environmental Management. The following year, a Certificate in Geographical Information Systems (GIS) for Environmental Management and an Advanced Certificate in Environmental Management were added. In 2007, students will be able to study for a Certificate in Renewable Energy.

"Most of our students have families or full-time jobs. With distance learning, there is no commuter time or expense and students can work at their own pace. Beyond the flexibility, they're looking for a challenging and engaging educational experience," says Donna Workman, the Centre's Manager, Program Development and External Relations. The programs have been a runaway success, with enrolment growing some 500 per cent since 2003.

The Institute of Canadian Bankers (ICB) has been providing continuing education for financial services professionals since 1967. Since then, over 250,000 students have earned a specialized ICB diploma and/or certificate. Executive Director Marie Muldowney says today most courses have an online component and the Institute is looking at the next generation of e-learning for future expansion. "The need for continuing education will keep growing," says Muldowney. "You can't practice in this industry without keeping up. And with technology, things are moving faster than ever."

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Stand out.

Eight years ago, I realized that providing online distance instruction was critical to making our Bachelor of Applied Communications in Professional Writing program accessible to students. I also knew that if we were to be successful, our online distance courses needed to stand out from those of other programs.

In order to accomplish this goal, I needed to go back to school myself.

Through my extensive search for a program that analyzed the needs of online students and understood the issues of distance education, I discovered the **Master of Distance Education** program at Athabasca University. This program provided solid theory in distance education and offered the training I needed to develop our own program into a comprehensive and creative online distance delivery degree.

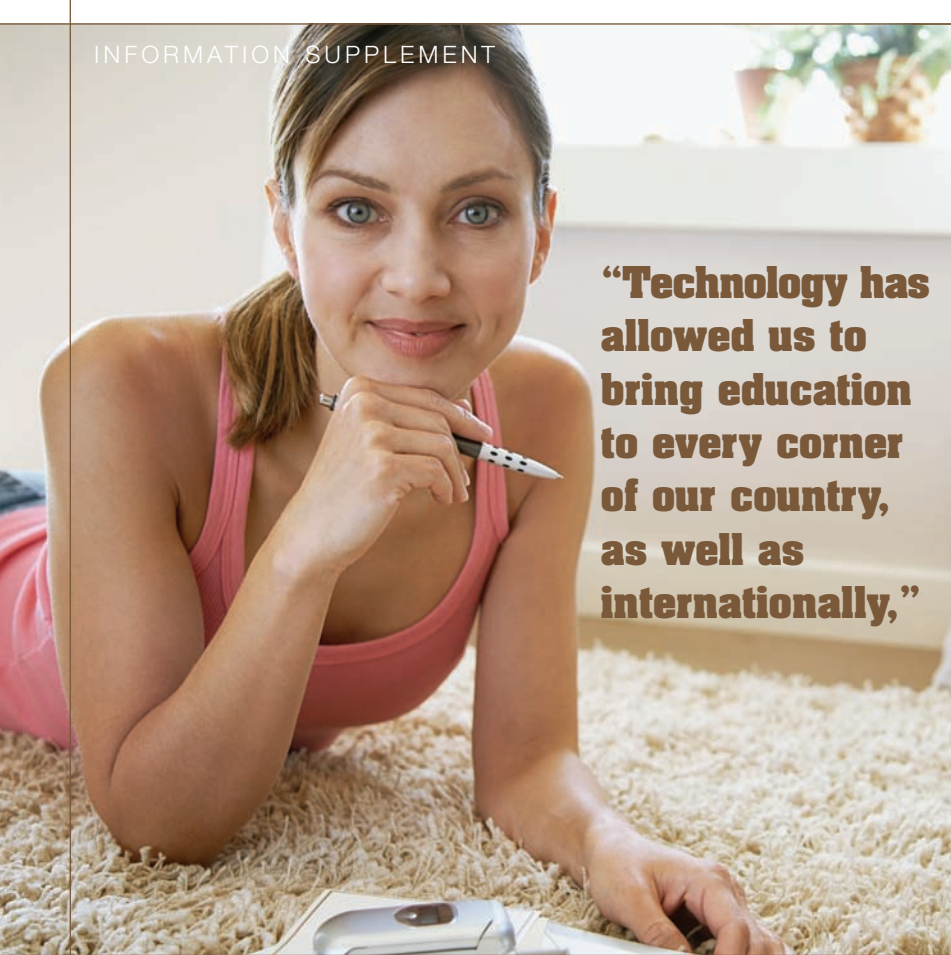
The idea that students and instructors could meet and interact online is not a dream anymore. My Athabasca University

