

2025-30 Strategic Mandate Agreement (SMA4)

LAMBTON COLLEGE
1457 LONDON RD
SARNIA, ON
N7S 6K4

**Ministry of Colleges, Universities,
Research Excellence and Security**



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SMA4 Interim Agreement – To be Signed by March 31, 2025

2025-30 Strategic Mandate Agreement

Between

Lambton College

And the

Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security

Signed for and on behalf of the Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security:

Signed for and on behalf of Lambton College by:



David Wai
Deputy Minister

Rob Kardas
President & CEO

April 3, 2025
Date

March 28, 2025
Date

This agreement focuses on accountabilities for funding related to the 2025-30 Strategic Mandate Agreements (SMA4), including corridor funding under the Enrolment Envelope, performance-based funding under the Differentiation Envelope, and STEM allocations. Special purpose/other institutional grants are not included as part of this agreement.

Once signed, the institution commits to work with the Ministry to finalize institutional technical appendices by June 2025. The signed technical appendices will be appended to this agreement. The ministry will conduct a thorough review of the postsecondary funding model ahead of SMA4 Year 3 (2027-28).

The agreement may be amended in the event of substantive economic or policy changes that would significantly affect the SMA deliverables. Any such amendment would be mutually agreed to in writing, dated, and signed by both parties. SMAs, including this agreement, represent a joint expression of the parties’ intentions and expectations. SMAs do not establish a contractual relationship or legally enforceable obligations.

Preamble

Strategic Mandate Agreements (SMA) are bilateral agreements between the ministry and the province's publicly assisted colleges and universities. SMAs are a key component of the Ontario government's accountability framework for the postsecondary education system. This agreement is between the Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security and Lambton College.

SMA4 will run through the fiscal period from April 1, 2025 to March 31, 2030 and has been designed to advance three strategic objectives:

- 1) Improve education and economic outcomes of students,
- 2) Improve outcomes for communities, and
- 3) Support sector stability and accountability.

SMA-Related Funding

Through SMAs, the ministry incentivizes stable domestic enrolment and accountability for student and community outcomes. The ministry agrees to fund a particular enrolment level of 3,506.91 Weighted Funding Units (WFU).

A portion of this SMA funding is linked to performance on 8 metrics. SMA4 Year 1 (2025-26) and Year 2 (2026-27) will maintain the 25% proportion of total ongoing operating funding for performance-based funding that was reached in SMA3 Year 5 (2024-25). The proportion is expected to grow by 5% starting in SMA4 Year 3 (2027-28) reaching 40% by SMA4 Year 5 (2029-30). This proportion may be revised based on the results of the funding model review prior to SMA4 Year 3 (2027-28).

Total "SMA-Related Funding" in SMA4 will be broken down into:

1. Enrolment Envelope: based on a corridor midpoint measured in WFUs to incentivize stable domestic enrolment; (for details see Appendix 1)
2. Differentiation Envelope (which includes Performance-Based Funding): to support accountability for student and community outcomes (for details on eight SMA4 metrics see Appendices 2-3); and
3. Priority Funding: STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) Funding related to the additional weighted enrolment units added to the corridor midpoint dedicated to the continued delivery and enhancement of STEM programs.

Additional STEM WFUs and Adjusted SMA4 Midpoints

For SMA4, the ministry will provide funding to support the continued delivery and enhancement of STEM programs at Ontario's publicly assisted colleges and universities. This funding supports institutions to deliver high-quality STEM programs to

prepare students for in-demand careers and maintain a robust pipeline of STEM graduates in key industries such as advanced manufacturing, artificial intelligence and the life sciences.

Funding will be implemented through an adjustment to corridor midpoint for the five-year period of SMA4 and will be subject to the annual reporting requirements as outlined in Appendix 4 “STEM Accountabilities”.

Lambton College will have 21.07 WFUs added to its existing corridor midpoint for STEM enrolments. The resulting SMA4 midpoint will be 3,506.91 WFUs. With a per WFU funding rate of \$4,150, this represents a total of \$87,441 in STEM funding allocation for each year of SMA4.¹

For communication purposes, the ministry and the institution agree that this funding represents support for **17.07 STEM learners per year** at the institution, based on the ministry’s historical funding rates.²

Accountability Requirements

For the duration of SMA4, five per cent of an institution’s total operating grant will be linked to accountabilities that will support the government’s objective of improving sustainability, and increasing accountability, efficiency and transparency in Ontario’s postsecondary education system.

This five percent excludes time-limited funding and will be assessed annually as part of SMA4.

