



# Education City

## La Cité des connaissances

**Imagine ... harnessing the power and potential of college and university education**

**Imagine ... workplace learning with theory to earn a diploma and a degree**

**Imagine ... seamless laddered education focused on skills development**

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**This is the vision for Education City – a unique partnership among the post-secondary institutions in the Ottawa Region and Invest Ottawa**

**We are developing a new type of postsecondary education – an education that is flexible, capitalizes on the advantages of college and university education, and is linked to workplace training and on-going skill development**

### **Canada faces an employment challenge**

Over the next decade up to 50% of jobs will cease to exist or will change dramatically. Current employees will not have the skills to migrate into new jobs. At the same time, there is a significant under-representation of women, minorities and people with disabilities in the workforce especially in STEM disciplines.

We have a national challenge in re-training our current workforce. But we also have to change the training we provide for the next generation.

How can we create programs and opportunities to train and re-train employees on an on-going basis?

Over the next two years we will develop programs where students spend two years in college and university then enter employment. They will have the option to learn on the job and take courses specifically linked to their field of study. Completion of these short, condensed and/or online will lead to diplomas and degrees and create a life-long commitment for continuous upgrading of skills to ensure people remain job-ready.

### **Our solution ...**

Algonquin College, Carleton University, Collège La Cité and the University of Ottawa will develop programs in both official languages that will change the face of higher education.

The new programs will focus on providing students with the skills to learn (both practice and theory); focus on continuous micro and macro credentialing so they can highlight their skills that are relevant to the workplace; promote job-sustained learning that fosters life-long commitment to continuous skill development and upgrading; and offer laddered qualifications that can be linked to their specific place of work.



## The importance of community-based learning and scholarship

Underpinning the concept of *Education City/La Cité des connaissances* is the notion and importance of community-based learning and scholarship. Face-to-face components of the programming (first two years of study) will focus on the development of the soft skills and behaviours that are seen to be important for continuous learning, flexibility and adaptability. Students will be expected to understand why they need to identify and practise ongoing skills training and retraining to stay current in a rapidly changing workplace. Learning modules will also concentrate on understanding issues that define the human condition, exposing them to some of the vital socio-cultural and economic issues facing people in different circumstances. They will work through a series of theoretical and community-based models to develop and practise the skills of independent learning, and critical thinking linking, and the need to engage in ongoing learning.

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## Progress to date

Education City has made strong progress towards its goal over the last twelve months.

1. Each institution made a commitment to *Education City/La Cité des connaissances* in its Strategic Mandate Agreement
  2. The Government of Ontario funded a pilot project for two years to develop the concept and outline the pathways to success
  3. Invest Ottawa has become a fully-fledged and active partner in the *Education City/La Cité des connaissances*
  4. The Government of Ontario augmented funds for the original pilot program with a \$5 million David C. Onley Fund designed to foster employability and entrepreneurial skills among students with disabilities. This fund is being deployed across all four postsecondary institutions in the consortium
  5. The four institutions held two joint and collaborative workshops exploring the problems that students and higher education face and determined a course of action
  6. *Education City/La Cité des connaissances* is in discussion with major financial institutions to support the project and to offer the first ladder employment opportunities
  7. The first launch of the program: will focus on: (1) the tech sector; (2) the financial sector; and (3) government
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