

# Red River College Occupational Health and Safety Certificate Program Final Report

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February 28, 2017

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Supported by a grant from the Community Initiatives and Research Program of the Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba



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## Project Overview

In July 2010, the School of Continuing Education of Red River College (RRC) submitted a Research and Workplace Innovation Program (RWIP) Proposal to the Worker's Compensation Board of Manitoba (WCB). The proposed project sought to develop seven courses for distance delivery for the certificate program in Occupational Health and Safety currently offered by RRC. The proposal was accepted by the WCB and, following a meeting held on November 22nd, 2010, RRC's School of Continuing Education agreed to modify its RWIP proposal to include:

1. The establishment of a partnership agreement between the WCB and RRC prior to undertaking the project;
2. Membership on the project advisory committee to include representation from the Workplace Safety and Health Division and the WCB; and
3. A review, update and enhancement of the existing program curriculum to be undertaken by RRC prior to developing and offering the program through distance delivery.

Following submission of an addendum to RRC's original proposal in February 2011, the project plan was agreed to by both parties and a contract was signed in November 2011. The project plan included two distinct phases described below.

### Phase I: Review of the existing Occupational Health and Safety Program

RRC used a variety of tools and processes to review, update, and enhance the Occupational Health and Safety Program. These tools and processes ensured that the program would continue to meet the changing needs of industry and included:

1. DACUM Occupational Analysis – A DACUM Occupational Analysis is a necessary component of any review of existing curriculum. The process involves the formation of a committee of 8 to 12 experienced OH&S professionals with reputations for being the best at their jobs. The committee is led through the process by a qualified DACUM facilitation team over a two-day period during which the skills and abilities necessary for success in the occupation are identified and presented in a DACUM chart. These skills and abilities form the basis for updating the curriculum.
2. Program Mapping / Gap Analysis – A Program Map was developed using identified skills and abilities and this map was compared to the National Occupational Classification to ensure that all the requisite NOC duties and skills were included. Once completed, a gap analysis was conducted between the existing program and the program map.
3. Environmental Scan – An environmental scan is a form of peer review which determines the conformance of RRC's program with similar programs offered by other Canadian colleges. It provides comparative information of RRC's OH&S program with other programs by gathering web-based information on similar programs and trends influencing their development and direction.

4. Focused Discussions – RRC conducted a series of focused discussions with the following three groups:
  - a. Practicum placements (employers)
  - b. Instructors
  - c. Graduates

The purpose of the discussions was to identify strengths and areas for improvement in the existing program prior to its re-development.

### **Phase II: Update and re-development of the Occupational Health and Safety Program and the development of core courses in distance delivery format**

1. Re-development of program's Curriculum Framework – The Curriculum Framework includes the program's Graduate Profile (the essential and enduring knowledge, skills, and judgments expected of a graduate of the program) and course-level Learning Outcomes (the knowledge, skills, and judgment students will be expected to demonstrate upon completion of each course). The Curriculum Framework was re-developed based on data gathered from Phase 1 above. This ensured a high level of quality as the program was re-developed.
2. Program Re-development / Course Revisions – As needed, existing courses were revised and the program was re-developed based on the outcomes of item 1 above, resulting in an updated Curriculum Framework for the program. Subject matter experts (SMEs) were hired as part of the program re-development, with training on course development provided by RRC to ensure quality courses and content.
3. Following the revision of the program, course development began simultaneously on the classroom-based and identified distance delivery courses with support from experienced Instructional Designers. This simultaneous development of both modes of delivery maintained consistency and ensured that, regardless of the mode of delivery, students would be required to demonstrate the same knowledge, skills, and judgments. Renewal of the classroom-based courses that were not to be developed for online delivery also occurred.

### **Project Rationale (as originally submitted/approved)**

RRC's certificate program in Occupational Health and Safety provides the knowledge, skills, and judgment required of entry level occupational health and safety practitioners through a formal education program at a post-secondary level comprised of theoretical and practical components.

The Occupational Health and Safety program was developed in 2005 under the direction and guidance of a Program Steering Committee consisting of industry representatives. Following the development of the program, an Advisory Committee was established to guide and advise the college on all matters related to the program, as per RRC Policy A18 – Program Advisory Committees. The Advisory Committee includes representatives from Industry, Workplace Safety and Health Division, government, faculty and the WCB.

