



# HR Report Submission Guidelines

For students enrolled in AMCTO's Diploma in Municipal Administration (DMA)

Updated October 2022

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## Introduction

In order to apply the Employment Law & Human Resources (HR) Program toward AMCTO's Diploma in Municipal Administration (DMA), students must submit a 4000-word, analytical, research-based report on a topic relevant to the human resources business area of the municipal corporation. Any topic covered in the seven modules of the program is acceptable.

You must be enrolled in the DMA prior to submitting an HR report. If you are not sure whether you are enrolled, contact [education@amcto.com](mailto:education@amcto.com).

## Attendance and Grade Requirements

To gain credit for the HR program toward the DMA, you must:

- Complete all seven modules of the program.
- Submit a report proposal.
- Receive a grade of 60% or higher on the completed report.

A failing grade on the report (59% or lower) will result in failure to gain credit toward the DMA.

## Submission Timeline

There are two deadlines you need to meet: one for the report proposal, and one for the completed report.

- The **report proposal** is due approximately two to three weeks after the conclusion of Module 7. Your marker will provide feedback within two weeks of the proposal deadline (timeline may be longer over the December holiday season). The proposal needs to be approved before you can proceed to the report.
- The **report** is due nine weeks after the approval date of the proposal.

Refer to the "Program Outline and Schedule" area in the HR course in AMCTO Connect for the specific deadlines that apply to your cohort.

Submissions are due by 11:59 pm on the due date. Late submissions are subject to late penalties outlined in Section 3 of the Education Programs Policy, provided at the end of this document.

## How to Submit the Proposal and Report

Each HR cohort will have access to an HR Report course in the platform that provides one drop box for the proposal and another for the report.

For the proposal, use the template provided in AMCTO Connect.

Submit both the proposal and the report as Word documents.

**Note:** If you took the HR program prior to January 2022 and plan to submit the report in 2022 or 2023, you must inform AMCTO at [education@amcto.com](mailto:education@amcto.com). You will be added to an HR course in AMCTO Connect where you can submit your proposal and report.

## Topic Selection Tips

You are encouraged to look for a topic that helps you achieve a practical goal in your professional work, your municipality, or another municipality you are interested in. For example, you could select a topic that:

- aligns with one of your HR-related projects or performance objectives at work;
- addresses an HR problem or challenge in your municipality;
- fits in with your municipality/organization's strategic plan.

Regardless of what HR topic you choose, it should be connected to the municipal sector. For example, if your topic is succession planning, it is not sufficient to talk about succession planning in general. You need to connect and apply it to a specific municipal context.

## The gap analysis approach

The gap analysis approach is a useful way to formulate a topic. Ask the following questions:

- What is the current situation? Why does it need improvement?
- What is the desired situation? How will it help?
- Are there any barriers to achieving the desired situation?
- What might need to be done to overcome these barriers?

This can help you identify a topic that is focused and specific, yet significant enough to merit attention. Keep in mind that the report needs to present an analysis, not a description.

## Examples of Past Reports

A selection of past students' reports from the HR program and the Executive Diploma in Municipal Management are posted on the [Diploma Research Papers web page](#). This page is updated periodically.

## Developing the Proposal

### Problem statement and research objectives

Background reading and research is essential to putting together your proposal. Other researchers or municipalities may have already published work related to your topic that you can cite, and knowing what has already been done will help you gain clarity on how to focus your own topic. Talk to others in your municipality. Your peers and colleagues may be the best sounding boards for research ideas that you have at this stage.

This background research process will help you narrow down:

- A **problem statement** that describes the specific problem/issue you plan to address with your report, and why it is important in your municipality or the municipal context.
- A set of four to five **research objectives** you plan to achieve with your report. Your objectives should be clear, explicit, and intentional statements, such as:
  - "Analyze case studies in \_\_\_ to identify recommended practices for \_\_\_"
  - "Evaluate the effectiveness of \_\_\_ municipality's \_\_\_ plan based on \_\_\_"
  - "Compare \_\_\_ and \_\_\_ policies to determine if \_\_\_"
  - "Investigate whether the \_\_\_ strategy had a positive impact on \_\_\_"
  - "Determine how improved \_\_\_ can contribute to higher rates of \_\_\_"
  - "Use findings on \_\_\_ to make recommendations on how to improve \_\_\_"
  - "Interview \_\_\_ to understand the impact of \_\_\_"

Research objectives are closely tied to the problem statement. For example, if the problem you plan to address is that there are common misunderstandings of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* in your municipality, then your objectives may involve investigating the root cause and developing recommendations to improve understanding.

