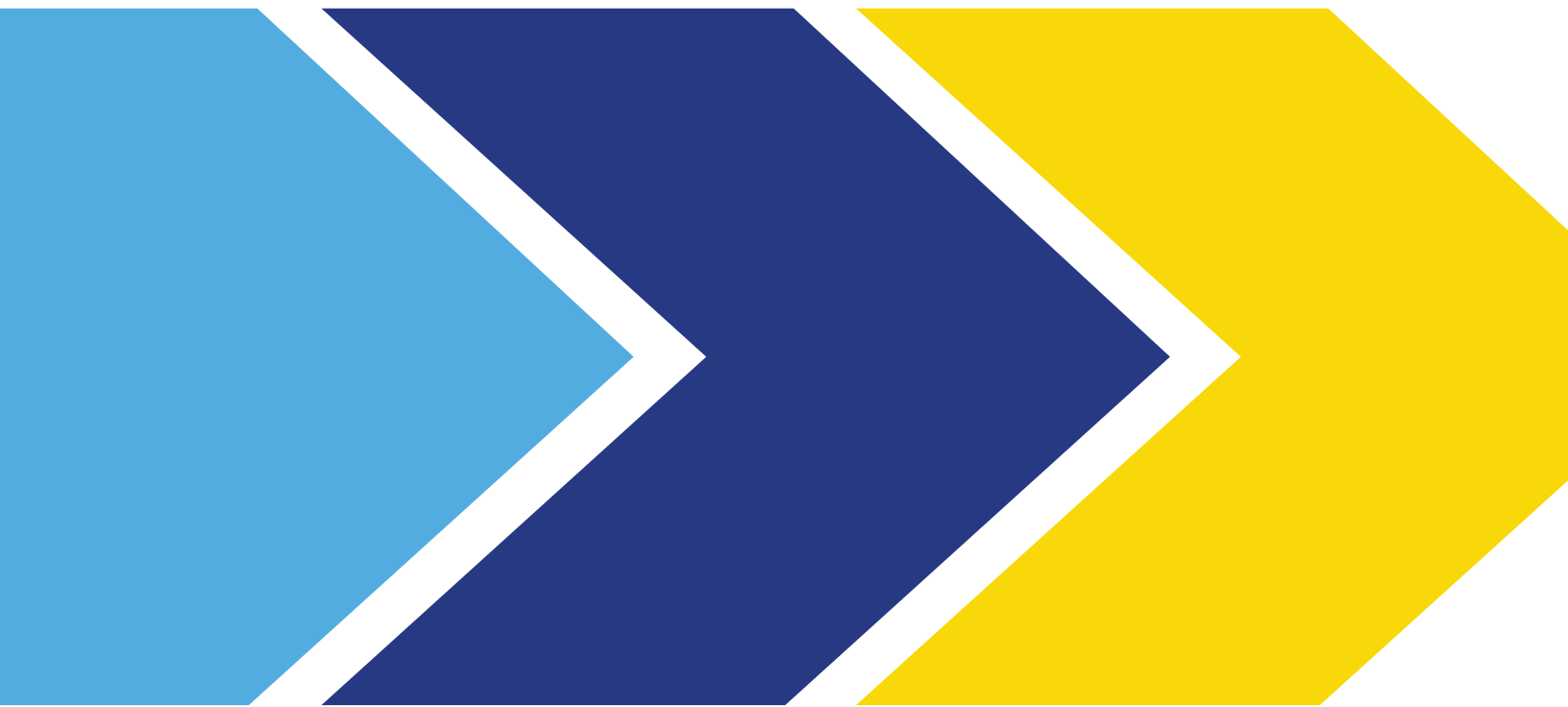


# **BUSINESS PLAN**

2022-23



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Budget 2022-23: Business Plan  
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## Message from the Minister

I am pleased to present the first business plan for the newly created Department of Advanced Education. It is my hope that as you read through this plan you will be inspired by the work, collaboration, innovation, and research underway to continue to support a strong, sustainable and vibrant post-secondary system that meets the needs of students, our communities and the provincial economy now and in the future.

