



# Accountability Report 2022–23

---

Advanced Education



**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**Accountability Statement** ..... 3

**Measuring Our Performance**..... 4

**Financial Summary and Variance Explanation**..... 11

**Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act**..... 12

## Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Department of Advanced Education for the year ended March 31, 2023, is prepared pursuant to the *Finance Act* and government policies and guidelines. The reporting of the Department of Advanced Education outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgments, and opinions by Department management.

We acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of Department management. The report is, to the extent possible, a complete and accurate representation of outcomes relative to the goals and priorities set out in the Department of Advanced Education's 2022-23 Business Plan.

*Original signed by:*

---

The Honourable Brian Wong  
Minister

*Original signed by:*

---

Nancy MacLellan  
Deputy Minister

## Measuring Performance

The Department of Advanced Education envisions a high-quality, collaborative, innovative, and inclusive post-secondary education system that is focused on helping all learners thrive; and where the Department is a key partner and contributor. Our strategic priorities that shaped initiatives and programs to support our mandate in 2022-23 are the following:

- 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.

Some highlights of the initiatives and programs are outlined in the following section.

### Support Improving Health Care in the Province

#### **Grow a Progressive Education Model for Continuing Care Assistant Programs**

- In 2022-23, a Work and Learn progressive education model for Continuing Care Assistant (CCA) programs was successfully launched at private career colleges across the province (e.g., CBBC Career College, Island Career Academy and Eastern College). Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) also launched, in 2022-23, CCA Work and Learn training in collaboration with long-term care facilities on the Eastern Shore.
- NSCC also met the training target of 360 students in the traditional CCA program. NSCC added additional traditional cohorts at the Annapolis Valley and Ivany campuses, which began in March 2023.

#### **Explore Expanded Programming to Address Current and Future Health Care Needs**

- In 2022-23, the Province provided \$58.9 million for the development of a new medical school campus at Cape Breton University (CBU). The medical school will operate as a partnership between CBU and Dalhousie and will train 30 new doctors every year. It is planned to open by fall 2025.
- An additional five new medical seats for rural students were created and these students began their studies at Dalhousie in September 2022, and will commit to a five-year return of service to practice family medicine in rural Nova Scotia. Five more students will begin in September 2023 under this program.
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between Advanced Education and the Michener Institute of Education at University Health Network to explore innovative methods to address the workforce requirements in Nova Scotia's health system. In January 2023, a 16-week bridging program was launched to help five internationally educated Medical Laboratory Technologists (MLTs) prepare for the Nova Scotia licensing exam. Another bridging cohort will begin in September 2023 with a target of seven participants.

- Starting in September 2023, a new, flexible online learning option will be available for up to 40 Nova Scotians who want to become MLTs.

### **Expand Nursing Seats at Post-Secondary Institutions in Nova Scotia**

- In 2022-23, the Province announced investments, as part of a four-year commitment, to support 80 additional first year Bachelor of Science, Nursing seats at CBU (28 seats), St. Francis Xavier (26 seats) and Dalhousie (26 seats).
- In addition, NSCC is expanding its first-year practical nursing seats by 120. A cohort for 30 Mi'kmaw learners at the NSCC Pictou campus will be offered in the 2023-24 academic year. Curriculum for the new Mi'kmaw nursing program will be a custom-learning experience developed with a Mi'kmaq and Indigenous lens. Representatives from Mi'kmaw Kina'matenewey, Tajikeimik, NSCC, the Dalhousie Indigenous healthcare in nursing team and the Nova Scotia College of Nursing are contributors, along with the departments of Advanced Education, Education and Early Childhood Development, and Health and Wellness.

### **Support Other Government Departments to Address Health Care Needs in the Province**

- In 2022-23, Advanced Education completed a review of the nursing clinical placement process in the province in partnership with the Department of Health and Wellness, Nova Scotia Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care, the IWK and universities. The Department received a report providing recommendations for improving the process, system and programming related to nursing clinical placements. Next steps will be determined by Nova Scotia Health with Advanced Education supporting.
- In 2022-23, Advanced Education along with Department of Community Services and the Department of Health and Wellness announced investments in addressing under-representation of Black/African Nova Scotians in the social work field. A cohort of 35 Black/African Nova Scotian students are set to begin in September 2023 in the Bachelor of Social Work program at Dalhousie University.
- In 2022-23, eligibility criteria were expanded to allow more Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) to qualify for Bachelor of Science, Nursing programs at CBU and St. Francis Xavier University. The programs allow LPNs who meet academic, work experience and other licensing requirements to use their existing education and experience to more quickly complete the Bachelor of Science, Nursing program and become Registered Nurses.

