ADMISSIONS POLICY

NORTHWESTERN **POLYTECHNIC**

ADMISSIONS POLICY			
Effective Date	December 10, 2021	**Policy Type**	Academic
Responsibility	Registrar	**Cross-Reference**	Advanced Standing Recognition of Academic Achievement Course Access
Approver	Board of Governors	**Appendices**	Appendix 1 – Admissions Procedure Appendix 2 - Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure
Review Schedule	3 years		

1. **Policy Statement**

    1.1. This policy governs admission processes, categories, conditions, and requirements.

2. **Background**

    2.1. Admission requirements for all Ministry-approved programs are designed so that applicants have the necessary preparation to enable them to succeed in their programs of study.

    2.2. NWP admits qualified applicants in a timely and expeditious manner by setting transparent admission requirements and applying those requirements in a fair and equitable manner.

    2.3. Where appropriate, access to programs will be restricted to best qualified applicants who satisfy established admission criteria.

3. **Policy Objective**

    3.1. To apply fair, equitable, and consistent admission practices that follow clear and transparent procedures and guidelines.

4. **Scope**

    4.1. This policy applies to all prospective students applying for admission into a credit program at NWP.

5. **Definitions**

    5.1. **"Academic Requirements"** refers to specified high school or post-secondary grades, courses, or credentials required for admission as formalized and recognized through the Ministry of Education.

    5.2. **"Admission"** refers to the decision of the Polytechnic to accept an applicant based on the process of applying to and providing the necessary documentation for consideration for entry to a program or course of studies.

    5.3. **"Admission Criteria"** is a term used to encompass both academic and non-academic requirements that are considered in assessing the suitability of an applicant for admission.

Admission criteria articulates prior knowledge or skills necessary for a student to be successful in a chosen program,

5.4. "**Advanced Credit** or **Transfer Credit**" refers to granting academic credits for courses taken elsewhere at a recognized institution. Advanced credit is granted at the course level for students in a specific program.

5.5. "**Advanced Standing**" refers to granting generic academic credits for courses taken elsewhere at a recognized institution.

5.6. **"Competitive entrance requirements"** refers to requirements that are higher than the specified minimum high school and/or post-secondary grades, courses, or credentials required for admission.

5.7. **"Competitive Selection"** refers to an admission process for programs that evaluate criteria beyond minimum academic requirements and, in some cases, require an additional screening component such as an interview, situational judgement assessment, or career assessment.

5.8. **"Conditional Admission"** refers to an offer of admission to NWP or to a program of choice contingent upon the applicant meeting the requirements necessary for full admission. Full admission may be contingent upon fulfilling outstanding academic and/or non-academic requirements.

5.9. "**Domestic Student**" is an applicant who present valid documentation confirming their legal status as Canadian citizens, permanent residents, or students with refugee status.

5.10. **"English Language Proficiency Requirement"** refers to specialized assessment exams or credentials required to demonstrate English language proficiency.

5.11. **"Enrolment Target"** refers to the number of domestic and international seats the Polytechnic aims to fill in a program in any given term.

5.12. **"Equivalency Tests"** refers to assessment tests that may be used to determine whether an applicant meets an academic entrance requirement for admission.

5.13. **"First-qualified, First-offered selection"** refers to an admission selection process for programs that accept minimally qualified applicants on an ongoing basis until the program enrolment target is met.

5.14. **"Full offer of admission"** refers to an offer granted to qualified applicants who have completed all application requirements.

5.15. "**International Student**" is an applicant who is not a domestic student and who meets the guidelines established for international student studying in Canada.

5.16. **"Matriculated"** refers to a student becoming active in a program, most often by paying a tuition deposit. A student must matriculate into a program to enrol in courses and apply for advanced credits.

5.17. "**Mature Student**" is an individual who is 21 year of age or older on the first day of classes and may be eligible for alternate Program Admission Requirements as outlined in the Polytechnic Calendar.

5.18. **"Minimum entrance requirements"** refers to the minimum requirements that all applicants must meet to gain admission to a program.

5.19. **"Non-academic requirements"** refers to requirements that are intended to support, supplement, or otherwise enhance the assessment of the suitability of an applicant for admission to a program. This may include documentation, certification, or performance standards achieved and demonstrated beyond identified academic requirements (e.g., career investigation, performance on an interview, audition, portfolio, First Aid certification).

5.20. **"Prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR)"** refers to a process of assessing the knowledge and skills acquired through life experience, work experience, non-credit courses, or training for advanced credits or in lieu of entrance requirements.

5.21. **"Program"** refers to a group of related courses that is formally approved by Alberta's Ministry of Advanced Education or NWP's Board of Governors.

5.22. **"Program of Choice"** refers to the program or programs in which an applicant applied for admission.