## Research methodology

The purpose of the Research Methodology section is to help you think through how you will achieve the research objectives.

For example, if one of your objectives is to analyze whether a certain HR policy has led to better or worse attendance among a particular group of staff in your municipality, consider the following:

- What information/data will you analyze?
- Does that information/data already exist?
- Do you have access to it?
- If not, are you able to collect the relevant information yourself?

By going through this process, you may start to discover valuable sources of information that will be useful to you well beyond the HR report. It can also help you identify what is and isn't realistic to achieve within the scope of the report or the timeline you have. If it's going to take you three months just to collect information in a certain way or from a certain source, then you may need to go with an alternate plan.

**Note:** If you plan to conduct interviews, surveys, or use other methods involving human subjects, you should take steps to gain their explicit consent and ensure their anonymity and confidentiality.

## Preliminary list of sources

As you are doing background research and developing your research methodology, remember to document all your sources in detail: the author/organization, title, date, link to the source, etc. It can be very time-consuming to retrace your steps later on. You'll also want this information for the bibliography in your report.

For the proposal, narrow down to a set of 10 preliminary sources. The final sources you use in the report can change as your research progresses.

Make sure to assess your sources for credibility. For example, you'll likely want to look at articles published by vendors of HR solutions with a critical eye. Consider whether the article is supported by evidence or research, and whether it is marketing material designed to sell a product.

## Writing the Report

### Report format

Your report should be structured as follows:

1. Title page. Include a formal title, your name, and AMCTO ID number.
2. Executive Summary. This explains to the reader in a nutshell what your report covers. An Executive Summary should summarize the content of your report, reinforce your findings, and the benefits if your recommendations are implemented.
3. Table of Contents
4. List of tables, charts and/or diagrams, if any
5. Scope and Methodology. Explain the scope of your report—what it covers, what it does not, and why. Explain how you conducted your research, what data you collected, and how.
6. Text of your report, divided into chapters or sections. Chapters/sections make it easier for the reader to grasp the message of your report.
7. Recommendations and Conclusion. A summary of the main findings of your report and your recommendations.
8. Bibliography, Reference List, or Works Cited, depending on the citation style you use.
9. Appendices, if any. Appendices contain reference information that might take away from the readability of the report if included in the main body—for example, questionnaires you used to collect data, or tools that help the reader implement the recommendations in your report. Appendices should be numbered or lettered (for example, Appendix 1 or Appendix A) to help readers locate them, and they should be listed in your table of contents.

The final report should cite at least eight relevant and credible sources.

Submit the report in Word format.

## Word count

Aim for approximately 4,000 words for the entire report, including all of the components listed above. If your report is far below 4,000 words in total, you may not have been thorough enough in your research and analysis and it will likely be reflected in your grade.

If needed, you can use up to 6,000 words in total, but make sure the additional words are there for a good reason. If the report exceeds 6,000 words you should edit it to be more concise. Points will be deducted for excess words, repetitive information, unnecessarily verbose language, or content that goes off track. Points will also be deducted if the report is significantly under the expected word count.

## Tips

- Identify and understand your audience. While it is obvious that your report is being submitted to a marker for academic purposes, the marker is not your audience. Identify who your audience is (for example, supervisor/council/senior management). Indicate the audience in the introduction of your report. Write your report keeping this audience in mind.
- Start by making an outline of what you want to say, even if the outline is only a list of the key points you want to cover and the order in which you want to cover them. An outline does not have to be detailed; it must, however, provide you with a sense of direction and order.
- Write a rough draft. Drafts should not take a lot of time. They should be written as quickly as possible and should record ideas about the topic. Then you have something you can shape and revise.
- Use a simple font. Don't use fancy or unique fonts—they are usually hard to read. Keep it simple.
- Use simple language where possible. Resist the urge to use complex words.
- Avoid writing in first person. Use third person format.
- Break up the text of your report where feasible with bulleted highlights, textboxes, graphics, etc. Create visual breaks to help the reader maintain interest in your report. These visual representations can also help enhance some of the key points in your report.
- Paginate all your pages and make sure the page numbering is correct in your table of contents.

## How to Cite a Source

A citation in a report or essay paper generally has two components.