### **Work with the Department of Health and Wellness to Assess the Need for Medical School Residency Seats**

- In 2022-23, Advanced Education and Health and Wellness established a working group to evaluate medical residency capacity for the future in Nova Scotia. A comprehensive assessment of the physician residency program was finalized in Spring 2023 and next steps will be determined in the coming year.
- Two additional residency seats in the areas of Care of the Elderly and Palliative Care have been approved to address the shortage of clinicians in these areas of identified need.
- Ten international residency seats were added via the Family Medicine Enhanced Skills residency programs pathway. This will make it easier for Nova Scotians who attend medical school outside Canada to complete their residency at home.

## Foster an Accessible Post-Secondary Education System

### Implement new Post-Secondary Accessibility Services Agreements

- In 2022-23, the Department renewed its Memorandums of Understanding with the universities and NSCC to provide continued support for programs that remove barriers to post-secondary education for students with disabilities.

### Expand Work Integrated Learning Programs for Students with Disabilities

- Throughout 2022-23, Advanced Education has been engaged in discussions with institutions regarding innovative ways to enhance their respective work integrated learning programs for students with disabilities, which will inform future initiatives.

### Develop a Plan to Continue Improvements to MyPATH Student Assistance Portal

- Work to advance improvements to the Student Assistance MyPATH portal has progressed throughout 2022-23, with a final product expected to be delivered in Summer 2023 that will improve the online user experience and highlight amounts that are potentially eligible through the Nova Scotia Loan Forgiveness Program. The new enhancements will also improve accessibility for the online student portal and ensure that the website is mobile-friendly and compatible with assistive technology software to support access for students with disabilities.

### Renegotiate the Nova Scotia Student Assistance Program Service Provider Contract

- In 2022-23, a new service provider contract was implemented with DH Corporation, who disburses loan and grant funds to students and schools and manages repayment of provincial student loans on behalf of Advanced Education. This contract is in effect through to July 31, 2028.

## 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

- The Mi'kmaq and Indigenous Post-Secondary Education Recruitment and Retention Advisory Committee, chaired and supported by the Department, is working to improve the collection of data and research to help post-secondary institutions improve services and support for Mi'kmaq and Indigenous students, including developing standards for self-identification questions. The Committee includes representation from universities, NSCC, community and other government departments. A communication plan is also in development to ensure students know how data will assist the post-secondary institutions in improving services and supports for Mi'kmaq and Indigenous students.

### Develop a Framework for Recruitment and Retention of African Nova Scotian and Black Post-Secondary Students

- The Post-Secondary Advisory Council on African Nova Scotian and Black Students was formed by the Department to specifically address the issue of equal opportunity in post-secondary education for African Nova Scotians and Black Students. The work of the Advisory Council, which includes representation from universities, NSCC, and other government departments,

includes exploring a provincial approach to the Scarborough Charter Anti-Black Racism and Black Inclusion in Canadian Higher Education, and a framework to inform future work of the post-secondary institutions. The aim of the Advisory Council is to have a first draft of the framework tabled by the end of summer 2023, for the Department and university presidents' consideration.

### **Work with Innovation Partners to Enhance the Utilization of an Intersectional Lens**

- Throughout 2022-23, Advanced Education has been exploring ways to better engage with partners and incorporate an intersectional lens for the ways we work together. This work will be mobilized in the coming year.

### **Further Sexual Violence Prevention on Post-Secondary Campuses**

- In 2022-23, Advanced Education, through the commitments in the 2019-24 university Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), provided \$470,000 in funding to support sexual violence prevention initiatives on campuses.
- The Provincial Sexual Violence Prevention Committee, co-chaired by Advanced Education, continued to collaborate and share best practices on sexual violence prevention initiatives. The Committee reviews and provides feedback on any proposals for sexual violence prevention grant funding submitted to Advanced Education. In 2022- 2023, Advanced Education approved funding for 12 initiatives that supported primary prevention of sexual violence on post-secondary campuses. As an example, the *Courage to Act Toolkit Pilot* was funded in 2022-23, which involves a coordinated approach by all 10 universities and NSCC to work together to explore how best to work with people who cause harm by identifying gaps in policy, enhancing accountability processes and creating new primary prevention efforts on campuses.
- Starting in 2022-23, the Private Career Colleges Division is reviewing the Provincial Sexual Violence Prevention Committee's report (2019): *Changing the Culture of Acceptance*, to establish transferability of principles and approach of sexual violence prevention to the context of the private career college sector.

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

- In 2022-23, updates were made to the HealthyMindsNS website to include links to resources to further support student mental health and wellbeing.
- Advanced Education committed \$25,000 in funding provided through the university MOU, to ensure publicly funded post-secondary institutions can participate in the Canadian Campus Wellbeing Survey in Winter 2024. This survey will provide data about student wellbeing that can be used to inform prioritizing and planning. Questions about the e-mental health tools will be included in the provincial cohort administration.