This plan will highlight a path forward. It will showcase the work underway to fulfill the goals of the Department over the next year, with a focus on how we intend to achieve key government mandate priorities, specifically around enhancing healthcare training, improving governance, enhancing the student experience, supporting inclusion, diversity and accessibility across the system, and inspiring continued economic growth across Nova Scotia.

One of the first acts Premier Houston took after entering office in August 2021 was to create the Department of Advanced Education, signalling the value our government places on the post-secondary system, and its role in the province's economic prosperity and overall success.

In my previous life before entering politics, I was an educator for 28 years. Working with students has always been a passion of mine, and to have the opportunity to lead a department, with students at the center of everything we do, is a privilege.

On that note, a key priority for the Department is the recruitment and retention of post-secondary students. We need more students to choose our world-class post-secondary institutions for their education so when they graduate, they can build a life and career here in Nova Scotia. We need their skills to fill jobs in high-demand sectors like healthcare. We know we need more doctors, nurses, Continuing Care Assistants (CCAs), and Medical Laboratory Technologists. We are working with the Department of Seniors and Long-term Care to introduce a CCA progressive education model. The model allows CCA students earlier entry into the workforce for their practicum, providing quality training and helping with labour gaps in this profession.

We want students to make strong workforce connections, while they are studying and training. We are focused on creating more opportunities to connect more post-secondary students with industry and employers to build experience and connections that will help with finding work and staying in Nova Scotia after graduation. In 2022-23, the Department will work to increase experiential learning opportunities and continue advancing post-secondary sandboxes.

Inclusion, diversity and accessibility is at the core of our work. It is important that we foster a post-secondary system that is safe, accessible and represents the diversity of the province. In 2022-23 we will move forward with our strategic plan that advances the recruitment and retention of Mi'kmaq and Indigenous post-secondary students. The Department will continue to work with universities and the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) to further the implementation of sexual violence policies including the commitment by universities and the NSCC to review their stand-alone sexual violence policies every three years. As well, the Department will work with private career colleges on the development and implementation of sexual violence policies. In 2022-23, the Department will also implement new funding agreements with post-secondary institutions that focus on the needs of students with disabilities specific to each institution.

We know many students across our province need assistance to pay for school. The Nova Scotia Student Assistance Program supports students with financial need to access post-secondary

education through student loans and grants. In 2022-23, the Department will develop a plan to continue improvements to MyPATH, the online student portal, to improve efficiency and access of student assistance information for post-secondary students, including students with disabilities.

Student access to housing is an important component of supporting access to post-secondary education. In 2022-23, in collaboration with Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Department will develop a provincial post-secondary student housing strategy and will begin the process of building three new residences at the NSCC Pictou, Akerley, and Ivany campuses.

The impacts of COVID-19 have been felt by all Nova Scotians including post-secondary students. In response to this, in 2021-22 the Department was able to provide targeted support through a one-time COVID grant for recipients of Nova Scotia Student Assistance (NSSA). In 2022-23, we will continue to support post-secondary institutions to navigate the pandemic and as we move to pandemic recovery.

I am extremely proud of the work undertaken so far and look forward to strengthening our important partnerships with post-secondary students, post-secondary institutions, industry, businesses, and the broader community to advance our new Department's mandate and focus on supporting a strong post-secondary system.

# Department Vision, Mission and Mandate

## Vision:

We envision a high-quality, collaborative, and inclusive post-secondary education system that is focused on helping all learners thrive.

## Our Envisioned Future:

We envision a future in which learners are thriving and our post-secondary education system is inclusive and innovative and where the Nova Scotia Department of Advanced Education is a key partner and contributor, specifically...