### The first component

The first component is a citation of the source inserted immediately after a quote or a piece of paraphrased information, as shown in the following examples:

#### Example A

In spring 2021, the Survey on COVID-19 and Mental Health found that "one in four (25%) Canadians aged 18 and older screened positive for symptoms of depression, anxiety or posttraumatic stress disorder" and that "a greater proportion of Canadian adults screened positive for major depressive disorder in spring 2021 compared with fall 2020 (19% vs. 15%)" (Statistics Canada 2021).

#### Example B

There is a growing body of evidence that social isolation during the pandemic exacerbated pre-existing symptoms of depression. The Survey on COVID-19 and Mental Health, for instance, found that the number of Canadian adults who reported symptoms of mental health disorders in spring 2021 was noticeably higher than in fall 2020 (Statistics Canada 2021).

In Example A, the writer used two word-for-word direct quotes from the same source, so the quotes are enclosed in quotation marks and followed by a credit to the source. In Example B, the writer paraphrased information from the source—in other words, they communicated what was said by the source in a different way. The paraphrased information is also integrated into the writing to support a point that the writer was trying to make. In both cases, the writer included a citation of where the information came from.

These citations typically provide information such as the author's last name (or the authoring organization's name), the year of publication, and the page number if applicable. Here is an example where the source is a 2021 article by Amanda Tieber and Nicole Goodman, and the quoted phrase is located on page 12:

Municipalities that plan to use online voting should engage candidates well in advance of the election with "robust online voting education plans" (Tieber and Goodman 2021, 12).



## The second component

The second component provides the full details of the cited source in a bibliography, reference list, or works cited section, depending on the citation style being used. The entries are listed alphabetically and the details typically include the author's full name, the year of publication, the full title of the work, the location and name of the publishing company (if applicable), and the full URL if the source is on the web.

### For example:

Statistics Canada. 2021. "Survey on COVID-19 and Mental Health, February to May 2021." *The Daily*, September 27, 2021. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/210927/dq210927a-eng.htm>.

Tieber, Amanda, and Nicole Goodman. 2021. "Thinking of Moving Your Voting Online? Considerations for Candidates." *Municipal Monitor* Q1, 2021: 10–13. <https://municipalmonitor.ca/q1-2021>.

Waddell, Dave. 2021. "Study Highlights Magnitude of Manufacturing Job Losses." *Windsor Star*, September 16, 2021. <https://windsorstar.com/news/local-news/study-highlights-magnitude-of-manufacturing-job-losses>.

Moffatt, Mike P. 2021. *The Big Shift: Changes in Canadian Manufacturing Employment, 2003–2018*. Ottawa: Smart Prosperity Institute. [https://institute.smartprosperity.ca/sites/default/files/The\\_Big\\_Shift\\_Full\\_Report.pdf](https://institute.smartprosperity.ca/sites/default/files/The_Big_Shift_Full_Report.pdf).

Osborne, David, and Ted Gaebler. 1993. *Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector*. New York: Penguin Books.

## Citation styles

There are many different citation styles such as American Psychological Association style (APA) and Modern Language Association style (MLA). Some use parenthetical citations like the ones above, while others use footnotes.

For the HR report, we recommend using the guidelines provided by Kate L. Turabian's *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*. The examples above are based on this style. You can find many online resources on Chicago Style, so there is no need to purchase the manual.

A good starting point is to visit [chicagomanualofstyle.org/turabian](http://chicagomanualofstyle.org/turabian). Go to the "Citation Quick Guide" section. You'll notice there are two methods for citing sources in Chicago

Style:

1. Notes and Bibliography: This style uses **footnotes** within the body the paper, followed by a **bibliography** at the end of the paper that lists all the sources cited.
2. Author-Date: This style uses **parenthetical citations** within the body of the paper, followed by a **reference list** at the end with all the sources cited.

You can use either method. Choose one and use it consistently throughout the report.

To see examples of how footnotes, bibliographies, parenthetical citations, and reference lists are formatted in actual papers, go to the “Tip Sheets” section of the Turabian website provided above.

## Paraphrasing, Quoting, and Summarizing

A big part of writing the HR Report is about demonstrating your own understanding, interpretation, analysis, and application of the program content. To do so, you will often need to paraphrase and summarize source materials or use quotes selectively to support a point.

Many Canadian universities and colleges have online help guides and tips for students that are publicly accessible. For example, Ryerson University's [Hints to Avoid Academic Misconduct](#) may be useful if you need help understanding what commonly gets identified as plagiarism or other types of academic misconduct. Pay attention in particular to the following sections:

- Copying and Pasting
- Paraphrasing vs. Just changing a few words
- Quoting and Paraphrasing

### How to paraphrase and summarize

Read “[How to Paraphrase](#)” from Plagiarism.org to understand the difference between paraphrasing and quoting.