Accountabilities will focus on timely reporting of the identified data and activities and annual attestation related to key activities. For the full list of reporting accountabilities, please see Appendix 5 “Accountability Requirements”.

¹ Funding for 2028-29 and 2029-30 to be confirmed by the ministry through future multi-year planning exercises.

² To estimate the number of STEM learners supported, the ministry first estimated the institutional number of weighted enrolment units resulting from the STEM funding using the standard funding rates. The ministry then converted the number of weighted enrolment units to Full-Time equivalent (FTE) for universities and to fall full-time headcounts for colleges using historical enrolment to weighted enrolment units ratios. The ratios were calculated based on the average of the latest five years of data (2019-20 to 2023-24) and were institution-specific. Data is derived from USER and CSER enrolment submissions.

SMA4 Technical Appendices – To be Signed by June 16, 2025

Signed Between

INSTITUTION NAME

and

Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security

Signed for and on behalf of the Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security:

Signed for and on behalf of **INSTITUTION NAME** by:

David Wai
Deputy Minister

Name
Title

Date

Date

Appendix 1. Enrolment Corridor Adjustments

Corridor Ceiling: The ceiling will remain at 3% above the corridor midpoint and will be held constant for **INSTITUTION NAME** at **XXX** WFUs throughout the SMA4 cycle.

Corridor Floor: The corridor floor for SMA4 Year 1 (2025-26) will be lowered by institution's historical 3-year average STEM enrolment³ lagged by 2 years and will be set for **INSTITUTION NAME** at **XXX** WFUs. In SMA4 Year 2 (2026-27), the corridor floor will be lowered by an updated rolling average of STEM enrolment⁴ if the institution submits a domestic enrolment target and meets this target.

INSTITUTION NAME's domestic enrolment target for the 2026-27 corridor floor adjustment is set at **X** WFUs.

If institution elects not to add a domestic enrolment target

***INSTITUTION NAME** has confirmed that it will not set a domestic enrolment target for Fall 2025, and will forgo potential corridor floor protection in SMA4 Year 2 (2026-27).*

The corridor floor will revert to the SMA3 level in SMA Year 3 (2027-28) to Year 5 (2029-30).

INSTITUTION NAME	SMA3	SMA4				
	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
Corridor Ceiling	X	X	X	X	X	X
Corridor Midpoint	X	X	X	X	X	X
Corridor Floor	X	X	X	X	X	X
Enrolment Target		TBA				

Note: Institutions that do not establish domestic enrolment targets will not see their corridor floor adjusted in Year 2 (2026-27), reverting to the SMA3 corridor floor

The ministry will review the corridor and performance-based funding model prior to SMA4 Year 3 (2027-28) which may result in changes to the corridor midpoint level in 2027-28. If no changes are communicated as part of that review, the corridor midpoint, ceiling and floor will be extended through to 2029-30 as outlined above.

³ For SMA4 Year 1 (2025-26) the relevant years for the Corridor STEM adjustment will be 2019-20, 2021-22, and 2022-23.

⁴ For SMA4 Year 2 (2026-27) STEM enrolment rolling average will be based on 2021-22, 2022-23, and 2023-24 data years.

Appendix 2. Performance-Based Funding and SMA4 Metrics

Performance-Based Funding in SMA4 is provided based on targets set for eight metrics in two priority areas:

- Student and Graduate Outcomes: 1) Graduate Employment Rate in a Related Field; 2) Graduation Rate; 3) Graduate Employment Earnings; and 4) Experiential Learning
- Community and Economic Outcomes: 5) Community/Local Impact; 6) Institutional Strength/Focus; 7) Investment and Innovation-Related; and 8) Institution-Specific.

These metrics are largely consistent with those used in SMA3, ensuring stability and predictability. They are also broad enough to recognize institutions' individual strengths and distinct mandates, as well as the role institutions play in their local communities and economies. Narratives below are intended to describe how an institution's activities and initiatives support metric performance.

Appendix 3a. Institutional Profile

The ministry recognizes the importance of supporting a differentiated system and building on institutional strengths to enhance efficiencies in the postsecondary education sector.

The Institutional Profile is intended to describe how an institution's mission and strategic goals support the priority areas of the Ontario government, as identified in this agreement.

