

2025-30 Strategic Mandate Agreement (SMA4)

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**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

Trent University

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 by:



David Wai
Deputy Minister

Signed for and on behalf of Trent
University by:



Dr. Cathy Bruce
President & Vice-Chancellor

April 3, 2025

Date

March 27, 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 Trent University.

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 19,099.6 Weighted Grant Units (WGU).

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 WGUs 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 WGUs 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”.

Trent University will have 4,018.18 WGUs added to its existing corridor midpoint for STEM enrolments. The resulting SMA4 midpoint will be 19,099.6 WGUs. With a per WGU funding rate of \$3,164.70, this represents a total of \$12,716,334 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 **1,636.12 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 per cent 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 full 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

Signed Between

Trent University

and

Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security

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

Signed for and on behalf of Trent
University by:



David Wai
Deputy Minister



Dr. Cathy Bruce
President & Vice-Chancellor

June 30, 2025

Date

June 20, 2025

Date

Appendix 1. Enrolment Corridor Adjustments

Corridor Ceiling: The ceiling will remain at 3% above the corridor midpoint and will be held constant for Trent University at 19,672.59 WGUs throughout the SMA4 cycle.

Corridor Floor: The corridor floor for SMA4 Year 1 (2025-26) will be lowered by institution's historical 5-year average STEM enrolment¹ lagged by one year and will be set for Trent University at 7,997.89 WGUs. In SMA4 Year 2 (2026-27), the corridor floor will be lowered by an updated rolling average of STEM enrolment² if the institution submits a domestic enrolment target and meets this target.

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

Trent University	SMA3	SMA4				
	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
Corridor Ceiling	15,533.86	19,672.59	19,672.59	19,672.59	19,672.59	19,672.59
Corridor Midpoint	15,081.42	19,099.6	19,099.6	19,099.6	19,099.6	19,099.6
Corridor Floor	14,628.98	7,997.89	14,628.98	14,628.98	14,628.98	14,628.98
Enrolment Target (Headcount)		N/A				

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.

¹ For SMA4 Year 1 (2025-26) the relevant years for the Corridor STEM adjustment will be 2019-20 to 2023-24.

² For SMA4 Year 2 (2026-27) STEM enrolment rolling average will be based on 2020-21 to 2024-25.

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 the 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.

Trent is [a highly regarded](#) Ontario university which offers a range of undergraduate degrees in arts, sciences, professional, and interdisciplinary programs as well as graduate programs at the master's and doctoral levels, with both advanced research and professional streams. Most recently, there have been program innovations focused particularly in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields. Trent has experienced strategic growth to over 13,000 students (nearly 54% growth since 2016-17). This includes a 22.3% increase in STEM FTEs between 19-20 and 23-24. It is important to note that Trent is one of the longest-standing universities in Ontario to operate above the corridor ceiling, having been above the funded corridor since prior to the signing of SMA3.

Trent is a highly efficient university, with efficiencies including the transitioning of all employees (Faculty and Staff) to the University Pension Plan, responsive program development with minimal resource needs, as well as consistent balanced budgeting. Trent has achieved financial sustainability through enrolment growth year-over-year.

All programming includes experiential learning opportunities (co-op and internship placements as well as community-based and research-based project work) appropriate to the field and focused on career-readiness training. In [Maclean's rankings](#), Trent has also been an Ontario leader in the primarily undergraduate category, including number one in Ontario for highest quality, student services, and faculty awards in 2024 as well as number two in all of Canada for reputation, most innovative, and developing leaders of tomorrow. Survey data shows that over 90% of first-year Trent students are happy they chose Trent (Canadian University Survey Consortium). As a research and teaching University that punches above its weight, Trent has ranked as a top 50 Research University in Canada for more than a decade and has been named in the Research Infosource Winner's Circle repeatedly (including for growth in partnerships and [not-for-profit research](#)).

Given the rapid growth of the eastern Greater Toronto Area, particularly the Durham Region, Trent is well placed to serve the economic and educational needs of the GTA and the Province. At the Trent Durham campus, a range of programs, responsive to community need, have been developed, including Social Work, Child & Youth Studies, Logistics and Supply Chain Management, Policing, and an innovative new program offering a BA and a BSc in Artificial Intelligence. These, combined with foundational programs in humanities and the social sciences, provide students with

access to diverse programming options in a smaller, supportive campus setting. At the Peterborough campus, Trent offers over 100 programs in a wide range of sciences, business and administration, software engineering, teaching, nursing, the arts, environmental studies, and Indigenous and Canadian studies. Interdisciplinary teaching and research are a key component of the University, as are partnership and articulation agreements which allow college students, mature students, and international students to transition to Trent.

