

Extended Education Strategic Plan 2022 – 2025

Council Approval – June 21, 2022
Review Date – March 2023



University
of Manitoba

A strategic plan represents the collective vision of where a unit is going, while acknowledging where it has been. It helps provide a general compass direction of future state framed within the principles and priorities deemed to be important at a point in time. The process of achieving consensus on this unified vision is difficult – as the exercise requires reducing the multi-dimensionality of purpose, duties, challenges, and opportunities, onto a single plane. If one is successful, one needs to reconcile the fact that the plan will not, by design, be deterministic. Rather the plan will need to be an adaptive tool, guiding a general charted course - imbued with ambition that will require fine scale adjustments along the way.

The Division's new plan represents a significant achievement - addressing our identity while marking the start of a new era. We are not alone on this journey. Never in the modern history of humanity has the confluence of consequences heralded such an unprecedented age of uncertainty (act two of the Anthropocene). The impacts will be felt across all corners of modern society. Within Higher Education and more specifically University Continuing Education (UCE) there appears to be a greater societal imperative regarding our collective purpose. How we respond and to what extent we (as UCE units) rise to the challenge, I suppose, remains to be seen. Here's what we do know in the present tense: change and uncertainty will result in a disentangling of previous steady states. Old economic frameworks are being dismantled giving way to a new age of work which will likely widen the chasm of equitable access for much needed education and training. How we will manifest the universal principles of Lifelong Learning to empower individuals and deliver authentic inputs into labour market recovery and development amid growing concerns of inflation and stagnation – is perhaps the *raison d'être* of this document. In a time when “skills attainment” is the new commodity of knowledge being sold in the form of a plethora of credentials – a plan like this is a critical and much needed compass.

This plan was initiated under the guidance and leadership of David Mandzuk, following a series of internal and external intensive consultation sessions. The plan was formalized and approved in the early days of my term as Acting Dean (early 2022). Moving forward the Division will commit to bringing into reality our collective vision as we navigate new and uncharted waters.



Rod Lastra, Ph.D.
Acting Dean, Extended Education

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
1. PREAMBLE	4
2. PILLARS	5
3. MISSION	5
4. VISION	5
5. PILLARS, GOAL STATEMENTS, & ACTION ITEMS	6
Pillar 1 – Learners	6
Pillar 2 – Programs	7
Pillar 3 – Indigenous Engagement	8
Pillar 4 – Partnerships	9
Pillar 5 – Profile	10
APPENDIX A. GLOSSARY	11

1. PREAMBLE

The Division of Extended Education (EE)'s mandate has focused on delivering university continuing and extension education to traditional and non-traditional learners since 1949. We have leveraged our experience with lifelong learning to develop innovative and transformative non-degree and degree programming in partnership with industry, community organizations, government, Indigenous communities, University of Manitoba (UM) faculties, and other post-secondary institutions.

As a hub for lifelong learning, we provide programming for diverse audiences with unique needs. We offer:

- 1) **Part-time flexible programs** to domestic students, many of whom are interested in upskilling or reskilling;
- 2) **Short-term, full-time intensive program packages** to international students who are interested in developing additional skills in a global and professional context upskilling and reskilling;
- 3) **The UM Access Program** which provides holistic support to students who are Manitoba residents (with preference given to Indigenous peoples, residents of Northern Manitoba, low-income earners, and newcomers) and have demonstrated personal, academic and/or financial needs;
- 4) **General Studies**, an option that allows working and aspiring professionals, students working on faculty and school entrance requirements, visiting students from other institutions, and older adults to take degree credit courses from various faculties and schools on a course-by-course basis; and
- 5) **Preparatory courses** for students wishing to strengthen their Math and Chemistry skills before they enroll in university-level courses in these areas.

After an external review of the unit was conducted in 2019, we launched a strategic planning process in the fall of 2020. Under the leadership of the Acting Dean, project manager, colleagues from the Office of Change Management and Project Services, along with members of the Dean's Advisory Team (DAT), we met regularly and conducted a series of focus group discussions with stakeholders that included current students, alumni, central and academic unit representatives, program coordinators, program assistants, and contract instructors. Although a strategic plan can have multiple audiences, this strategic plan is intended primarily for faculty and staff within Extended Education and our partners across the University. Given that there is terminology that is specific to the field of continuing education, we have included that terminology in the plan; however, for those less familiar with some of the terms, we have included a **Glossary** in Appendix A.