### **Support the Provincial Immigration and Population Growth Strategy**

- In 2022-23, the Post-Secondary Innovation Team, through funding from Advanced Education, supported a series of Nova Scotia university led projects focused on international student recruitment efforts, increasing Nova Scotia's competitiveness and further differentiating it as a study destination of choice, improving institutional study permit approval rates, and retaining more post-secondary students in Nova Scotia post-graduation.
- With funding from the Department, EduNova's Study and Stay CONNECT program was launched in September 2022. Using the iCent app, EduNova and post-secondary institutions can connect

with international students in all years of study. The app can be used to administer programming, housing resources, set tasks, and send out notifications about events or to highlight available services. The program will continue for the next three years (2023-24 to 2025-26), with the goal of reaching 500 graduates.

## **Advance Research and Innovation**

### **Support a Robust Research Agenda that Informs Provincial Priorities**

- In 2022-23, Research Nova Scotia has been engaged to help review the extent to which research conducted at universities is aligned with government research priorities and to help identify opportunities. This work will continue in 2023-24.

### **Working with Partners, Develop an Innovation Framework that will Guide and Balance the Department's Innovation Portfolio**

- In 2022-23, development of the framework continued with a goal to complete in 2023-24. The innovation framework will focus the Department's innovation portfolio on priority areas as well as embed evaluation, learning, and action into initiatives. This work includes mapping innovation initiatives across multiple facets of innovation and planning to ensure efforts focused on inclusion innovation.

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

- In 2022-23, Advanced Education provided \$800,000 to support the post-secondary sandboxes that are hosted across the universities and NSCC campuses.
- Some highlights from 2022-23 include the Pulse Sandbox's two Innovation Health Challenges, which allowed students to participate in seminars, workshops, and a pitch competition relating to a health challenge identified as a priority for the Province and the post-secondary institution. Another project was Startup Labs held by Discoverbox, that targeted rural Nova Scotian students. The program guided students through problem definition, ideation, business development, testing and reiteration, and early market entry.
- In 2022-23 food security for students was a central theme at student roundtables. In response, Advanced Education engaged and funded 5 sandboxes to initiate a prototype food sovereignty project. The project will hire 20 interns in September 2023 to address food challenges faced by students across the province.



## **Oversee the Post-Secondary Innovation Team and Working Groups**

- In 2022-23, in addition to the projects listed above that supported the Provincial Immigration and Population Growth Strategy, other projects funded by the Innovation Team and its working groups were:
  - Under the Entrepreneurship and Experiential Learning Working Group:
    - Art of the Possible, which produced a report with recommendations that would support a robust province wide entrepreneurship and experiential learning strategy to increase and enhance formalized, meaningful entrepreneurship and experiential learning opportunities for arts students.
    - The Study and Stay Entrepreneurship Program, a partnership between EduNova Cooperative Ltd. and post-secondary institutions across Nova Scotia that supported international student entrepreneurs in launching businesses.
  - The Onboarding MyCreds™ project is providing change management and onboarding support for all universities and NSCC to join the Association of Registrars of the Universities and Colleges of Canada MyCreds™ network, for the secure and encrypted transfer of official documentation and data. MyCreds™ is intended to enhance student experience, reduce costs to students and institutions, support student mobility, accelerate academic data-sharing, minimize fraud, and reduce dependence upon paper transactions.
  - With funding from the Innovation Team and the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, EduNova launched Study and Stay CONNECT in September 2022. This program leverages technology using an app to increase program capacity so that more students can access supports, engage with their communities, and develop career-readiness skills that will better position them to find work and remain in Nova Scotia.
  - The Social Equity Working Group has worked to implement the *Transforming Practice: Learning Equity, Learning and Excellence* learning modules. This builds upon the two prior Universal Design for Learning, and Culturally Responsive Pedagogy projects. The working group is advancing the last phase of the project, which is creating communities of practice.

## **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**

- Additional funding in the amount of approximately \$13 million over four years (2022-23 to 2025-26) was approved for Mitacs to support an additional 3,244 internship units. This enabled Mitacs to deliver a total of 913 internships to students in Nova Scotia in 2022-23. This will bring the total number of internship opportunities to approximately 4,244 over the four years.
- The Institutional Experiential Learning Data Research Project of the Entrepreneurship and Experiential Learning Working Group was completed. The project had three main objectives:
  - Propose an experiential learning typology that captures a shared understanding of Curricular Experiential Learning,
  - Understand current data collection efforts, and
  - Identify opportunities for improved data collection.

- The report provides recommendations on these objectives which will lead to a better understanding of experiential learning, its outcomes, and how experiential learning contributes to the work of post-secondary institutions.

### **Post-Secondary Student Housing Strategy**

- In 2022-23, the Department advanced discussions with students, post-secondary institutions, private developers, other provincial departments, municipal and federal governments, and others in an effort to develop solutions to the student housing shortage in the province.
- The Department has been working closely with the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing, to align with the broader provincial housing strategy.