For a deeper understanding, see the following Trent University resource, which provides a thorough explanation of paraphrasing and summarizing, along with a step-by-step guide on how to paraphrase effectively: [Paraphrasing and Summarizing: Putting It In Your Own Words](#).

## Use your own words

Your report should be in your own words and represent your own analysis, except the parts where you are using a direct quote from a source. If you are using a word-for-word quote, it must be enclosed in quotation marks and directly followed with a citation. (If the quote is longer than five lines it can be formatted as an indented block quote.)

A simple regurgitation of the HR program materials or other source/reference materials will result in a low grade. Copying and pasting or repeating content verbatim (or close to verbatim) from any source material without citation is considered plagiarism, and will result in a grade of zero on the report.

## Citation Tools in Microsoft Word

Microsoft Word has features that can help you insert and format citations, bibliographies, and reference lists using a style of your choice.

See the following tutorial from Microsoft Support: [Add Citations in a Word Document](#).

## Academic Integrity Policy

AMCTO's policy on academic integrity is provided under Section 4 of the Education Programs Policy located at the end of this document. Read the policy. It is important to understand that:

- You are responsible for being informed about the definitions and consequences of academic misconduct
- If a marker finds academic misconduct in your report, the entire report will be given a grade of zero
- Ignorance of what academic misconduct is or what its consequences are is not an adequate defense

Please note that when you submit the proposal and report in AMCTO Connect, you will need to check a box that acknowledges the following statement:

I declare that this submission is my own work, except where I have acknowledged the use of the works of other people. I also acknowledge that it is my responsibility to be familiar with the definition of academic misconduct and the associated penalties outlined in Section 4 of AMCTO's Education Programs Policy.

## **Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

AMCTO recognizes that some students may require academic accommodations due to a disability or a barrier to participation in the learning environment. If you require an accommodation, please contact [education@amcto.com](mailto:education@amcto.com) to discuss your accommodation needs. AMCTO will assess requests on a case-by-case basis and work with you to determine a reasonable, individualized solution. AMCTO will maintain your confidentiality to the greatest extent possible, but where necessary, AMCTO staff will work with your marker, instructor, or other support persons to facilitate the accommodation plan.

## Grading Criteria

The marker will assess your report based on the following grading rubric.

Criteria	Point Levels				Grade
	0-2	3-4	5-7	8-10	
<b>Problem/Issue Identification and Relevance to Municipal Context</b>	<p>Problem/issue is not well identified or relevant to municipal context</p> <p>Minimal or no detail to rationalize topic importance and relevance</p> <p>Minimal reference to municipal context</p>	<p>Partially developed description of the problem/issue</p> <p>Relevance and importance to municipal context is partially developed</p> <p>Vague evidence or rationale for researching the topic</p>	<p>Well-developed description and explanation of the problem/issue</p> <p>Solid discussion and understanding of the relevance and importance of the topic to municipal context</p> <p>Evidence of an argument for researching the topic</p>	<p>Well-developed description and explanation of the problem/issue</p> <p>Sophisticated analysis of the topic with respect to its importance and relevance to municipal context</p> <p>Strong supporting arguments and rationale for researching the topic</p>	/10
	<b>0-2</b>	<b>3-4</b>	<b>5-7</b>	<b>8-10</b>	
<b>Scope and Methodology</b>	<p>Explanation of scope of research and how research was conducted is inadequate or not included in report</p>	<p>Scope of research, how research was conducted, how data was collected, and how it was analyzed is</p>	<p>Satisfactory explanation of scope of research, how research was conducted, how data was collected, and how it was analyzed</p>	<p>Well-developed explanation of scope of research, how research was conducted, how data was collected, and how it was analyzed</p>	/10

	Minimal or no connection between research methods and objectives of the report	explained but not clearly articulated Unclear connection between research methods and objectives of the report	Adequate connection between research methods and objectives of the report	Research methods effectively support the objectives of the report	
	<b>0-10</b>	<b>11-20</b>	<b>21-30</b>	<b>31-40</b>	
<b>Exploration of Problem/Issue and Analysis</b>	Exploration of problem/issue lacks most important details  Significant lack of analysis	Exploration of problem/issue lacks important details  Analysis does not adequately address the problem/issue or is insufficiently supported by research	Problem/issue well explored, but some important detail missing  Analysis is adequate but somewhat lacking in depth or support with research	Problem/issue explored thoroughly with few or no relevant details missing  Analysis is sophisticated, thoughtful and well supported by research	/40
	<b>0-2</b>	<b>3-4</b>	<b>5-7</b>	<b>8-10</b>	
<b>Recommendations</b>	Recommendations are absent or misaligned with the problem/issue	Recommendations are provided but are insufficient, unclear, impractical, or not supported by analysis	Recommendations provided based on analysis are adequate but somewhat lacking in clarity, practicality, or insight	Clear, practical, and sound recommendations are provided  Recommendations are well supported by analysis	/10