Key institutional documents which drive Trent's strategic focus include: the Board of Governors' [Strategic Priorities 2022-2027](#); the [Presidential Mandate 2024-2029](#); [The Academic Guiding Principles 2022-2027](#); and the [Strategic Research Plan 2023-2028](#). Collectively, these highlight Trent's commitment to and strength in **healthy and sustainable environments and communities**. This institutional area of strength is in alignment with the SMA4 priorities, responds to critical labour market needs in the Peterborough and Durham regions, and supports career goals of Trent students.

On the horizon are several large-scope projects including the development of a Senior's Village centered around a long-term care home, already provincially funded, to meet increased pressures on trained care resources for Ontario's aging population. The Village will be informed by the work of students and faculty in Nursing, Education, Social Work, the Medical Professional Stream, Business programs and Trent's Centre for Aging & Society, with partners in municipal, health care, industry, and community sectors. In support of broader housing needs the University plans to contribute 35% of the [City of Peterborough's new housing goal](#) by 2029 by increasing Trent's housing inventory by 69% through residence projects for new and upper-year students, both on and off campus.

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 skills acquired in their program of study, two years after graduation

Data Source: Ontario University Graduate Survey (OUGS)

Narrative

[Trent graduates are successful in gaining employment post-graduation, with 95.7% of graduates employed in a related field two years after graduation.](#) Trent has strategically focused on expanding [Careerspace](#), the [Co-op](#), Careers & [Experiential Learning department](#), to support strong graduate employment rates.

The University has continued to strengthen its career readiness programming through the launch of the [eCampusOntario Career & Workforce Readiness Modules](#); the creation of the Career Peer program offering peer-led employment support to students;

expanded career supports at the Trent Durham campus; [program-based Career Exploration Guides](#); and additional career workshops, resources, and appointments for students and alumni.

One of Trent's major developments has been the expansion of experiential learning programming. The number of co-op programs has grown significantly to the extent that paid co-op opportunities are available across 34 programs in 2025. With offerings in the Humanities, Social Sciences, Business, Sciences and professional programs, there is no shortage of opportunities for students to gain full-time, paid work experience, building their transferable skills, labour market knowledge, and connections to industry professionals and future employers. A career development course was developed to help co-op students build career readiness and additional co-op courses are entering development.

Trent has also increased field placements, and projects through the [Trent Community Research Centre](#) have expanded through financial donor support. This has increased student opportunities in community-based research, community partnerships, and faculty involvement. Staffing resources have fueled new employment-readiness programming for graduates. Examples include the [Trent Career Apprenticeship Program](#) and the [Community Concierge program](#), provincially funded by the Skills Development Fund, and new partnerships formed with [medical professional programs](#) such as medicine, pharmacy, and optometry through our Medical Professional Stream.

Trent has created additional opportunities for students to build skills through a total of [13 micro-credentials](#) that can be seamlessly added to any degree. Trent considers it part of our core mission to ensure experiential learning and programs alignment with industry demand to prepare students for successful employment upon graduation.

Metric Name: Graduation Rate

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

Data Source: University Statistical Enrolment Report (USER)

Narrative

Trent University attracts and supports students from communities across Ontario and Canada, including rural, first generation and Indigenous students, those who require financial assistance, accessibility and academic accommodation, and a large proportion of students who live off-campus away from their families. Data from the 2024 Canadian University Survey Consortium (CUSC) shows that Trent students are more likely to need to work part-time to support their studies and more likely to require support for their mental health.

In support of student retention, wellbeing and satisfaction and with a goal to constantly improve graduation rates, the Trent experience provides exceptional wrap-around supports, with one of the highest investments as a percentage of operating budget in [financial aid](#) and robust [student services](#) among primarily undergraduate

institutions in the province. These supports span academic advising, academic skills, support for complex learning needs, mental health and wellness.

The University measures the effectiveness and impact of these academic, financial and social supports by tracking the graduation rate as well as through an annual Student Experience Survey (SES), the National Survey for Student Engagement (NSSE) and CUSC. The SES tracks self-efficacy and sense of belonging as key indicators for student retention toward graduation. NSSE consistently demonstrates that Trent students are more satisfied with their University experience than comparator institutions including professors, academic supports and services.

Trent has determined that one of the primary drivers for student persistence toward graduation is an understanding of how their academic efforts relate to their career aspirations and future success. Trent has made significant progress in introducing paid co-op opportunities to an array of programs across the arts, sciences and professional programs and is able to guarantee that students in every discipline will have a meaningful career-related experience as they earn their degree. These programs are further enhanced by alumni mentorship and connections to community organizations that provide hands-on research and learning opportunities.