Maximum 500 words

Appendix 3b. Metric Narratives

Student and Graduate Outcomes

Metric Name: Graduate Employment Rate in a Related Field

Metric Definition: Proportion of domestic graduates employed full-time in jobs related to their program of study, six months after graduation

Data Source: College Graduate Outcomes and Employer Satisfaction Survey (GOES)

Narrative

Maximum 300 words

Metric Name: Graduation Rate

Metric Definition: Proportion of domestic and international students who graduated within a certain period of time

Data Source: College Graduation Rate Tool (CGRT)

Narrative

Maximum 300 words

Metric Name: Graduate Employment Earnings

Metric Definition: Median employment earnings of domestic graduates, two years after graduation

Data Source: T1 Family File tax data and Postsecondary Student Information System (PSIS) (linked via Statistics Canada's Education and Labour Market Longitudinal Platform (ELMLP))

Narrative

Maximum 300 words

Metric Name: Experiential Learning

Metric Definition: Proportion of domestic students who had experiential learning/work-integrated learning opportunities as part of their program of study
Data Source: Graduate Record File (GRF)/College Graduate Outcomes and Employer Satisfaction Survey (GOES)
Narrative
Maximum 300 words

Community and Economic Outcomes

Metric Name: Institutional Strength/Focus

Metric Definition: Proportion of domestic enrolment in an institution's self-identified program area(s) of strength to the total institutional domestic enrolment
Area of Strength to be added by institution
Data Source: College Statistical Enrolment Report (CSER)
Narrative
Maximum 300 words

Metric Name: Community/Local Impact

Metric Definition: Proportion of domestic enrolment in the population of the city (cities)/town(s) in which the institution is located
Data Source: College Statistical Enrolment Report (CSER)
Narrative
Maximum 300 words

Metric Name: Investment and Innovation Related

Metric Definition: to be determined
Data Source: Data source to be added by ministry
Narrative
Maximum 300 words

Metric Name: Institution-Specific

Metric Definition: to be determined
Data Source: Data source to be added by institution
Narrative
Maximum 300 words

Appendix 4. STEM Accountabilities

Projections of Domestic STEM Enrolment

Below is **INSTITUTION NAME**'s projection of domestic STEM enrolment over the SMA4 period as of **XXX**, 2025.

INSTITUTION NAME	STEM Enrolment (Domestic Full Time Head Count)					
	Preliminary	Projections*				
	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
STEM	X	X	X	X	X	X

*Projection set as of **XX, XX**, 2025.*

INSTITUTION NAME will strive to meet or exceed STEM enrolment as projected above.

2024-25 Corridor Recoveries One-time Suspension (if applicable)

For 2024-25, the ministry will suspend funding corridor recoveries for institutions that have fallen below their corridor floor. For **INSTITUTION NAME**, waived recoveries of \$ **XXX** is equivalent to **XXX** funded enrolments in STEM programs. The funding is intended to be used to retain this level of STEM enrolment.

Accountability Requirements for Additional STEM WFUs

To ensure accountability for STEM funding, the ministry will monitor annually institutional data on STEM enrolment, number of STEM programs and STEM program graduate outcomes. **INSTITUTION NAME** will be asked to review and add to data populated by the ministry through the SMA4 annual evaluation process, provide a narrative explanation of key trends related to STEM enrolments, programs, and labour market demand and attest on working with the ministry to develop and report on commercialization metrics through the SMA4 Annual Evaluation Process.

Institutional Data and Outcomes

- STEM enrolment (count in HCs and share of total)
- STEM programs (count and share of total)
- Employment Earnings of STEM domestic graduates two years after graduation
- Graduation Rate of STEM domestic graduates
- Graduate Employment Rate of STEM domestic graduates (six months after graduation)
- Experiential Learning in STEM programs

Narrative

Institutions will include an annual narrative with an explanation of how STEM funding supports the continued delivery or enhancement of STEM programs at the institution, such as maintaining enrolment and program offerings or providing more experiential learning (EL) opportunities. The narrative will include the following elements:

- The list and breakdown of the use of funds by expenditure categories to support STEM program costs: salaries and wages, student services, program delivery, equipment / supplies, communications, and technology / IT services. Unused funds that were not used to support STEM costs in these areas may be recovered by the ministry in the following year.
- If STEM enrolment is less than projected in a given SMA4 year or there is a reduction in STEM programming, the institution must provide an explanation and outline its plan to rebuild STEM enrolments.
- Supporting information on STEM faculty/staff and STEM cost per student:
 - For example, STEM faculty and staff: number and share to total of full-time faculty and administrative staff in STEM program departments.
 - STEM program cost per student⁵: estimate of total, direct and indirect, costs per student to deliver STEM programs at the institution.