	<b>0-2</b>	<b>3-4</b>	<b>5-7</b>	<b>8-10</b>	
<b>Clarity &amp; Organization</b>	<p>Random or scattered ideas lacking focus</p> <p>Difficult to follow</p> <p>No apparent clarity or organization</p> <p>Ineffective or no use of headings and sub-headings</p>	<p>Some orderly progression of ideas and a general focus</p> <p>Some sections confusing or unrelated to main idea</p> <p>Ineffective use of headings and sub-headings</p>	<p>Clear, logical pattern of development in organization</p> <p>General focus and coherence</p> <p>Logical sequence of ideas</p> <p>Transitions between ideas consistently smooth and effective</p> <p>Some use of headings and sub-headings</p>	<p>Seamless pattern of organization</p> <p>Ideas flow naturally and smoothly, reinforce and support content</p> <p>Headings and sub-headings used effectively</p>	/10
	<b>0-2</b>	<b>3-4</b>	<b>5-7</b>	<b>8-10</b>	
<b>Use of References (including at least 8 sources)</b>	<p>Minimal or no use of references to support assertions</p>	<p>Ineffective use of references to support assertions</p> <p>Fewer than 8 sources used</p> <p>Citations are insufficient or inconsistent</p>	<p>Effective, but inconsistent, use of credible references to explore the problem/issue and support analysis</p> <p>Fewer than 8 sources used</p> <p>Sources are cited but somewhat inconsistently</p>	<p>Effective and consistent use of credible references to explore the problem/issue and support analysis</p> <p>At least 8 sources used</p> <p>Sources are accurately and consistently cited throughout the report and bibliography</p>	/10

	<b>0-2</b>	<b>3-4</b>	<b>5-7</b>	<b>8-10</b>	
<b>Grammar and Sentence Structure</b>	Significant grammar, sentence structure, spelling, or punctuation errors	Frequent but minor sentence structure, spelling, or punctuation errors	Some grammar, sentence structure, spelling, or punctuation errors	Minor or no grammar, sentence structure, spelling, or punctuation errors	/10
<b>TOTAL</b>					/100

**Reminders:**

- Follow the [word count guidelines](#). If your report is far below 4,000 words in total, you may not have been thorough enough in your research and analysis, and it will likely be reflected in your grade. If it exceeds 6,000 words you should edit your report to be more concise. You will receive a deduction of 3 points for every 500 words in excess of the maximum and every 500 words under the minimum.
- Repeating content verbatim (or close to verbatim) from any source without citation is considered plagiarism and will result in a grade of zero on the entire report. See [How to Cite a Source](#) and [Academic Integrity Policy](#).



# Education Programs Policy

(updated June 2022)

## **Purpose:**

As a Certified Educational Institution, AMCTO is a leading provider of adult-learning education programs for Ontario's municipal professionals and those who are pursuing a career in municipal government.

To maintain its reputation for offering exceptional quality education programs, it is necessary for the Association to establish, implement and enforce an education programs policy that governs the activities of all stakeholders associated with the delivery of these programs.

## **Policy:**

### 1. Scope

This policy applies to all students enrolled in any of the Association's individual educational programs or diploma programs and to any instructors, academic mentors, proctors, or markers associated with these programs.

### 2. Interpretation/Enforcement of Policy Provisions

Unless otherwise noted in a specific section of the policy, the responsibility for interpreting and/or enforcing the provisions of this policy rests with the Manager – Education Services. The decisions of the Manager – Education Services are final.

The Manager – Education Services may, at their discretion, delegate responsibility for the interpretation/enforcement of policy provisions to another AMCTO staff member. In the event of disagreement, decisions made by these delegated individuals can be appealed to Manager – Education Services.

### 3. Late Assessment Submissions

- i) For the purposes of this policy:
  - a. "Assessment" is an umbrella term for any type of graded work in an education program.
  - b. "Assignment" refers to all types of assessments *except* quizzes, tests, exams, and discussion forum posts. Assignments may require work to be completed

in a variety of forms including, but not limited to, essays, articles, briefs, proposals, journals, reports, projects, slide decks, and oral presentations.