The current program educates graduates in the roles and responsibilities of entry-level occupational health and safety practitioners and is currently not available through distance learning. With continued demand for graduates, the availability of distance options is an important next step. This delivery mode will provide increased opportunities for Manitobans to train as Occupational Health and Safety practitioners through a flexible anytime-anywhere delivery format that will be available across Manitoba.

To facilitate this project, a Working Committee consisting of members of the Advisory Committee will be established to provide guidance and advice for the project. The project is facilitated through the Corporate Solutions department in conjunction with expertise from RRC's *School of Continuing Education* and the college's *Program and Curriculum Development Department*.

## Project Update

Phase 1 of the project was completed and items 1 and 2 of Phase II were completed. In addition, three courses (Safety, Health, Documentation & Reporting) have been developed for distance delivery as anticipated in item 3 of Phase II.

## Outcomes

The submission to the College's Senior Academic Committee (SAC) was drafted. This internal document described the processes and proposed changes to the program for approval by SAC. The submission was presented and approved by the SAC in November 2013.

The following research was included as part of the submission to SAC for approval:

### *Labour Market Information*

A search of the CareerJet employment search engine on October 17th, 2013 showed upwards of 250 Manitoba businesses seeking to fill a variety of positions in the Occupational Health and Safety field (MB 482) and included position titles such as Health and Safety Managers/Officers, Health & Safety Coordinators, Industrial Safety Officers, and Safety Practitioners.

### *Average Salary for Graduates*

According to the Red River College Graduate Satisfaction and Employment Report 2011/2012, the salary range for graduates of the full-time program was between \$35,984 and \$84,000. Salary range for part-time graduates was between \$49,140 and \$50,480. The upper salary range may be attributed to the type of training related employment for some graduates of the full-time program (i.e. Health & Safety Administrator) that were not identified by respondents of the part-time program.

The following information was included in the submission:

- Background – provided SAC with the details of the partnership with RWIP and a summary of the processes and outcomes of the redevelopment of the program
- Proposed Changes to the Program – identified the overall changes to the curriculum which included the addition of new courses and substantial changes to existing courses.
- Comparison of Current OH&S Program to the Proposed Program
- Labour Market Information
- A Program Outline which includes:
  - Admission Requirements
  - Courses and contact hours
  - Course descriptions
  - Co-op Practicum Information
  - Graduation Requirements
  - Average Salary for Graduates
  - Graduate Profile
  - Course Learning Outcomes
- DACUM Occupational Analysis
- Environmental Scan and Summary
- Advisory Committee Membership

A key component of the rationale for changing the program was demonstrating support for the changes by industry. The following organizations provided letters of support for the proposed changes:

- OH&S Program Advisory Committee
- Manitoba Hydro
- Nelson River Construction
- Manitoba Workplace Safety and Health
- Manitoba Federation of Labour
- Red River College Environmental Health & Safety Services

Since the last update report in October 2013, and the approval by SAC in November 2013 there has been one meeting of the Program Advisory Committee (January 14, 2014). Update meetings were held with WCB and RRC in January 2014, August 2014, and February 2015. E-mail communication between the WCB and RRC in January, June and November 2016 resulted in a meeting in December 2016 and a determination by the WCB in January 2017 to bring the project to conclusion.



## Next Steps

Although the project has not completed all of the intended outcomes, the WCB has decided to bring the project to conclusion. This decision was based on the meeting of December 20, 2016 regarding the following points:

- That the project was awarded in 2010. Typically WCB funded projects should be completed in two years and if not within three years at maximum;
- RRC had indicated that it would take at least an additional 2 to 3 years to complete the outstanding 4 online courses;
- Uncertainty surrounding the upcoming changes regarding eligibility criteria from the Board of Canadian Registered Safety Professionals (CRSP);
- Current lack of uptake of the online course already complete and available to students; and
- The financial statement provided in December 2016 indicates an unspent balance in excess of \$130,000.

Following review of the final report and financial statement by WCB, RRC is prepared to have the project concluded and to return to WCB any remaining financial contributions due to WCB. The project has been successful in many respects and only the lack of access to on-line developers and the currently non-existent demand for distance delivery has hindered the completion of the final outcomes. RRC would like to thank the WCB for awarding this RWIP grant and were pleased with the relationship that was enjoyed over the past several years.