This process has been instrumental in shaping our mission and vision of how to position EE in the next three years. It has also helped us to identify five pillars that support the foundation of our strategic plan. Those pillars are:

2. PILLARS

- 1) **LEARNERS:** Inspiring learner engagement and success through responsive programming and a positive learner experience
- 2) **PROGRAMS:** Building programs for upskilling, reskilling and social innovation
- 3) **INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT:** Designing experiences to enhance Indigenous engagement
- 4) **PARTNERSHIPS:** Exploring ways to strengthen partnerships and engage community
- 5) **PROFILE:** Creating opportunities to enhance Extended Education's reputation within the University and beyond

3. MISSION

The mission of the Division of Extended Education is closely aligned with the University within the context of a lifelong learning framework. This is accomplished by developing and delivering accessible, flexible, transformative, and innovative programs in a manner that not only produces responsive non-degree curricula but also delivers supports for a diverse learner population. Its core focus is offering courses/programs that address workforce development, international education, professional development, higher education, as well as post-secondary access and supports focused on Indigenous learners.

4. VISION

Extended Education will elevate its lifelong learning strategy and build on its experience in continuing education to enhance social mobility programming within Manitoba and across Canada.

Within Extended Education, we will take strategic actions to build a stronger internal community by:

- Working to remove barriers and bottlenecks so that we can engage more nimbly;
- Becoming more collaborative by breaking down silos;
- Affirming our commitment to ensuring program quality and timely review;
- Continuing to look for new ways to enhance communication across areas; and
- Seeking out and paying attention to diverse voices on complex issues.

Within the University of Manitoba, we will be the hub for alternative credentialing and for cross-faculty, non-degree collaboration by:

- Working with faculty representatives to develop non-degree programs that align with the UM's new Certificate and Diploma Framework;
- Becoming better known as the natural partner for other academic units at the UM, enabling the expansion or development of a broader institutional lifelong learning strategy; and
- Collaborating with the Provost's Office about how to ensure that quality non-degree programs are developed and reviewed on a regular basis.

Within Manitoba, we will strive to be recognized as a provider of high-quality continuing and extension education programming. EE will be committed to enhancing partnerships with industry, government, and Indigenous communities. This will be accomplished through the creation of innovative labour market-focussed programs that centre on upskilling, reskilling, and social innovation.

Across Canada and globally, we will be recognized for our role in contributing to the function and purpose of university continuing and extension education in the 21st century. We will also help foster excellence in lifelong learning scholarship and programming theory within the Canadian and global higher education context.

5. PILLARS, GOALS STATEMENTS, & ACTION ITEMS

The five pillars that support the foundation of our strategic plan include the following goals and action items:

PILLAR 1 - LEARNERS: Inspiring learner engagement and success through responsive programming and a positive learner experience

The Division of Extended Education focuses on providing traditional and non-traditional learners with quality responsive programming and a positive learner experience with a focus on learner success. To achieve this goal, the Division will:

Goal statements	Action items
<p>Provide quality programming that responds to the needs of diverse learners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage current learners, alumni, instructors, faculty and industry in the development and review of our programs. • Conduct an analysis of who our current learners are to gain a better understanding of their learning needs and aspirations. • Provide contract instructors with training, professional development, and ways to integrate Indigenous perspectives to enhance the learner experience.
<p>Foster learner engagement and a sense of community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and provide engagement opportunities for current learners and alumni. • Leverage the knowledge and experience of alumni members and contract instructors to provide value added learning to learners' experiences.
<p>Provide a holistic learner experience from the time of recruitment to program completion and beyond.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a framework for the Extended Education learner experience to ensure learners are able to meet program completion timelines. • Identify barriers to program completion and develop strategies to minimize those barriers. • Leverage existing learner supports and resources by partnering with central units like Student Affairs and potentially with providers in the community. • Increase transparency about Extended Education and University of Manitoba policies and procedures. • Explore additional funding/sponsorship models to increase access to upskilling and reskilling programs for domestic/Indigenous students. • Seek new funding sources for Access students.

PILLAR 2 - PROGRAMS: Building programs for upskilling, reskilling and social innovation

The Division of Extended Education offers relevant and responsive programming that provides opportunities for upskilling, re-skilling, and social innovation. Its programming addresses current and emerging learning needs of industry, community, and lifelong learners. Wherever possible, it leverages the expertise of University of Manitoba faculties. To achieve this goal, the Division will:

Goal statements	Action items
<p>Create innovative programs driven by current and emerging labour market and community development needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deepen our awareness of programming trends and needs by adopting a business development approach as we engage with faculties, industry, and communities. • Create effective and efficient decision-making processes for the development of new programs to enable us to become more strategic and nimble. • Strengthen capacity to develop new programs. • Foster the development of short-cycle programming such as micro-credentials. • Develop a framework for the academic implementation of digital badges to articulate and validate learning outcomes. • Increase experiential learning opportunities and develop a sustainable model for supporting them.
<p>Engage in frequent and systematic course and program review and renewal.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create efficient and strategic review processes for courses and programs. • Assess the value proposition of existing credentials (e.g., Letters of Accomplishment). • Expand capacity and develop a procedural framework for implementing changes to courses and programs. This will include maintaining an inventory of current course and program enrolment trends. • Enhance our ability to collect and analyze quantitative and qualitative feedback on existing courses and programs through consistent and effective feedback mechanisms. • Expand pathways for learning by identifying potential stackable credentials and laddering opportunities. • Establish a working group, led by the Indigenous Lead, to identify courses where Indigenous content and perspectives will provide value.