Through this holistic approach and uniquely agile responsiveness to student needs, Trent remains committed to attracting and supporting a wide range of domestic students with diverse learning styles and abilities.

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

Trent graduates are well employed upon graduation, with 2024/25 data showing their annual average earnings after 2 years of employment is: \$50,711 (Undergraduate: \$50,200, Master: \$58,000 (2020 graduate cohort, ELMLP).

Trent has adopted a three-pronged approach to learning that supports strong graduate employment rates.

The first component is the continued development and enhancement of university services related to resume, job search, interviewing and other career-related preparation through Careerspace. The second is an expansion of experiential learning and co-op opportunities for students. The third is a commitment to programs that culminate in professional careers and employment in fields related to the student's studies.

In the past 12 months, nearly one-third of the job postings in the regions where Trent is located listed Communication skills as a key priority. Trent University provides training in this critical skill to address a key labour market need in the Peterborough region and east area of the GTA. Other priority skills listed in these postings were [Analytic and Interpersonal Skills](#). Trent offers programs in all three of the most common job postings: business and finance management, education, and health services. In business and finance management, Trent offers a range of programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels, including specializations and post-graduate certificates. In education, Trent offers 5 programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels as well as professional teaching and Additional Qualifications programs and certifications.

In the area of health services, Trent offers a Nursing program (jointly with Fleming College) as well as a post-graduate certificate in Healthcare Management at Trent Durham, a Health & Wellness post-grad certificate, Dementia Studies graduate diploma, and a Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Aging. All of these programs are responsive to regional labour market needs.

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: Institutional Data

Narrative

After the restructuring and re-branding of career services resulting in the new Careerspace, the Co-op, Careers & Experiential Learning (CCEL) department, there was a strategic shift to focus on expanding experiential learning (EL) opportunities and community partnerships. Careerspace allowed for a shift to a more centralized model of facilitating EL programming and building EL processes.

Working alongside academic departments, faculty, student support services, and employers, EL programs have been created in consultation with key stakeholders. Community partnerships have been built local to Peterborough and the Kawarthas, in the Durham Region, throughout the GTA, and broadly across Canada, creating diverse work opportunities for students in different geographic areas serving diverse needs.

A significant development from the strategic shift was the considerable expansion of co-operative education, drastically increasing the number of EL opportunities for students. In fall 2025, there will be a total of 34 co-op programs offered across all faculties with notably popular options in Business Administration, Computer Science, Conservation Biology, Criminology, History, and Kinesiology. A sizeable increase in field placement opportunities across disciplines, including Communications, Criminology, and Law, is allowing more students to gain hands-on experience in their

academic discipline. Community-based research (CBR) and community service learning (CSL) opportunities, offered through the Trent Community Research Centre, have increased over the last two years, resulting in new capstone research courses across different academic disciplines, new courses offering CSL, and more students completing independent research projects.

With co-op, field placement, practicum, internship, and CSL opportunities, not to mention CBR available to all students regardless of academic discipline, participation in a form of EL is guaranteed to all students. The launch of the co-curricular record has allowed students to track different forms of curricular and co-curricular experiences and learn more about the different EL opportunities available for them to pursue throughout their degree.

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: Regional Industry Support, Interdisciplinary Programming and Traditional Strengths

Data Source: University Statistical Enrolment Report (USER)

Narrative

In selecting programs that represent Trent's key institutional strengths, it is helpful to distinguish programming on the University's Durham and Peterborough campuses.

Trent's Durham campus is evolving quickly, with the growing campus emphasizing programs that aim to meet Oshawa and Durham's business, social and service needs. Child and Youth Studies is centered at the Durham campus, while Criminology, Anthropology and Psychology were chosen as programs of strength offered at both campuses within a broader context provided by the core humanities and social sciences courses.

The Peterborough campus is known for a comprehensive range of arts, science, social science, and professional programming, and for interdisciplinary programs that allow students to combine disparate programs in innovative ways (e.g., business and the environmental sciences). Traditional areas of strength and specialization, such as Indigenous Studies and the Bachelor of Environmental Science/Studies programs have been included alongside areas of increased focus for growing STEM and Co-op programming such as Forensic Science, Forensic Biology, Forensic Chemistry, and Biomedical Science.