- ii) All assessment submissions are due by 11:59 p.m. Eastern time on the stated due date, unless otherwise specified in the assessment instructions. Any assessments submitted after this time will be considered late.
- iii) It is the student's responsibility to communicate with their marker/instructor if and when the student is unable to meet a deadline.
- iv) Assignments submitted late without an extension approved by the marker/instructor or AMCTO will receive the following penalties:
  - a. Up to 24 hours late: Deduction of 10% of the maximum number of points for the assignment. For example, an assignment graded out of 100 points will receive a 10-point deduction. An assignment graded out of 40 points will receive a 4-point deduction.
  - b. More than 24 hours late: Deduction of 5% of the maximum number of points for each additional day of lateness. For example, an assignment submitted one-and-a-half days late will receive a total deduction of 15 points if the assignment is graded out of 100 points, and a total deduction of 6 points if the assignment is graded out of 40 points.
  - c. More than 7 calendar days late: The assignment will not be accepted and will receive a grade of zero.
- v) AMCTO does not guarantee markers/instructors will return late assignments to students at the same time as on-time assignments or before the writing of the exam (in courses where an exam is applicable).
- vi) Students may request a one-time extension from their marker/instructor to submit a late assignment without penalty due to reasons beyond their control, including illness, injury, or unplanned circumstances such as an accident, extreme weather event, funeral, or jury duty. Extensions are subject to the following conditions:
  - a. The request for extension must be submitted in writing by the student to the marker/instructor prior to the assignment deadline.
  - b. The duration of the extension must be agreed upon between the student and their marker/instructor.
  - c. An assignment that is not submitted by the agreed upon extended deadline will receive a grade of zero.
  - d. If it is past the original assignment deadline and it was not possible, due to reasons beyond the student's control, to contact the marker/instructor prior to the deadline, the student must contact the marker/instructor within 7 calendar days of the assignment deadline to make alternate arrangements.

- vii) Students must contact AMCTO to make alternate arrangements for late assignment submissions if:
  - a. The student requires more than one extension within a course due to reasons beyond their control;
  - b. The student requires an extension that falls beyond 7 calendar days from the deadline of the final assignment.
- viii) If a student does not submit an assignment within 7 calendar days of the deadline and does not communicate with the marker/instructor within those 7 days, the marker/instructor will assume the student has chosen to forgo the assignment and give a grade of zero.
- ix) Late submissions are not accepted for quizzes, tests, and exams that have a closing date and time. Quizzes, tests, and exams that are not submitted by the closing time will receive a grade of zero unless prior arrangements have been made with AMCTO.
- x) Requests for exam deferrals must be made in writing to AMCTO at least two weeks prior to the exam opening date and will only be considered under exceptional circumstances. Approval is not guaranteed. If approved, the student must complete a request form and schedule an alternate date with AMCTO. Exam deferrals are subject to an administrative fee.
- xi) Graded discussion forum posts (or discussion forum posts that contribute to a participation grade) with posting deadlines are subject to late penalties or point deductions specified in the course.
- xii) Students seeking research report extensions beyond 7 calendar days for the Executive Diploma in Municipal Management and the Employment Law and Human Resources Program must apply for a formal 3-month extension with AMCTO. Such extensions are subject to an administrative fee.
- xiii) Students can request waiver of the above stated consequences by submitting documented proof of exceptional circumstances. AMCTO may waive the consequences of a late submission of an assessment upon review of the student's request for a waiver.

#### 4. Academic Integrity

- i. Academic integrity is crucial to the quality and credibility of AMCTO's education programs. Students are expected to act with respect, responsibility, and honesty and demonstrate integrity, professionalism, and ethical conduct with behaviours such as:
  - a. Doing their own work;

- b. Giving credit to sources used in their work;
- c. Taking responsibility to review guidelines and protocols for course work, and seeking assistance when they do not understand the expectations;
- d. Refusing to assist with the academic misconduct of others;
- e. Respecting the privacy and intellectual property of other students, markers, instructors, and AMCTO (for example, by using course materials and class recordings for study purposes only and not sharing them without permission).

Behaviours such as plagiarism, cheating, impersonation, and falsifying information are considered academic misconduct, which is contrary to the ethical conduct expected of AMCTO students and municipal professionals. Academic misconduct is subject to a range of penalties outlined in this policy. The penalties depend on the severity, frequency, and nature of the misconduct.