PILLAR 3 - INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT: Designing experiences to enhance Indigenous engagement

The Division of Extended Education will continue to support Indigenous learners through the Access Program and will continue contributing to the University's efforts to support Indigenous achievement and engagement and work towards Reconciliation. To this end, the Division will:

Goal statements	Action items
<p>Integrate Indigenous perspectives across curriculum and programming.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify courses/programs that can be enhanced through the integration of Indigenous perspectives.
<p>Enhance pathways to access post-secondary education.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish stronger relationships with First Nations, Metis and Inuit education directors to review pathways to post-secondary programming and enhance student supports.
<p>Increase the number of Indigenous staff and contract instructors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a targeted recruitment, marketing and hiring strategy to increase the number of Indigenous faculty and staff. • Prioritize the hiring of Indigenous contract instructors to teach in EE's non-degree programs.
<p>Enhance collaborative partnerships both internally and with industry and community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage the Indigenous Lead in program development meetings. • Collaborate with faculties and other units across campus to engage in course and program development initiatives. • Collaborate with other Indigenous Leads on campus to offer support and share resources. • Enhance partnership with the Office of V.P. Indigenous to ensure consistency and alignment with UM strategic priorities and initiatives.

PILLAR 4 - PARTNERSHIPS: Exploring ways to strengthen partnerships and engage community

The Division of Extended Education will actively pursue opportunities to develop joint programming in innovative, high-demand areas with other academic units and industry and community partners. To achieve this goal, the Division will:

Goal statements	Action items
<p>Strengthen existing partnerships and develop new partnerships with other academic units at the university.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify programming areas that will invite collaboration from a wide cross-section of academic units. • Establish “partnership leads” within EE to build internal capacity and facilitate partnership development. • Together with the Provost’s Office, identify various academic and financial measures that will encourage collaboration across academic units.
<p>Strengthen existing external partnerships and develop new partnerships in emerging fields.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make stronger connections in a variety of sectors in Manitoba including the tech sector and explore joint programming ideas. • In collaboration with the Indigenous Chamber of Commerce, explore and develop new partnership opportunities. • Formalize the establishment of advisory committees for new and existing industry partnerships.
<p>Build a stronger connection to Extended Education alumni.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen our connection with the University’s Alumni Association to ensure that EE has a presence at Homecoming and other university-wide events. • Partner with External Relations and the Registrar’s Office to maintain EE’s presence at any convocation-related events. • Strengthen our engagement with alumni members, work with the University’s Alumni Association and the Office of Institutional Analysis to create a more inclusive and robust database. • Develop a strategy for alumni engagement to ensure that lifelong learning remains front and centre.

PILLAR 5 - PROFILE: Creating opportunities for enhancing Extended Education’s reputation within the University and beyond

The Division of Extended Education will position itself as the natural partner for faculties interested in developing non-degree courses/programs and for industry partners, community and government interested in reskilling and upskilling programs for their employees. To achieve this goal, the Division will:

Goal statements	Action items
<p>Clearly define EE’s role and function as a bona fide university continuing and extension unit within the University of Manitoba.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address upskilling and reskilling needs that respond to emerging societal and higher education trends. • Engage in scholarly activities that help shape provincial and national understanding on issues related to the future of higher education and workforce development. • Highlight the UM by being actively involved with professional associations such as CAUCE and UPCEA. • Create greater understanding and adoption of digital credentialing technologies to enable the academic use and proper implementation of advanced digital platforms (e.g., open badges).
<p>Build on EE’s long history as one of Western Canada’s oldest continuing and extension units.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be seen as the lifelong learning hub at the UM – using its national standing as a university continuing education unit to inform best practices. • Highlight EE as a subject matter expert on alternative and/or micro-credentials, flexible delivery, prior learning, and non-traditional learners. • Highlight the Access Program as a model for providing holistic supports and guidance in working with Indigenous students and those who face multiple barriers.
<p>Build capacity to enable open and accessible admission and registration to alternative credential programs across campus.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Function as the registration hub for alternative (non-degree) credential programs across campus.