- Participation in post-secondary education from underrepresented groups has increased. Accessibility has been improved and the Department has made strides in addressing financial, technology and other barriers. All partners have demonstrated leadership in integrating equity, diversity and inclusion best practices into their culture and processes. We have achieved the post-secondary education related Calls to Action from the Truth & Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Equity-seeking groups are over-represented in their participation rates in post-secondary education.
- Post-secondary education institutions, private and public sector employers, labour market experts and other departments are working in collaboration to anticipate and meet needs. Flexible learning models are offered, and work-integrated learning is widely practiced. Key sectors (like health care) are partners in the system.
- More people are thriving because of the opportunities created from their post-secondary education throughout their life span.
- International students remain in Nova Scotia because they feel welcome and have opportunities open to them.
- As an organization, the Department of Advanced Education is proactive; has embedded principles of equity, diversity, cultural competency, and inclusion in all its work and actions; and has a diverse staff compliment at all levels that is representative of the population it serves.

## Mission:

We facilitate a proactive and inclusive post-secondary system through which people learn, grow, and thrive.

## Mandate:

- We facilitate a post-secondary education system where learners receive high-quality education that meets their learning needs and allows them to thrive as members of vibrant communities and a successful province.
- We ensure that post-secondary education is accessible to all learners by removing barriers, including financial; by ensuring the system is equitable, diverse, inclusive; and by advancing the Truth & Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action for post-secondary education.
- We work in collaboration and partnership to support research & innovation and ensure our post-secondary education system proactively addresses the changing needs of the economy and contributes to social and economic growth.

## 2022-23 Initiatives and Programs

In 2022-23, the Department of Advanced Education will advance the following programs and initiatives to support the Department's mandate. Below are the strategic priorities for 2022-23 that shape the initiatives and programs.

- Support improving health care in the province.
- Foster an accessible post-secondary education system.
- Support diversity, inclusion and advancing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action for post-secondary education.
- Advance research and innovation.
- Facilitate a high quality, accountable post-secondary education system that furthers the social and economic growth of the province.

### Support improving health care in the province

#### **Grow a progressive education model for Continuing Care Assistance programs.**

- Working with the Department of Seniors and Long-term Care, the Department is introducing a progressive education work and learn model that includes tuition support.
- The progressive education model allows CCAs to enter the workforce earlier than in a traditional CCA program. The aim is to increase the number of CCAs receiving training and working in the health care system.

#### **Explore expanded programming to address current and future health care needs**

- To address labour needs in the health care system, the Department, in partnership with the Department of Health and Wellness (DHW), will explore expansion of programming for health care occupations.
- The Department, in partnership with DHW, will explore innovative partnerships with organizations, including the Michener Institute, to increase training capacity opportunities to address workforce demand in the provincial health care system.

#### **Expand nursing seats at post-secondary institutions in Nova Scotia to address the increased demand for nurses.**

- In 2022-23, working with post-secondary institutions who offer nursing programs, the Department will support the expansion of nursing seats at in the province.
- A total of 200 new seats will be funded at Cape Breton University, St. Francis Xavier University, Dalhousie University, and the Nova Scotia Community College.

#### **Support other government departments to address health care needs in the province**

- The Department will work with the Department of Seniors and Long-term Care on amendments to the Homes for Special Care Act and the Department of Health and Wellness on the clinical health services plan.

#### **Work with the Department of Health and Wellness to assess the need for medical school residency seats**

- The Department will work with the Department of Health and Wellness to better understand the need for medical residency seats that are targeted to areas of specialty and need across the province.

## Foster an accessible post-secondary education system.

### **Implement new Post-Secondary Accessibility Services Agreements**

- Post-Secondary Accessibility Services funding agreements with the NSCC and universities expire March 31, 2022.
- In 2022-23, the Department will finalize and implement new agreements with institutions to reflect the needs of post-secondary students with disabilities including a focus on addressing attitudinal barriers in post-secondary environments and supporting positive experiences for students with disabilities.

### **Expand work integrated learning programs for students with disabilities**

- The Department will expand partnerships with post-secondary institutions to support work integrated learning programs for post-secondary students with disabilities.
- These programs use wage subsidies to provide students with disabilities work experience in their related areas of study, and education as well as awareness on disability accommodations for the employer.