Attestation Related to Commercialization Metrics

Since 2023-24, the ministry has been requiring institutions to submit qualitative annual commercialization plans (ACPs) outlining their activities. Starting in 2025-26, reporting will shift to include a standard set of quantitative IP and commercialization metrics. To align the work being done on ACP system performance metrics with SMA4, encourage sector adoption of commercialization metrics and drive overall improvements for Commercialization and STEM programs, **INSTITUTION NAME** will commit annually to:

SMA4 Year 1 (2025-26) and Year 2 (2026-27): Engaging with the ministry, as called upon, to refine the ACP metrics and streamlining the list of commercialization metrics to a shortlist of common sector metrics that may be appropriate for inclusion as a performance-based funding in a future SMA cycle. Institutions will also attest to submitting their ACPs, meeting the expectation of the ministry for information and data requests and working to resolve data collection issues.

Remaining years of SMA4: Attesting to reporting the agreed-upon commercialization metric(s) annually through the ACP.

Note that commercialization metrics will not be linked to funding in SMA4, unless an institution has chosen a commercialization metric as one of its 8 metrics tied to performance-based funding.

⁵ Direct costs include at minimum instructional costs related to salaries, wages and benefits (for both academic and support staff such as lab technicians or teaching assistants) and other direct costs as deemed necessary (e.g., materials and supplies; furniture and equipment purchases). Indirect costs include the costs of space, student services, administration and other campus-wide costs. Methodology details will be confirmed during the SMA4 Annual Evaluation Process in further consultation with the sector.

Failure to report on the STEM accountabilities elements as described above, may trigger a recovery of STEM funding by the ministry in the fiscal year following the Annual Evaluation process.

Appendix 5. Key Data Reporting and Attestations

For the duration of SMA4, five per cent of an institution's total operating grant will be linked to accountabilities and if any one element of the accountability requirements is not met, five per cent of total operating funding will be deducted. This deduction will operate on a slip-year such that if accountabilities are not met in 2025-26, for example, the funding reduction will take place in 2026-27.

This five percent excludes time-limited funding and will be assessed annually as part of SMA4.

Data Reporting

INSTITUTION NAME will submit on time the following annual reports:

- Audited Enrolment Report by June 30 of each year
- Graduate Reports by September 15 of each year
- Financial Accountability
 - Audited Financial Statements by June 15 of each year
 - Budgets by June 30 of each year

The accountability relates to the fiscal year of submission, not the year of underlying data. For example, in SMA4 Year 1 (2025-26) the accountability will relate to the submission of audited enrolment for 2024-25 which is due on December 31, 2025.

Attestations

INSTITUTION NAME will attest annually on:

1. Research Security:

SMA4 Year 1 (2025-26): As called upon, institution will attend meetings and collaborate with the ministry to develop the approach for institutional research security plans. Institutions will also submit disclosure of their international agreements as requested by the Ministry.

Remaining years for SMA4: Requirements for the annual attestation will be communicated to the sector each year in March in advance of the next fiscal.

2. Efficiency Metrics

SMA4 Year 1 (2025-26): Institutions will agree to engage with the ministry, as called upon, to develop efficiency metrics that use consistent and verifiable data and benchmarks that will help find efficiencies in the sector. The institutions also attest to meeting expectations of information requests communicated, or to work with the ministry to resolve any issues with respect to data collection.

Remaining years for SMA4: Requirements for the annual attestation will be communicated to the sector each year in March in advance of the next fiscal.

3. Skills and Competencies Assessment

SMA4 Year 1 (2025-26): As called upon and in collaboration with MCURES, institution will participate in a sector Working Group related to scoping and developing an implementation approach for the skills and competencies assessment.

Remaining years for SMA4: Requirements for the annual attestation will be communicated to the sector each year in March in advance of the next fiscal.

The ministry will confirm attestation requirements through each Annual Evaluation cycle ahead of the next fiscal year.

Accountability requirements implementation will be monitored through Metric and Data Workbooks and will be confirmed by the institution during the SMA4 Annual Evaluation Process.

If an institution anticipates delays in submitting any of the reporting items, the institution must request an extension with a reason for delay and the institution's proposed new submission date by emailing the ministry contacts as listed in the technical manual, in advance of the deadline. Ministry approval of the extension is required.