5.23. **"Provisional admission"** is a method of admission that allows students who lack specific entrance requirements to enter a program and complete the missing requirements in the first term or first year of their program. The student must successfully clear all provisions outlined in their offer letter to progress in the program.

5.24. **"Provisional entrance requirements"** refers to the requirements an applicant must meet to gain admission to programs that offer a provisional admission pathway.

5.25. **"Recognition of Prior Learning"** is a broad umbrella concept which includes three types of assessment processes that are used to evaluate the learning that people have acquired in their lives. The three processes for assessing and recognizing these forms of learning are transfer credit, credential recognition, and prior learning assessment and recognition.

6. Guiding Principles

6.1. Applicants are admitted to NWP based on admission criteria established in the Admission Procedures.

6.2. Admission criteria may be defined in areas such as academic requirements, non-academic requirements, competitive entrance requirements, English language proficiency requirements, and criteria specific to a program or School.

6.3. Prior learning, whether achieved through formal, non-formal, or informal learning and experiences, may be recognized for both advanced credit and admission.

6.4. In order to be eligible for admission into a NWP program, applicants must meet the published requirements or assessed equivalences for their program of choice:

6.5. Applicants are responsible to review and understand all requirements necessary for admission to their program of choice, including application deadlines for submission of requirements, payment of tuition deposit, enrolment, and tuition payment.

6.6. Applicants are admitted according to both first-qualified first-offered and competitive methods.

6.7. Applicants wishing to appeal their admission status may initiate an appeal procedure through the Office of the Registrar.

6.8. Admissions decisions are the responsibility of the Registrar's Office.

    6.8.1. The Dean of a program area has authority for granting admission criteria waivers in exceptional situations in consultation with the Registrar.

6.9. Admission Selection will be offered on a first-qualified, first-admitted basis.

    6.9.1. Departments may propose admission rules that establish extraordinary admission priorities for program selection. These changes to admission selection will be proposed by the Department and reviewed by the Department's Dean and recommended by the Curriculum Committee to Academic Council for final approval.

6.10. Quota Programs

    6.10.1. Some programs have quota set and approved by government, and/or Academic Council. Applicants who qualify for admission after a quota program is full will be waitlisted for the program and selected as per 6.5.

6.11. Refused Admission

    6.11.1. Applicants who are not admitted into the program of their choice will be told the reason and will be offered assistance in choosing another program.

    6.11.2. General regulations notwithstanding, the Polytechnic, at its discretion, may refuse admission to any applicant.

6.12. Refusal of Admission for Reasons of Danger

6.12.1. NWP reserves the right to admit applicants on a conditional basis or to refuse admission to an applicant who may represent a danger or risk of danger to students, staff, or property.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Stakeholder	Responsibilities
Board of Governors	• Approve and formally support this policy
Academic Council	• Recommend and formally support this policy.
Vice-President, Academic and Research	• Review and support this policy. • Oversee implementation of policy and associated procedure..
Registrar	• Responsible for implementation of this policy • Ensure procedures are followed • Lead admission appeals
Deans and Department Chairs	• Make recommendations for amendments as required. • Work consistently with the policy.
Employees	• Work consistently with the policy.

8. Exceptions to the Policy

8.1. Exceptions to this policy must be approved by the Registrar.

9. Inquiries

9.1. All inquiries to this policy can be directed to the Office of the Registrar.

10. Amendments (Revision History)

Approved by Academic Council: March 8, 2001
Revised and Approved by Academic Council: May 8, 2003
Revised and Approved by Academic Council: February 10, 2005
Revised and Approved by Academic Council: February 14, 2006
Revised and Recommended by Academic Council: November 25, 2021
Approved by the Board of Governors: December 10, 2021

Appendix 1 – Admissions Procedure

1. **Entrance Requirements**
    1.1. Program chairs, in consultation with the Dean and the Registrar, review the minimum, competitive, and provisional entrance requirements every year to ensure that they are relevant and clear. All changes must be made based on evidence and be approved through the Polytechnic's Curriculum Committee.
    1.2. To minimize negative impact to prospective students, any increase to the minimum entrance requirements must be approved at least 30 months before the effective academic year. All other changes to the entrance requirements must be approved at least 18 months before the effective academic year.
    1.3. Once admission has opened for an academic year, the minimum entrance requirements cannot be changed.