APPENDIX A:

GLOSSARY

- **Lifelong learning:** Lifelong learning is considered to be one of the unifying concepts underlying adult education. The term itself was coined in the post-industrial era prior to its wider adoption in adult education theory in the early 1900s. During this period, lifelong learning simply described learning as a continuous process where knowledge or skills were acquired in formal (e.g., accredited post-secondary education), non-formal (e.g., work-based training, workshops, seminars), and/or in-formal (e.g., life/work experience) settings. UNESCO (2022) acknowledges that lifelong learning is a human right and as such learning should remain accessible in order to ensure “individual fulfillment, social cohesion, and economic prosperity”. The aim is on improving equity through educational opportunities that foster “skills for life, work and learning”.
- **Alternative credentialing:** Alternative credentialing refers to the certification of formal learning by accredited or non-accredited providers (e.g., certifications, citations) and excludes comprehensive traditional degree programs (i.e., associate, undergraduate, masters, or doctorate degree programs). At the UM, this includes all non-degree credentials, such as Letters of Accomplishment/Participation; Micro-Certificates and Certificates; Micro-Diplomas and Diplomas; Graduate Micro-Diplomas.
- **Micro-credentials:** The term micro-credential has been used since 2013, although the concept of certified short-cycle education and training can perhaps be traced back to the late 1990s (e.g., IT certification programs). Currently, there is no national or international definition that could be used as a universal standard. That said, there is a growing consensus that micro-credentials are recognized as being accessible and short in duration, and designed using micro-learning pedagogical theory with a focus on discrete skills (informed using a skills-qualification framework). Micro-credentials often build on pre-existing knowledge (i.e., upskilling) or provide entry level skills training (i.e., reskilling). Learning must be assessed and validated by the educational provider. A credential and/or open badge is often issued upon completion. Within Canada, the United States, Europe and Australia, micro-credentials are being used to address skilling needs as identified by industry and government; societal needs as identified by community organizations; or increase post-secondary participation and attainment in the form of embedded or stand-alone micro-credentials associated with existing degree programs.
- **Open (digital) badges:** Open badges are a digital platform that recognize attainment of learning in any context, in-formal, non-formal, or formal learning. Within a university context only the latter applies. In the U.S., open badges were and are still being used synonymously with micro-credentials. All open badges are embedded with metadata that articulates attained learning in a post-secondary setting and typically reflects learning attainment associated with a course of study. Learning outcomes are validated and authenticated by the educational provider. Since 2012, open badges have primarily been designed to be portable and follow open standards. They can also be used alone or be part of a wider digital ecosystem (e.g., embedded within a digital wallet or part of a blockchain).
- **Stackable and Embedded credentials:** Stackable and Embedded credentials are short credentials that can be stacked or embedded within macro-credentials such as Certificates or Diplomas. For example, in a stackable credential model, the completion of three micro-credentials could result in a macro-credential (e.g., three 36-contact-hour micro-credentials equals one 108-contact-hour certificate). Alternatively, micro-credentials could be part of a larger more comprehensive credential. In this case the shorter credential would be considered embedded within the larger credential (e.g., three 36-contact-hour micro-credentials would be embedded within a 200-contact-hour certificate). There is a grey area between stackable and embedded, often contingent on how university Senate policies and regulations are interpreted and implemented.

- **Laddering credentials:** A short credential is considered to ladder towards another larger credential if transfer credit and/or Senate articulation rules exist. For example, a block transfer credit model could be used within an existing degree program to transfer in a predetermined number of credit hours from a short non-degree credential (e.g., completion of a micro-credential could transfer in 9 credit hours towards the completion of a degree program).
- **Upskilling and Reskilling:** Although upskilling and reskilling are often used synonymously (i.e., providing skills that better align with 21st-century job qualifications), they do have distinct definitions. Upskilling refers to enhancing existing knowledge and skills obtained through formal education, whereas reskilling refers to shifting existing knowledge whilst acquiring in-demand skills in a new domain (i.e., viable and desirable job transition). Within industry, upskilling of workers is seen as of means of enhancing productivity, while reskilling is seen as an opportunity to innovate.
- **Skills gap:** Skills gap refers to a disconnect between qualifications employers are seeking and the skill sets that exist in the population. Currently, digital and technology skills are driving a wedge in this gap. To be more precise, advances in technology, artificial intelligence, and automation are changing the nature of work. These impacts are being realized in diverse sectors from advanced manufacturing to health care. Some have stated that this increasing emphasis on digital and technology-focused skill requirements is an extension of the third industrial revolution which was ushered in by the emergence of the personal computer. Others have stated that this evolution has given rise to a new era of automation and artificial intelligence – the so-called fourth Industrial revolution or Industry 4.0.
- **Social mobility programming** – Social mobility programming refers to programs that are designed to improve the socio-economic standing of an individual.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

- **UPCEA** – University Professional and Continuing Education Association
- **CAUCE** – Canadian Association for University Continuing Education



University
of Manitoba

Extended Education **Strategic Plan 2022 – 2025**