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: University Statistical Enrolment Report (USER)

Narrative

Trent University is an institution deeply committed to the City of Peterborough and Durham Region where our campuses are located. [We are a top employer in Peterborough](#), driver of local GDP, and our graduates become visible leaders in the local community. Increasing our enrolment magnifies our impact and community benefit.

Attracting students to study in their home community provides them with an accessible and affordable education and helps address the historically low education and income levels in our regions. At the same time, attracting students from outside of our region to Trent brings new economic value to our communities.

Increasing our enrolment relies upon Trent offering degree programs that meet local employer needs and student career interests. At our Durham campus, programs in Logistics and Supply Chain Management and Artificial Intelligence are responding directly to the local economy. The long-term care home being built on Trent's lands in Peterborough will provide undergraduate students in nursing, kinesiology, social work and business, and graduate students in Aging studies, with skills to meet the growing need for aged care in our community and across the province. Community-based research is another way to increase our local impact, with students addressing questions from local municipalities, social service agencies, and in STEM-related fields.

Trent's Peterborough and Durham campuses play a central role in the economy of their local communities. In 2023, Trent Peterborough contributed approximately 10% of the GDP for the region and based on a 2024 Economic Impact study by R.A. Malatest & Associated Ltd, the University had an overall \$700 million annual economic impact there. Additionally, the alignment of Durham programming with local labour market needs, in areas such as Logistics and Supply Chain Management, allows the University to function as a key local economic partner. The recently released *Presidential Mandate* aims to "help build strong and innovative partnerships with community, government, industry, non-profits and other educational institutions." These broader community relationships respond to Ontario's workforce needs as articulated in the regions we serve.

Metric Name: Investment and Innovation Related - Total Sponsored Research Revenue

Metric Definition: All research activities and contract research funded from restricted sources such as government, private industry and donors

Data Source: Council of Ontario Finance Officers (COFO) Annual Report, Table 2

Narrative

Trent University is poised to grow its Total Sponsored Research Revenue, including our Federal Tri-Agency funding by increasing the number and the quality of grant applications that Trent faculty submit. As a result of the most recent external review of our Research Office, Trent implemented several recommendations aimed at improving efficiencies and intensifying grant capture. Establishing high quality service and support systems is a top priority and we succeeded by incentivizing grant applications, recognizing researchers' achievements and celebrating their successes in attracting awards. Trent implemented new internal grant programs focussing especially on early career researchers, strategic initiatives and knowledge mobilization. Activities culminated in making the 2024 Research Infosource Winners Circle, realizing the largest growth in Not-For-Profit Research Income.

Trent further increased and enhanced outreach activities leading to new exciting partnerships at all levels. At the local level, we are most enthusiastic about a renewed collaboration with the Peterborough Regional Health Centre (PRHC), which is a shining example of partnership with non-research hospitals, leveraging our combined expertise to break new ground on topics such as responsible management of clinical and public health data. This new partnership is in line with the University's recognized leadership in aging research, already manifested through an alliance with an innovative private provider of long-term health care.

Trent's renewed commitment to innovation and support of our next generation of business leaders is expressed through our new Trent Entrepreneurship Centre (Create), which will launch in spring 2025. Trent continues to be invested in the Cleantech Commons, an 85-acre research and innovation park developed on the Peterborough campus. Envisioned as a major catalyst for collaboration with the private sector, Cleantech Commons will leverage Trent's well-established research strengths in water research, sustainable agriculture, DNA forensics, wildlife conservation biogenetics, life science and biomaterials.

Metric Name: Institution-Specific - Number of Co-op Programs

Metric Definition: Number of active co-op programs per year

Data Source: Institutional Data

Narrative

At Trent, every student is guaranteed to have meaningful, purposeful, and recorded career-boosting learning opportunities that will contribute to their success as they enter the workforce.

With the Co-op Paid Work Experience, students put their skills and knowledge to work in one of a variety of co-op streams. Students graduate with a distinct career advantage – building valuable connections and gaining hands-on experience through paid work terms, all as part of their Trent degree.

The Trent Co-op Advantage:

- Students graduate with a degree and 12 months of paid work experience in as little as four years
- Co-op streams offered across the sciences, social sciences and humanities
- Hands-on experience in their chosen field, developing marketable skills and a better understanding of the job market
- Experience working directly with people and organizations that could become personal references for their next job, industry mentors, or even future employers
- Students connect with local and regional employers to start building their network with leaders and experts in their field

Trent University is an active supporter of local and regional employers. With the addition of the Careerspace department, Trent can offer students valuable learning tools and opportunities to gain practical and hands-on experience.

This unique program allows students and recent graduates to get an inside look at the career landscape while gaining meaningful experiences and necessary perspectives.

