



Municipal Administration Program (MAP) Unit 1: Introduction to Local Government Course Outline

Updated January 2023

Course Description

MAP Unit 1 traces the historical evolution of local government in Ontario, its adaptations to the pressures of growth and change, and the complex inter-governmental and international world in which local governments operate. You will gain insight into the challenges and opportunities that shaped their evolution since Confederation and how these have set the stage for today's municipal governments.

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

- Identify the characteristics, categories, and purpose of local government in its various forms
- Explain the structure and responsibilities of Ontario municipalities, as well as their legal, functional, and financial position in relation to the province and the federal government
- Recognize situations in which municipalities must manage the conflict between their administrative and representative roles
- Relate the historical evolution of local government to the challenges and opportunities that exist for Ontario municipalities today, and use this knowledge to examine the state of your own municipality
- Apply research and report-writing skills to your current or future work in local government

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

- Unit 1: Introduction to Local Government
- Unit 2: Municipal Administrative Structure
- Unit 3: Municipal Financial Management
- Unit 4: Management in the Municipality

MAP is one element of AMCTO's [Diploma in Municipal Administration \(DMA\)](#) and one pre-requisite for the [CMO or AMP professional accreditations](#).

Course Delivery Formats

AMCTO offers MAP in two formats: correspondence format and live instruction format through Zoom.

If you are in the correspondence format, you will submit assignments and contribute to discussions through discussion forums in the association's online learning portal, AMCTO Connect. An assignment and discussion schedule will be provided with the syllabus when the course opens in AMCTO Connect. Your work will be graded by a marker.

If you are in the Zoom format, you will also submit assignments through AMCTO Connect. However, you will also attend classes led by an instructor and you will need to adhere to the assignment schedule set by the instructor. The instructor will grade your work.

Grading Scheme

Assessment	Weight
Assignment 1: The Role of Local Government	15%
Assignment 2: The Provincial Government	20%
Assignment 3: The Municipal-Provincial Relationship	20%
Final Assignment: Challenges and Opportunities Report	30%
Discussion Contributions	15%

To successfully complete the unit, students must earn a minimum grade of 51% on the final assignment and an overall average grade of 60% or higher for the entire unit.

Students who do not achieve 51% but score at least 35% on the final assignment will be given the opportunity for a re-write. This re-write must take place on the date(s) chosen by AMCTO.

Students who score less than 35% on the initial final assignment or under 51% on the re-write will be required to re-register to take the course in its entirety.

Assignment Expectations

All assignments are written assignments. Assignments 1 to 3 comprise essays and council reports, and the final assignment is a report.

Please note that MAP is an academic program that requires time commitment for reading, research, and writing. In general, the assignments will require you to read the textbook and do additional research on the web to apply the content to real-world examples and issues.

If you use a source (such as a website, article, report, video, or any other source) in your work, it must be properly cited.

Further guidelines and expectations will be provided with the course syllabus and assignment instructions.

Academic Integrity

Students who enroll in AMCTO's education programs are expected to abide by the association's policy on academic integrity (section 4 of the Education Programs Policy). Plagiarism is considered academic misconduct and will result in a zero on the assignment. Repeated offences will lead to more severe penalties such as expulsion. It is the student's responsibility to be informed about the definitions and consequences of academic misconduct. The full policy will be provided with the course syllabus.

MAP Unit 1 Topic Outline

Chapter 1: The Basics of Local Government

- What local governments are and why they exist
- Classifications and characteristics of municipalities
- Agencies, boards, and commissions (ABCs): what they are and what they do
- Pros and cons of ABCs

Chapter 2: Provincial and Federal Governments

- The constitutional hierarchy in Canadian government
- The structure, function, and responsibilities of provincial and federal governments
- The process of enacting legislation in Ontario

Chapter 3: The Evolution of Local Government

- The historical pressures that triggered reforms to local government in Ontario
- The functional, structural, financial, and political adaptations to these pressures
- The current state of the local government structure that has resulted from the reform initiatives of the past

Chapter 4: The Municipal-Provincial Relationship

- The nature and significance of the subordinate constitutional position of local government
- How the provincial–local government relationship—both general and financial—has evolved over time

Chapter 5: Intergovernmental and International Relationships

- The impact of reforms to regional and county upper-tiers on lower-tier municipalities
- The federal–local relationship, both general and financial
- The effect of international economic developments, trade agreements, and agencies on local governments

Chapter 6: Challenges and Opportunities for the Future

- The impacts of past and present challenges on municipal operations
- Potential solutions and opportunities for the future of local governments
- Current realities and trends affecting all levels of government