Appendix 6. Projected Financial Information – To be Populated by Ministry

Funding Envelope ⁶	SMA3 Year 5 (2024-25)	SMA4 Year 1 (2025-26)	SMA4 Year 2 (2026-27)	SMA4 Year 3 (2027-28)	SMA4 Year 4 (2028-29)	SMA4 Year 5 (2029-30)
1. Enrolment Envelope	\$	\$ (% change)	\$ (% change)	\$ (% change)	\$ (% change)	\$ (% change)
2. Performance-Based Grant ⁷	\$	\$ (% change)	\$ (% change)	\$ (% change)	\$ (% change)	\$ (% change)
3. Differentiation Envelope (Remainder) ⁸	\$	\$ (% change)	\$ (% change)	\$ (% change)	\$ (% change)	\$ (% change)
Total SMA-Related Funding (1+2+3)	\$	\$ (% change)	\$ (% change)	\$ (% change)	\$ (% change)	\$ (% change)
Performance-Based Grant At Risk ⁹	\$	\$ (% change)	\$ (% change)	\$ (% change)	\$ (% change)	\$ (% change)
Accountability Funding At Risk ¹⁰	N/A	\$	\$ (% change)	\$ (% change)	\$ (% change)	\$ (% change)

In addition to “SMA-related funding” the ministry also provides funding via Special Purpose Grants (SPGs) and the Postsecondary Education Sustainability Fund (PSESF).

⁶Further details on calculations are available in Ontario’s Performance-Based Funding Technical Manual. Funding data presented for SMA4 Years 1-5 are estimates based on the 2024-25 final operating grant totals. This table will be updated on the Ontario.ca Open Data portal. Updates in Years 3-5 will be based on a broader funding review, decisions on performance-based funding proportions, and metric performance. As the SMA-related funding does not include SPGs, the ministry holds these figures constant, for modelling purposes, based on the latest final operating grant totals.

⁷The Performance-Based Grant has been capped at the system-average annual proportion of 25% in SMA4 Year 1 and Year 2, with potential increase by 5% each year up to 40% in Year 5, pending a broader funding review ahead of Year 3.

⁸ The Differentiation Envelope (Total) has been kept at the system-average proportion of 60% of total operating funding in SMA4 Year 1 and Year 2 (proportion for Years 3 to 5 pending broader funding review ahead of Year 3). The Differentiation Envelope (Remainder) in this table reflects Differentiation Envelope without the Performance-based Funding Grant.

⁹The total amount of performance-based grant at risk is five per cent of the total performance-based grant due to the Stop-Loss Mechanism, which caps metric losses at five per cent.

¹⁰ Five per cent of an institution’s total operating funding would be clawed back if the institution does not meet all accountability requirements.

Appendix 7. Data, Targets, and Results – To be Populated by Ministry

Metric	2025-26 APT	2025-26 Actual	2026-27 APT	2026-27 Actual	2027-28 APT	2027-28 Actual	2028-29 APT	2028-29 Actual	2029-30 APT	2029-30 Actual
Graduate Employment Rate in a Related Field										
Graduation Rate										
Graduate Employment Earnings										
Experiential Learning										
Community/ Local Impact										
Institutional Strength/ Focus										
Investment and Innovation Related										
Institution- Specific										

Note: "2025-26 Actual" refers to the year in which the evaluation takes place and not (necessarily) the year of the data. Data for out-years will be updated on Ontario.ca and in the SMA4 Dashboard in Open SIMs every year after the completion of Annual Evaluation Process.

Appendix 8. Weighting Strategy – To be Populated by Ministry and Institution

Metric	2025-26 Weighting (Min xx%, Max xx%)	2025-26 Notional Allocation	2026-27 Weighting (Min xx%, Max xx%)	2026-27 Notional Allocation	2027-28 Weighting (Min xx%, Max xx%)	2027-28 Notional Allocation	2028-29 Weighting (Min xx%, Max xx%)	2028-29 Notional Allocation	2029-30 Weighting (Min xx%, Max xx%)	2029-30 Notional Allocation
Graduate Employment Rate in a Related Field	%	\$	%	\$	%	\$	%	\$	%	\$
Graduation Rate	%	\$	%	\$	%	\$	%	\$	%	\$
Graduate Employment Earnings	%	\$	%	\$	%	\$	%	\$	%	\$
Experiential Learning	%	\$	%	\$	%	\$	%	\$	%	\$
Community/Local Impact	%	\$	%	\$	%	\$	%	\$	%	\$
Institutional Strength/Focus	%	\$	%	\$	%	\$	%	\$	%	\$
Investment and Innovation Related	%	\$	%	\$	%	\$	%	\$	%	\$
Institution-Specific	%	\$	%	\$	%	\$	%	\$	%	\$

This table is for illustrative purposes and will include weightings and notional allocations for only 2025-26. Data for out-years will be updated on Ontario.ca every year after the completion of the Annual Evaluation Process.