Since the University's first Co-op streams came online in 2018, we have seen growth of 1,400% in applications and 1,700% in enrolment. With more new Co-op programs coming online over the next few years, the University expects these numbers to grow as the institution gives students and local and regional employers an opportunity to forge stronger partnerships, foster talent development, and build a more vibrant, skill-ready workforce.

Appendix 4. STEM Accountabilities

Projections of Domestic STEM Enrolment

Below is Trent University's projection of domestic STEM enrolment over the SMA4 period as of December 1, 2024.

Trent University	STEM Enrolment (Domestic Full-time Equivalent)					
	Preliminary	Projections				
	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
STEM	3,143	3,010	3,020	3,020	3,030	3,050

Trent University 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. The funding is intended to be used to retain this level of STEM enrolment.

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. The depth of report-backs required will be calibrated based on the amount of STEM funding received. Universities receiving less than \$500,000 can provide higher-level report backs and may omit other elements identified below.

Trent University 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

To be populated by the Ministry

- STEM enrolment (count in FTEs 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 (two years after graduation)

To be populated by the University

- 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.

Required only if allocation is above \$500,000:

- 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 student³: 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, Trent University 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.

³ 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.

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.

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 per cent excludes time-limited funding and will be assessed annually as part of SMA4.

Data Reporting

Trent University will submit on time the following annual reports:

- Audited Enrolment Report by December 31 of each year
- Graduate Record File by February 15 of each year
- University Financial Accountability Framework: Due dates for risk rating reporting requirements following ministry memo released each year to all universities. Institutions will submit their responses within the timeline articulated in the ministry memo and the most recent financial accountability guidelines sent out to the sector.

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

Trent University 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

Funding Envelope ⁴	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	\$16,513,552	\$16,513,552	\$16,513,552	\$16,513,552	\$16,513,552
2. Performance-Based Grant ⁵	\$15,791,662	\$15,791,662	\$18,949,994	\$22,108,326	\$25,266,659
3. Differentiation Envelope (Remainder) ⁶	\$17,761,636	\$17,761,636	\$14,603,304	\$11,444,972	\$8,286,639
4. STEM Funding	\$12,716,334	\$12,716,334	\$12,716,334	\$12,716,334	\$12,716,334
Total SMA-Related Funding (1+2+3+4)	\$62,783,184	\$62,783,184	\$62,783,184	\$62,783,184	\$62,783,184
Performance-Based Grant At Risk ⁷	\$789,583	\$789,583	\$947,500	\$1,105,416	\$1,263,333
Accountability Funding At Risk ⁸	\$3,158,332	\$3,158,332	\$3,158,332	\$3,158,332	\$3,158,332

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

⁴Further 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.

⁵The 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.

⁶ 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.

⁷The 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.

⁸ 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

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	86.81%									
Graduation Rate	66.31%									
Graduate Employment Earnings	\$45,408									
Experiential Learning	95.94%									
Community/ Local Impact	14.98%									
Institutional Strength/ Focus	28.87%									
Investment and Innovation Related	\$13,209, 078									
Institution- Specific	22									

Note: Data for 2025-26 APT may be updated as part of the Annual Evaluation Process, as the ministry continues working with the institutions on data validation. "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

Metric	2025-26 Weighting (Min 5%, Max 25%)	2025-26 Notional Allocation	2026-27 Weighting (Min 5%, Max 25%)	2026-27 Notional Allocation	2027-28 Weighting (Min 5%, Max 25%)	2027-28 Notional Allocation	2028-29 Weighting (Min 5%, Max 25%)	2028-29 Notional Allocation	2029-30 Weighting (Min 5%, Max 25%)	2029-30 Notional Allocation
Graduate Employment Rate in a Related Field	5%	\$789,583	%	\$	%	\$	%	\$	%	\$
Graduation Rate	5%	\$789,583	%	\$	%	\$	%	\$	%	\$
Graduate Employment Earnings	5%	\$789,583	%	\$	%	\$	%	\$	%	\$
Experiential Learning	5%	\$789,583	%	\$	%	\$	%	\$	%	\$
Community/Loc al Impact	25%	\$3,947,915	%	\$	%	\$	%	\$	%	\$
Institutional Strength/ Focus	25%	\$3,947,915	%	\$	%	\$	%	\$	%	\$
Investment and Innovation Related	5%	\$789,583	%	\$	%	\$	%	\$	%	\$
Institution- Specific	25%	\$3,947,915	%	\$	%	\$	%	\$	%	\$

Note: This table includes 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.