2. **Admissions Process**
    2.1. Applicants must provide accurate information on their applications and submit all required supporting documents. Applicants who provide false information or do not submit the required documents will be denied admission. If falsified documentation or misrepresentation is discovered after the student was admitted, the student may be required to withdraw from the program.
    2.2. Applicants must meet published entrance requirements to be eligible for admission into their program of interest. These may include minimum and competitive requirements.
        2.2.1. An applicant may be admitted to a program based on Mature Student Status. The criteria for a student to be admitted to a program under this status will be specified by the Department and published in the Polytechnic Calendar.
        2.2.2. Some programs have designated seats held for applicants meeting specific criteria. Criteria for designated seats must be clearly stated and students admitted into a designated seat will be required to meet the minimum qualifications for the program. Unfilled designated seats will return to general usage seats three (3) months before the course or program start date.
    2.3. Applicants must abide by all posted deadlines. Their application will be cancelled if they do not comply with all posted deadlines.
    2.4. Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition may be considered in place of the entrance requirements for admission.
    2.5. In programs where the demand far exceeds the capacity of the program, applicants may be required to meet competitive entrance requirements. Competitive entrance requirements are specified by the program and include but are not limited to higher grades or interview requirements to gain admission.
    2.6. The Office of the Registrar is the only office authorized to issue an offer of admission.
    2.7. All applicants will receive a conditional admission to NWP.
        2.7.1. Conditional offers of admission to NWP are issued to all applicants and are not program specific. Applicants with a conditional offer of admission to NWP will receive further information from the Office of the Registrar related to admission into their program of choice or an alternative program. Conditional admission to NWP does not guarantee conditional admission into the applicant's program of choice.
    2.8. Applicants who qualify for admission into a program of choice will receive a conditional, full, or provisional offer of admission.
        2.8.1. Conditional offers of admission into a program of choice are issued to qualified applicants who have outstanding entrance requirements in progress or who have not submitted all required official documents. Applicants with a conditional offer of admission into a program of choice must fulfill all conditions by the specified

deadlines to receive a full offer of admissions. Failure to do so will result in cancellation of the application.

    2.8.2. Full offers of admissions are issued to applicants who have completed all entrance requirements.

    2.8.3. Provisional offers of admission are issued to applicants who have completed all provisional entrance requirements. Applicants will receive an offer letter that outlines provisions that must be cleared within the first term or first year to progress in their programs.

2.9. To accept an offer of admission into a program, an applicant must pay a non-refundable tuition deposit by the posted deadline. The tuition deposit will be applied to the student's tuition once the student has enrolled in courses for that term.

    2.9.1. The tuition deposit may be waived at the discretion of the Vice President Academic and Research to support specific enrolment objectives.

    2.9.2. An applicant may only be admitted, matriculated, and become active in one program.

3. Waitlist Management

3.1. Qualified applicants who completed their applications after the program enrolment target is met are placed on a waitlist.

    3.1.1. If an applicant applies to a program that does not have competitive entrance requirements, their waitlist position is determined by the date they completed their application.

    3.1.2. If an applicant applies to a program that has competitive entrance requirements, their waitlist position is determined by the overall average grade of specific courses required by the program.

    3.1.3. If an applicant is offered conditional acceptance, they will need to maintain the academic average grade presented for conditional acceptance in their final grades to secure final acceptance.

    3.1.4. The Office of the Registrar reserves the right to prioritize specific applicants on the waitlist, if necessary, to meet institutional enrolment objectives or as part of the resolution process for successful appeals.

    3.1.5. The Office of the Registrar will notify the applicants on the waitlist when a seat becomes available.

4. Application Deferrals

4.1. Students who are prevented from attending the program they had been accepted into due to extenuating circumstances beyond their control may request to defer their start date for up to one year.

4.2. Only one deferral request can be approved per student. All requests must be approved by the Registrar.

5. Admission Appeals

5.1. An applicant may request the Associate Registrar, Enrolment Services to review an admission decision if they believe that a procedural error was made in their application evaluation. The student must submit this request in writing to the Associate Registrar, Enrolment Services.

5.2. If the concern is unresolved, the applicant may initiate a formal appeal to the Registrar within 10 business days of their application cancellation. The applicant must provide evidence that a procedural error has happened, meaning a NWP policy or procedure was violated or misapplied.

5.3. The appeal package must include:

- Admissions Appeal Form
- Reference to specific sections of relevant policies and procedures
- Proof of payment

5.4. The Registrar will review the appeal to determine if there is sufficient evidence that a NWP policy or procedure was violated or misapplied. If there is reasonable ground, the Registrar will refer the request to the Vice-President Academic and Research who will convene the admissions appeal committee of at least three members appropriate to the nature of the appeal.

5.5. The admissions appeal committee will evaluate the request and inform the Vice President Academic and Research of their decision within 15 business days of receipt of the applicant request.

5.6. The Vice president Academic and Research will forward the admission appeal committee's decision to the Registrar within 5 business days.

5.7. The Registrar will communicate the committee's decision to the applicant within 10 business days of receipt of the committee's decision from the Vice President Academic and Research.

5.8. Fees related to appeal of admission are set by the Office of the Registrar. This fee is for re-evaluation of the application. In cases of successful appeal, the appeal fee will be refunded.

5.9. The decision of the committee will be final and binding, and the applicant shall have no further right to appeal that particular admission decision.