- ii. For the purposes of this policy, academic misconduct is defined as the misrepresentation of any element of academic work, including (but not limited to):
  - a. Absent or inadequate citation of sources in submitted assessments. Students are expected to be competent in the treatment and citation of source materials. Those who are not familiar with citation practices are responsible for consulting the resources provided in their course materials and seeking advice from the Association when needed.
  - b. Plagiarism, which includes:
    - Copying words verbatim (or close to verbatim) from a source without quoting the words and/or crediting the source;
    - Submitting an assessment in which the majority of the words are copied verbatim (or close to verbatim) from sources authored by others, regardless of whether the sources are credited;
    - Representing someone else's work or ideas as one's own work, regardless of the format of the source or the submitted work (whether it is written work, a presentation, or multimedia such as an audio or video recording).
  - c. Self-plagiarism, which includes:
    - Submitting work for which credit has already been obtained in another course;
    - Submitting the same piece of work for more than one course without permission from the marker/instructor;

- Re-using one's own prior professional or academic work without citation and permission from the marker/instructor.
  - d. Use of unauthorized aids in an assessment;
  - e. Aiding and abetting the academic misconduct of another student;
  - f. Fabricating information about a source;
  - g. Fabricating research data;
  - h. Arranging for someone else to complete an assessment for the student;
  - i. Falsifying academic records or other information for the purpose of gaining admission or credit to a program;
  - j. Forging or falsifying AMCTO transcripts, certificates, diplomas, or documents;
  - k. Impersonating another person to access a course or interact with markers/instructors, other students, or AMCTO staff.
- iii. Students are responsible for being informed about the definitions and consequences of academic misconduct. Ignorance of what academic misconduct is or what its consequences will be, is not an adequate defense.
- iv. AMCTO markers, instructors, and staff are obligated to report suspected incidents of academic misconduct to the Manager – Education Services immediately.
- v. Academic misconduct found on a submitted assessment will result in a mark of zero on the entire assessment.
- vi. Academic misconduct discovered after an assessment has been graded will result in a rescinding of the original mark.
- vii. Academic misconduct discovered after a Certificate or Diploma has been awarded will result in the immediate rescinding of the Certificate or Diploma.
- viii. AMCTO will assess the nature and severity of each reported instance of academic misconduct. A minor first offence will generally be resolved through discussion between the student and the marker/instructor or AMCTO and the applicable penalties outlined in this policy. More severe offences (for example, significant plagiarism or submitting someone else's work as one's own), or repeated offences (two or more times) will result in a written warning letter from AMCTO in addition to other applicable penalties outlined in this policy. Such cases of academic misconduct thereafter will be escalated to the Association's Executive Director and may result in:
- a. Expulsion from the course(s) or program(s) in which the student is enrolled;
  - a. Prohibition against registering for AMCTO education programs;

- b. Disciplinary action according to AMCTO's Constitution and By-laws if the student is an AMCTO member.

A major offence involving falsifying information, forgery, or impersonation as described in section 4(ii) h, i, j, and k will be immediately escalated to the Executive Director and subject to the aforementioned penalties

- ix. Students may appeal an academic misconduct finding to the Manager – Education Services.

## 5. Grade Appeals

- i. Students who wish to raise questions regarding the assessment of their academic performance and allege error in the academic judgment of their work on the part of a marker, must first communicate directly with the marker/instructor to clarify the reason for the assigned grade. In the case where the marker is anonymous, the Association will solicit clarification from the marker and present it to the student.
- ii. Students must raise concerns regarding grade appeals no more than 30 days after the date of return of the work in question. The date of return is defined as the date on which the grade was conveyed to the student. After this period, no grade appeal requests will be considered.
- iii. If dissatisfaction continues, the student may submit an AMCTO Request for Re-Marking Form and the related administrative fee. The request must include a written, reasoned rationale for the appeal of the grade.
- iv. Upon receipt of a Request for Re-Marking Form, the Association will arrange for a review and remarking of the work in question by someone other than the original marker.
- v. The result of the re-marking will be final.
- vi. AMCTO will not consider requests from students to change their marker/instructor on the grounds of dissatisfaction, disagreement with, or lack of confidence in the marker/instructor's academic judgment.
- vii. If a student alleges injustice on grounds other than academic judgment, such as discrimination, conflict of interest, or harassment, the provisions of the Association's Respect in the Workplace Policy will apply.