Master of Distance Education degree continues to be one of the cornerstones of my research in visual and verbal learning styles and online learning, and it has opened the door to furthering my education at the PhD level.

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“Technology has allowed us to bring education to every corner of our country, as well as internationally,”

Fast Facts

- OntarioLearn.com, a partnership of 22 community colleges offering online education, has seen a 21% increase in students from 2004 to 2005.
- Since it was established in 2000, the Canadian Virtual University has grown from two to 12 member schools offering 2,500 courses and over 300 degree/ diploma/ certificate programs.
- eConcordia, created by Concordia University's foundation started with one course in 2000. Enrolments increase an average of 64% annually.
- The Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT) is Canada's leading trainer of apprenticeship with its 35 programs.

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Stay on top of your game

Succession planning for educational leaders is an area of growing concern. This prompted the University of Calgary, one of the country's most respected research universities, to launch Canada's first online doctoral program in 2003. Offered through the Faculty of Education, the four-year program allows students to continue in their careers while working towards a Doctor of Education (EdD). Only 20 students a year are accepted, and they are nurtured and encouraged to bond via a summer program during the first two years, says Dr. Charlie Webber, Associate Dean, Graduate Division of Educational Research. "These students become part of our international community, exchanging ideas and information. It's a global world and you need these networks to be at the top of your game."

Public Security and Terrorism is a timely new credit course from eConcordia. "The course covers more than the Middle East," says Patrick Devey, eConcordia's Director, Research & Development. "It goes all over the world and within our own borders, covering law enforcement, the governance side and how terrorism affects public policy." Another new course beginning in January is Global Conflict in the Middle East, taught by Middle East expert Henry Habib.

Seneca College in Toronto recently exported its expertise to Hong Kong with a post-graduate certificate program in Forensic Accounting. The part-time program is geared to industry professionals requiring technical skills and practical knowledge in investigative techniques, law and ethics, computer forensics, and research tools and practices. Delivered at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University by Seneca and PolyU faculty, it's a combination of face-to-face lectures and online learning. Says Cam McCaw, Seneca forensic accounting professor: "In today's sophisticated business world, fraud is increasingly seen as a trans-global issue. It's essential that expertise is shared to prevent, detect, and investigate financial wrongdoings."

There are also plans to grow internationally at eConcordia, with its "A Year at a Distance" program where foreign students can take their first year of studies online from home with added-value English instruction. After that, they may transfer to Concordia to complete their degrees.

Keep on learning

There's a strong link between continuing education and the betterment of communities, economically and socially, says Dr. Wes Koczka, President of the Canadian Association for University Continuing Education (CAUCE), and Dean of Continuing Studies at the University of Victoria. For instance, in British Columbia alone, continuing education programs from the four major universities generate some \$100 million a year to their local economies.

Skills training will remain a growth area, says Jamie Rossiter, President of the Canadian Association for Distance Education. "As the shortage of skilled workers intensifies, business and post-secondary institutes will end up working closer together on training," he says, pointing to companies already working with institutions such as NAIT. Online English and French language courses will also be in demand, he adds.

The interest in lifelong learning will continue unabated, boding well for distance education. "Technology has allowed us to bring education to every corner of our country, as well as internationally," Rossiter says.



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