



Municipal Accounting and Finance Program (MAFP) Unit 2: Integrated Financial Planning Course Outline

Updated May 2023

Course Description

MAFP Unit 2 builds on Unit 1 by exploring planning, strategy, and policy in Ontario municipal finance, with a focus on how financial planning ties to budgeting, asset management, treasury management, and growth management. Although municipalities each have their own unique approaches to financial planning, the unit introduces current and emerging best practices. The assignments are based on examples from different municipalities to help participants connect concept to practice.

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

- Identify connections between long-term financial planning and other types of planning within a municipality
- Review a municipality's financial plans, strategies, and policies to understand how it addresses different aspects of financial management and legislative requirements
- Outline the stages of a municipal budgeting process and recognize common factors that influence budget decisions
- Explain the legislative requirements for asset management and the key components of asset management plans and policies
- Identify functions within treasury management and the principles that guide responsible handling of investments and debt
- Recognize different types of strategic policy decisions that municipalities must make to support long-term growth and financial sustainability

The MAFP certificate of completion will be issued upon completion of two units:

- Unit 1: Introduction to Municipal Accounting and Financial Reporting
- Unit 2: Integrated Financial Planning

MAFP can be taken on its own or as part of AMCTO's Diploma in Municipal Administration (DMA).

Course Delivery Formats

AMCTO offers MAFP in two formats: correspondence format and Zoom format.

- If you are taking the course in **correspondence format**, you will complete the assigned readings and submit assessments according to a given schedule. There are no classes to attend. Your work is graded by a marker.
- If you are taking the course in **Zoom format**, you will attend interactive online classes led by an instructor in addition to completing readings and assessments. Your work is graded by the instructor.

Peer-to-peer discussions are an important part of MAFP, regardless of the format. All course materials, assessments, and discussion forums are provided through AMCTO's online learning platform, AMCTO Connect.

A syllabus with assessment due dates is provided when the course opens each term.

Grading Scheme

Assessment	Weight
Reading Review Quizzes (5 quizzes total)	15%
Chapter 1 Assignment: Integrated and Long-Term Planning	15%
Chapter 3 Assignment: Asset Management	15%
Chapter 4 Assignment: Treasury Management	15%
Chapter 2 and 5 Discussion Contributions	15%
Final Assignment: Comparative Analysis	25%

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. The first three assignments are short-answer format, and the final assignment is a report.

Please note that MAFP 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 connect the concepts to real-world examples and issues. In addition to using the textbook, you will need to do research on the web and review documents produced by Ontario municipalities to support your responses.

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.

Discussion Expectations

MAFP Unit 2 includes discussion forums that are designed for participants to share perspectives and observations related to the course topics. They are opportunities to learn from the experiences of different municipalities as well as professionals who work in a variety of roles in local government.

If you are taking the course in correspondence format, you will make discussion contributions with written posts in discussion forums. If you are taking the course in Zoom format, you will contribute to discussions both in class and in discussion forums. Further guidelines and expectations will be provided with the course syllabus.

Academic Integrity

Students 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.

MAFP Unit 2 Topic Outline

Chapter 1: Introduction to Integrated Financial Planning

- The legal framework for long-term financial planning
- Elements of an integrated planning framework for the public sector
- The benefits, objectives, and features of a long-term financial plan and how it connects to other plans in the municipal setting

Chapter 2: Municipal Budgeting

- The purpose of a budget

- The legal requirements governing the preparation of the annual municipal budget
- Differences between capital and operating budgets and the links between them
- The steps typically followed in the annual budgeting process
- The advantages of different approaches to budgeting and budget formats

Chapter 3: Asset Management

- What asset management is and how it ties into long-term planning
- The state of municipal public infrastructure and the importance of asset management
- Legislative requirements for asset management policies and asset management plans
- Elements of an asset management framework
- The key components of asset management plans and processes

Chapter 4: Treasury Management

- The various functions of treasury operation and management
- The legislative framework for municipal investment and borrowing
- Factors relevant to the measurement of a municipality's debt capacity
- Legal documentation related to debenture issues
- Factors to be considered in relation to the issuance of debentures

Chapter 5: Financial Strategy and Policy

- What a growth management strategy entails, and the key growth funding tools available to Ontario municipalities
- The relationship between asset management, capital budgeting, and long-term financial planning
- Different approaches to capital funding, capital financing, and debt management
- Strategic financial policies and strategies that support council priorities and incorporate integrated financial planning elements