## 6. Requirements for Academic Mentors for the Executive Diploma in Municipal Management

- i. Suitable academic mentors are municipal managers, clerks, treasurers, chief administrative officers or the deputy of these positions. Retired professionals who

once held these positions are also acceptable mentors. In addition, the principals and teachers of recognized post-secondary educational institutions can also be considered as academic mentors. AMCTO approval of the student's selected mentor will be necessary.

- ii. Under no circumstances can a member of a student's family or another student enrolled in the same course act as an academic mentor.
- iii. Despite the provisions of this section, an individual may not act as an academic mentor for a student, where the student has managerial or supervisory responsibilities that directly affect the individual proposed to serve as academic mentor.
- iv. The academic mentor, as a representative of AMCTO, is responsible for upholding the standards of education and professional development held by AMCTO.
- v. The academic mentor will negotiate their fee directly with the requesting student and report the outcome of those negotiations to AMCTO.
- vi. The academic mentor will guide the student develop their research topic, thesis question in order to submit a successful Research Application that ensures an appropriate and achievable level of difficulty, focus, and relevance.
- vii. The academic mentor will guide the student in creating and adhering to a progress schedule for their research.
- viii. The academic mentor will actively guide the student through the course of academic research and study by engaging the student in one-to-one conversation. The frequency of these meetings is to be determined by a consensus between the mentor and the student.
- ix. The academic mentor is responsible for further guiding the student's progress by recommending additional secondary source research materials that would help the student reach their goals. All of these additional resources are to be appropriately referenced.
- x. The academic mentor will review all drafts produced by the student, and critique the work on the basis of factual accuracy, clarity of thought, relevancy to stated thesis, grammatical correctness and insight.
- xi. The academic mentor will act as coach, encourager, and academic counsellor to the student throughout the period of their agreement.
- xii. Upon completion of the course, the academic mentor must not keep any of the student's work (in whatever form that work has taken) in their possession.
- xiii. Should the need arise, the academic mentor will have recourse to support and advice from AMCTO with regard to the mentor's duties and responsibilities.

## 7. Requirements for Markers and Instructors

- i. The provisions of this section apply only to courses that are operated directly through AMCTO and not through post-secondary institutions.
- ii. Persons who wish to be a marker or instructor for one of the Association's education programs must be approved by the Manager – Education Services. This approval must be obtained prior to the commencement of the course.
- iii. AMCTO course marker qualifications are as follows:
  - a. A minimum of five years' recent working and/or consulting experience in the municipal sector in an area that relates to the specific materials to be marked;
  - b. Excellent written, verbal, interpersonal, and communication skills;
  - c. Experience with the grading adult-learner assignments/exams is an asset.
- iv. AMCTO course instructor qualifications are as follows:
  - a. A minimum of five years' recent experience in municipal administration at the management level or equivalent professional expertise;
  - b. Excellent written, verbal, interpersonal, and communication skills;
  - c. Experience teaching or training adult learners is an asset.
- v. Preference will be given to individuals who are AMCTO members in good standing.
- vi. Instructors must provide the Association with updates regarding the status/progress of the course on an ongoing basis.
- vii. Instructors must use course materials and assessments provided by AMCTO. Instructors may use supplementary materials to enhance the instruction and discussion.
- viii. Instructors and markers must evaluate and grade assessments based on grading rubrics or criteria provided by AMCTO and must not alter the grading scheme. Instructors who wish to modify an assessment method, the assessment content, or the grading scheme for their classes must obtain approval from the Manager – Education Services prior to the opening of registration.
- ix. If a course is delivered through a municipality or other organization, the municipality/organization will be invoiced for each course by AMCTO. AMCTO, at its discretion, may require payment prior to the material being supplied.
- x. No individual serving as a course marker as of the date on which this policy is approved by the Board of Directors will be excluded from the opportunity to continue serving as a course marker, if they do not meet the municipal experience qualifications set out in this section.



## 8. Respectful Learning Environment

- i. AMCTO markers, instructors, students, and staff are expected to foster a respectful learning environment. Personal attacks and comments or behaviours that are threatening, obscene, offensive, or discriminatory will not be tolerated. AMCTO staff will take all reasonable steps to prevent and stop disrespectful behaviour.
- ii. AMCTO markers, instructors, students, and staff are encouraged to report issues of concern to the Manager – Education Services as soon as possible. The Manager – Education Services will assess the context, nature, and severity of the issue and seek a reasonable intervention or resolution. If necessary, the issue will be escalated to the Executive Director for resolution.
- iii. Discussion forum posts that do not meet the expectations of the Respectful Learning Environment policy will be removed by AMCTO staff.