

## Mandate

Founded in 1970 and operating as a comprehensive academic and research institution under the authority of the *Alberta Post-secondary Learning Act*, Athabasca University is a public, board-governed, open and distance education university which serves students throughout Alberta, across Canada and around the world. Working as a partner within Campus Alberta, Athabasca University is committed to collaborating with other key stakeholders to ensure a seamless and responsive advanced education system that provides high-quality learning opportunities in support of lifelong learning.

The university offers a range of courses and programs leading to graduate and undergraduate degrees, certificates and diplomas in the humanities, the social sciences, the sciences, technology, business and the health disciplines.

As an open university, Athabasca University seeks to remove barriers to undergraduate and graduate education. It offers flexible enrolment opportunities for learners, regardless of age, gender, culture, income, disability, career and family obligations, geographic location or educational background. As a distance education university, Athabasca University provides flexibility for lifelong learners who cannot or choose not to undertake residential post-secondary education. The university offers learners the opportunity to interact with students across Canada and around the world through programs in established and emerging areas as it seeks to meet the needs of career professionals, develop research expertise and create knowledge that fosters a global outlook among its graduates.

Athabasca University provides high-quality, interactive learning environments that include a variety of online and other media technologies for individualized and cohort learning. The university's library and tutorial services and extensive student support services that facilitate access and increase learner success are integral aspects of a quality open and distance education system. Similarly, its course designs and technology applications are based on current research in open and distance education, pedagogical advances in lifelong learning and contemporary developments in online learning technologies. The university actively pursues technological innovations that can enhance its teaching, research and administrative functions.

The university provides undergraduate degree completion opportunities for university transfer students and college diploma graduates through credit co-ordination, credit transfer, prior learning assessment and associated forms of learning accreditation. It supports collaborations such as its degree completion agreements with colleges and partnership with Alberta-North. These collaborations, together with its participation in initiatives such as the Canadian Virtual University, reflect Athabasca University's longstanding commitment to adult and lifelong learners, to Aboriginal communities, to

learners in remote, rural and northern areas, to under-served urban populations and to program students at other universities who seek courses to accelerate degree completion. The university also acquires and maintains accreditation in other Canadian provinces and in appropriate international jurisdictions.

Athabasca University pursues and demonstrates excellence in research and scholarship, viewing research as central to the creation and mobilization of knowledge, the enhancement of its programs, the education of its students, the betterment of its community and the development of its faculty and future scholars. Besides its international reputation for research in all aspects of open and distance education and learning technologies innovation, the university is developing notable strength in interdisciplinary research in several areas such as Canadian studies, globalization and cultural studies, Indigenous education, space and environmental sciences, project management, and nursing and health management. Aspects of technological change are integral to many of these theme areas. By supporting and conducting research activity in all program areas, Athabasca University makes significant contributions to cultural, scientific and professional development in Alberta and beyond.

Athabasca University's academic, professional and support staff engage in professional service within the education system at local, provincial, national and international levels. The university encourages its members to serve a wide range of communities through activities such as volunteerism, community based research, involvement in local community organizations and participation in virtual learning communities.

*Approved by the Minister of Advanced Education and Technology on November 17, 2009*

## **Mission Statement**

Athabasca University, Canada's Open University, is dedicated to the removal of barriers that restrict access to and success in university-level study and to increasing equality of educational opportunity for adult learners worldwide. We are committed to excellence in teaching, research and scholarship and to being of service to the general public.

## **Principles**

Adherence to four key principles underlies all of AU's operations:

**Excellence:** We are dedicated achieving the highest standards in teaching, research, scholarship and student service.

**Openness:** We are committed to our mission of guaranteeing access to post-secondary learning to all who have the ability and desire.

**Flexibility:** We are committed to providing flexible learning models to meet learners' needs.

**Innovation:** We continue to adopt and develop learner-centred, technology based learning models.

## Values

The students, faculty and staff of Athabasca University profess a set of complementary values that are fundamental to the university's identity and provide the foundation for its practices.

- We value excellence: The search for excellence is the hallmark of all of our endeavours.
- We value learning: Student learning and satisfaction are measures of our success.
- We value scholarly research: We engage in reflective practice through the scholarship of discovery and the scholarship of teaching.
- We value the free exchange of ideas: A respectful climate for open discourse promotes innovation, discovery and social responsibility.
- We value openness and flexibility: Reducing barriers to education enhances access and social equity.
- We value diversity and inclusiveness: Diversity and inclusiveness enhance the quality both of learning and of the workplace.
- We value our employees: The commitment, innovation, creativity and continuous learning of every employee contribute to our success.
- We value accountability: We are accountable to our students, to each other and to the public.