### **Develop a plan to continue improvements to MyPATH student assistance portal**

- In 2022-23, the Department will continue to improve MyPATH, the online student portal focusing on improvements to efficiency and access to student assistance information.
- The MyPATH enhancement plan will also include addressing accessibility for students with disabilities in post-secondary.

### **Renegotiate the Nova Scotia Student Assistance program service provider contract**

- The Department will renegotiate the service provider contract to deliver the Nova Scotia Student Assistance Program.
- This contract will bridge the Nova Scotia Student Assistance program as the Department integrates with Canada Student Financial Assistance.



## Support diversity, inclusion and advancing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action for post-secondary education.

### **Recruitment and retention of Mi'kmaq and Indigenous post-secondary students**

- In 2022-23, Department staff will work closely with stakeholders to implement the Strategic Plan on Recruitment and Retention of Mi'kmaq and Indigenous Post-Secondary Students.
- An advisory committee, made up of individuals from the Mi'kmaq community, the Departments of Advanced Education and Labour, Skills and Immigration, will help guide the work of the Director of Mi'kmaq and Indigenous Post-Secondary Recruitment and Retention.

### **Develop a framework for recruitment and retention of post-secondary students of African descent.**

- Partner with the Departments of Labour, Skills and Immigration and Education and Early Childhood Development, the Council of Nova Scotia University Presidents and the NSCC to develop a framework for post-secondary recruitment and retention that supports racial equity and equal opportunities for students of African descent.

### **Work with innovation partners to enhance the utilization of an intersectional lens.**

- The Department will work with partners to identify ways to enhance and deepen the use of an intersectional lens in the development of their innovation initiatives and programming.
- This work includes supporting capacity where needed to ensure innovation programming is founded in anti-oppressive practice and principles.

### **Further sexual violence prevention on post-secondary campuses**

- The Department will continue to support the Provincial Sexual Violence Committee in its work to prevent sexual violence on Nova Scotia university and college campuses through sharing expertise and resources.
- Advanced Education will ensure that universities and the NSCC update their sexual violence policies every three years and will work with the private career colleges on the development and implementation of sexual violence policies.
- The Department will continue to provide funding through the Sexual Violence Prevention Grant to support initiatives that endorse and advance the ten recommendations outlined in the Changing the Culture of Acceptance (2017) report. [changing-the-culture-of-acceptance.pdf \(novascotia.ca\)](#)

### **Continue support for Healthy Minds Nova Scotia**

- In 2022-23, the Department will continue to support provision of e-mental health resources through the suite of tools available through the HealthyMindsNS.ca website and will oversee the work via the Health Minds NS Committee. The committee advises the Department of Advanced Education about selection, implementation, promotion and ongoing evaluation of e-mental health products and services to support the mental health and wellness of students at Nova Scotia universities, NSCC, and with the NS Apprenticeship Agency.
- Through representation on the e-Mental Health and Addictions (e-MHA) Governance Group, the Department will work with government partners to guide work towards the development of a coordinated, integrated, and efficient e-MHA system of services and supports.

### **Support the provincial immigration and population growth strategy**

- Working with Labour, Skills and Immigration, the Department will support the development of the provincial immigration and population growth strategy.

- This includes work through the Innovation Team’s Student Recruitment and Retention Working Group and collaboration with EduNova.

## Advance research and innovation.

### **Support a robust research agenda that informs provincial priorities**

- In 2022-23, working with other government Departments, Advanced Education will confirm the research priorities for the provincial government and work with Research Nova Scotia to support the coordination and funding of research to further these priorities.
- The Department facilitates provincial funding provided to Research Nova Scotia to support the Research Opportunities Fund, as well as the operations of Research Nova Scotia.