### **Increase Residence Spaces for NSCC Students**

- In 2022-23 the construction for new campus student housing at NSCC's Ivany, Akerley and Pictou campuses continues. On-going oversight is being provided by a steering committee, chaired by Advanced Education, and includes representation from Public Works, Finance and Treasury Board, and NSCC. The timelines for student occupancy are September 2024 for the Pictou and Akerley campuses and September 2025 for the Ivany campus. In total, 350 beds will be added.

### **Review Education Pathways at the NSCC for Apprentice Students**

- A review was conducted on NSCC's recognition of prior learning program to identify gaps or areas of opportunity as it relates to students who are accredited apprentices acquiring credits towards programs at NSCC. No gaps in the pathway for apprentices to acquire credits at the NSCC were identified.

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

- A review of university acts and governance models was completed in 2022-23. The review included an assessment of Nova Scotia university legislation and by-laws aided by information collected in a provincial scan with respect to university governance best practice. Opportunities were identified that may make the governance of universities more effective in certain aspects, however it would not be transformative for the sector and may divert university resources away from other priorities.

## Financial Summary and Variance Explanation

### Departmental Expenses Summary (\$ thousands)

<b>Programs and Services</b>	<b>2022-2023 Estimate</b>	<b>2022-2023 Actuals</b>	<b>2022-2023 Variance</b>
Administration	633	645	12
Policy and Corporate Services	1,391	2,033	642
Program Service and Delivery	61,997	66,621	4,624
Nova Scotia Community College	160,112	159,400	(712)
Grants to Universities	452,484	613,035	160,551
<b>Total - Departmental Expenses</b>	<b>676,617</b>	<b>841,734</b>	<b>165,117</b>
<b>Additional Information:</b>			
Ordinary Revenues	(8,600)	(8,475)	125
Fees and Other Charges	(40)	(38)	2
Ordinary Recoveries	(9,049)	(12,860)	(3,811)
<b>Total: Revenue, Fees and Recoveries</b>	<b>(17,689)</b>	<b>(21,373)</b>	<b>(3,684)</b>
TCA Purchase Requirements	85,883	78,255	(7,628)
<b>Funded Staff (# of FTEs)</b>			
<b>Department Funded Staff</b>	<b>76.0</b>	<b>63.9</b>	<b>(12.1)</b>

#### **Departmental Expenses Variance Explanation:**

Department of Advanced Education expenses were \$165.1 million or 24.4 per cent higher than estimate primarily due to \$122.8 million in university health initiatives grants, \$25.0 million for Research NS - Research Opportunities Fund, \$5.0 million to Cape Breton University to support the Tartan Down Affordable Housing project, \$4.4 million in additional student assistance support, and \$3.0 million to Atlantic School of Theology for residence renovations.

#### **Revenue, Fees and Recoveries Variance Explanation:**

The Department of Advanced Education's Revenue, Fees and Recoveries were \$3.7 million higher than budget primarily due to: \$1.9 million in additional Post-Secondary Accessibility services and equipment, fully recoverable from the Federal Government; and \$1.7 million in increased recoveries from a Regional Transfer agreement with PEI for PEI residents to have access to programs being offered in NS, that are not offered in PEI.

#### **TCA Purchase Requirements Variance Explanation:**

The Department of Advanced Education's TCA purchases were (\$7.6 million) lower than estimate primarily due to projects progressing slower than anticipated: (\$14.7 million) savings from the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) Residences project, mainly Ivany Campus; and (\$2.3 million) for the Nursing Seats Retrofit project. These decreases are partially offset by \$9.2 million in higher than anticipated annual spending for the NSCC Sydney Waterfront Campus build and \$0.2 million for the NSCC Forestry Innovation project.

#### **Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs) Variance Explanation:**

Temporary vacancies that occurred throughout the year

## Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act

The *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act* was proclaimed into law on December 20, 2011. The Act provides for government employees to be able to come forward if they reasonably believe that a wrongdoing has been committed or is about to be committed and they are acting in good faith. The Act also protects employees who do disclose from reprisals, by enabling them to lay a complaint of reprisal with the Labor Board.

A wrongdoing for the purposes of the Act is:

- a) a contravention of provincial or federal laws or regulations;
- b) a misuse or gross mismanagement of public funds or assets;
- c) an act or omission that creates an imminent risk of a substantial and specific danger to the life, health or safety of persons or the environment; or,
- d) directing or counselling someone to commit a wrongdoing.

The following is a summary of disclosures received by the Department of Advanced Education:

<b>Information Required under Section 18 of the Act</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2022-2023</b>
The number of disclosures received	0
The number of findings of wrongdoing	0
Details of each wrongdoing	n/a
Recommendations and actions taken on each wrongdoing.	n/a