6. Exceptions to the Procedure

6.1. Exceptions to this procedure must be documented and formally approved by the Vice President Academic and Research. Procedure exceptions must include:

6.1.1. The nature of the exception

6.1.2. A reasonable explanation for why the procedure exception is required

6.1.3. Confirmation that the exception aligns with the general principles of the policy

6.1.4. Any risks created by the procedure exception and how they will be managed.

Appendix 2 – Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure

1. **Advanced Credit or Transfer Credit**
   1.1. Students can only apply for advanced credit in a credit certificate, diploma, or degree program after they have been matriculated into the program. Students should apply for advanced credit as soon as possible after matriculation.
   1.2. Open studies students are not eligible to apply for advanced credit.
   1.3. Students who wish to obtain credit towards an apprenticeship program must apply to Alberta Industry and Training for recognition of their prior learning.
   1.4. Students are expected to monitor their email and myNWP portal for updates and to complete any required follow-up actions by the specified deadline. Otherwise, their advanced credit application will be cancelled.
   1.5. Advanced credit is granted per course for an entire course or block of courses, partial credit is not granted. The maximum number of credits awarded through advanced credit must not exceed 50% of the curriculum credits for a NWP program.
   1.6. The Office of the Registrar is responsible for administering the advanced credit process centrally. Program and service areas will adhere to established quality assurance standards to ensure equitable and consistent assessments of advanced credit.
   1.7. When there is no existing formal transfer agreement or transfer decision, transfer credit evaluations are completed by the program leader or their designate in the academic areas that develop and deliver the courses.
      1.7.1. Course curriculum must be a minimum of an 80% match to NWP course outcomes to award transfer credit.
      1.7.2. Students may combine the learning outcomes from multiple incoming courses to apply for credits for a NWP course.
      1.7.3. Transfer credits can only be granted when the minimum grade determined by the relevant program leader has been attained in the incoming course.
      1.7.4. Transfer credit will not be granted for course work completed outside the allowable timeframe as determined by the relevant Department Chairperson.
      1.7.5. In cases where transfer credit is not awarded for formal learning, students may present that learning for evaluation as part of a PLAR application.
   1.8. Once a transfer decision is made, it is stored in a central database maintained by the Office of the Registrar.

2. **Advanced Standing**
   2.1. Advanced Standing credits are generic credits and cannot be used to satisfy specific course requirements in a program.
   2.2. Advanced Standing credits are awarded to reflect the student's appropriate level in the program that the student has been admitted to.
   2.3. Advanced Standing credits can be awarded to a student for satisfying some of the program requirements through courses completed prior to admission.

3. **Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)**
   3.1. Applicants seeking advanced credits through PLAR must demonstrate that their knowledge, skills, and abilities are equivalent to students having completed the curriculum, based on the learning outcomes identified for each course.
   3.2. The Department Chair will determine the appropriate assessment methods for each course that may be available for PLAR within their program. Assessments must be authentic and reliable in that candidates will be given the opportunity to demonstrate their specific knowledge of the stated outcomes through consistent and tenable methods.

3.3.   The program leader will provide the Office of the Registrar with an updated list of courses not available for PLAR in their program, as well as the assessment methods for each course.

4.   Challenge Examinations

4.1.   Some programs will allow students who demonstrate knowledge or skill in the subject matter of a particular course to seek credit through challenge exams.

4.2.   The student must present, to the Department Chairperson, the eligibility criteria upon which they feel they are capable of successfully passing a challenge exam.

4.3.   Only courses schedule during the academic semester may be challenged.

4.4.   Challenge examination fess are normally 50% of the regular tuition fee.

4.5.   Challenge examinations will be set and graded by the department and a grade assigned for the academic semester in which the challenge exam is completed.

4.6.   Credit awarded through challenge examinations will apply only to the designated course and will not constitute awarding of credit of any prerequisite to that course.

4.7.   A student is not eligible for a challenge exam in a course for which a grade has been received.

5.   Student Records

5.1.   Transfer credits and PLAR credits are listed on a student's transcript with the grade of TR and are not included in the calculation of the student's grade point average (GPA) at NWP.

5.2.   Student records are updated upon determination that credit will be granted in accordance with published quality assurance processes.

6.   Appeals

6.1.   Students wishing to appeal an advanced credit decision may initiate an appeal as outlined in the Student Rights and Responsibility Policy.

7.   Exceptions to the Procedure

7.1.   Exceptions to this procedure must be documented and formally approved by the Vice President Academic and Research. Procedure exceptions must include:

7.1.1.   The nature of the exception

7.1.2.   A reasonable explanation for why the procedure exception is required

7.1.3.   Confirmation that the exception aligns with the general principles of the policy

7.1.4.   Any risks created by the procedure exception and how those risks will be managed.