### **Working with partners, develop an innovation framework that will guide and balance the Department’s innovation portfolio.**

- The innovation framework will include initiatives in multiple facets of innovation from incremental enhancement to systems transformation, focus the Department’s innovation portfolio on priority areas as well as embed evaluation, learning, and action into initiatives.
- This work includes mapping across multiple facets of innovation.

### **Advance post-secondary education sandboxes**

- In 2022-23 the Department will oversee the operations of the ten sandboxes and other projects that were funded under the Post-Secondary Sandbox Funding Grant with the goals of developing an entrepreneurial mindset among sandbox participants.
- The Department will continue to support the annual Creativity and Innovation Bootcamp that is held in the spring. This bootcamp is a seven-day immersive experience to introduce post-secondary students to a suite of approaches that uncover their creative potential and capacity for innovative problem solving.

### **Oversee the Post-Secondary Innovation Team and working groups**

- The Department will continue to oversee the Innovation Team and the working groups that fall under the Innovation Team.
- The working groups advance the mandate of the Innovation Team to promote innovation and advance the OneNS Commission’s goals.
- The Innovation Team meets periodically to review proposals and disburse funding from the annual \$1.685 million funding envelope.

## Facilitate a high quality, accountable post-secondary education system that furthers the social and economic growth of the province

### **Support experiential learning opportunities for post-secondary students**

- Through Mitacs, the Department will support internship placements that connect post-secondary students with industry which supports experiential learning and the commercialization of research. Mitacs is a national not-for-profit organization that connects industry and academia through work-integrated learning opportunities.
- The Department will continue to develop innovative projects and programs through the work of the Post-Secondary Innovation Team's Entrepreneurship and Experiential Learning Working Group to increase the number of work-integrated learning and experiential learning opportunities (including entrepreneurship) available to students.

### **Post-secondary student housing strategy**

- Working with the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Advanced Education will develop a post-secondary student housing strategy that aligns with the provincial housing strategy.
- A focus for 2022-23 will be research on housing supply and demand for post-secondary students to inform the strategy.

### **Increase residence spaces for NSCC students**

- Working with the Department of Public Works and the NSCC, Advanced Education will support the design and development of the three student residences at the Akerley, Ivany and Pictou NSCC campuses.
- The timeline of occupancy of the new residences is September 2023 for the Pictou campus residences and September 2024 for the Akerley and Ivany campus residences.

### **Review education pathways at the NSCC for apprentice students**

- Working with the NSCC and the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency, review the NSCC's prior learning program to identify gaps or areas of opportunities as it relates to students who are accredited apprentices acquiring credits toward programs at NSCC.

### **Through the Department of Economic Development support innovative, sustainable, and green businesses**

- In 2022-23, where appropriate, the Department will work with the Department of Economic Development to assist partnerships with universities and the NSCC to enable entrepreneurs to start and scale green and sustainable businesses in all parts of the provinces, considering the distinct regions based on their comparative advantage.

### **Review university acts, governance models and structure**

- In 2022-23, the Department will undertake a review of university legislation and by-laws focusing on governance, structure, accountability and reporting, university board of governor and senate composition and powers.
- The review will be informed by a jurisdictional scan that looks at university governance and structure.

## Departmental Financial Summary

Departmental Expenses Summary (\$ thousands)			
<u>Programs and Services</u>	<u>2021-22 Estimate</u>	<u>2021-22 Forecast</u>	<u>2022-23 Estimate</u>
Administration	313	365	633
Policy and Corporate Services	80	395	1,391
Program Service and Delivery	59,384	62,759	61,997
Nova Scotia Community College	154,436	162,695	160,112
Grants to Universities	443,590	573,590	452,484
<b>Total - Departmental Expenses</b>	<b>657,803</b>	<b>799,804</b>	<b>676,617</b>
Ordinary Recoveries	-13,392	-12,667	-9,049
<u>Funded Staff (# of FTEs)</u>	70.7	58.8	76.0
Department Funded Staff			
<b>Notes:</b>			
For TCA Purchase Requirements, see Estimates and Supplementary Detail Book, Chapter 1			