

Culminating Tasks

BEST PRACTICES GUIDE

For Get SET Managers and Practitioners

MARCH 2026

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Introduction

Best Practices Guide

This guide is intended for Get SET (Skills, Education and Training) program managers and practitioners who support learners with culminating task (CT) completion.

This guide is organized into four sections: an overview of culminating tasks, organizational best practices, practitioner best practices, and program integration. It is intended to support both organizational planning and day-to-day practise.

This guide was developed using the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF) Culminating Task User Guide 2024, as well as through collaborative working group discussions with Get SET practitioners in 2025. These discussions, along with the User Guide, have informed the content for this Best Practices Guide.

The working groups were part of a 2025–2026 business plan deliverable funded by the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD -referred to as the Ministry in this document). The goal of the working group was to support Get SET practitioners in implementing culminating tasks and to provide opportunities to share best practices.

Organizations involved in this deliverable

- Laubach Literacy Ontario
- Learning Connections Hamilton (Formerly ABEA)
- Learning Ontario Central South
- Literacy Link Eastern Ontario
- Literacy Link South Central
- Literacy Northwest
- Quality in Lifelong Learning (QUILL) Network

Ministry Guidelines

As mentioned, the content in this Best Practices Guide follows the Ministry “OALCF Culminating Tasks User Guide 2024” (referred to as the CT Guide in this document). This guide is stored in the [OALCF Repository](#). The information in this Best Practices Guide does not replace the CT Guide but can be used as a supplement. Service providers are responsible for implementing culminating tasks according to the guidelines to ensure that they are used consistently, fairly, and meaningfully across Get SET agencies. Additionally, all learner information and assessment materials must be handled in accordance with organizational privacy policies and applicable legislation.

There was a major change regarding culminating tasks that was outlined in a memo dated November 1, 2024 from Annette Hutton, Director Program Delivery Support Branch MLITSD:

“Our expectation is that service providers will begin including culminating tasks in all learner plans. This will support service providers in capturing learners’ transition readiness and help to consistently document learner completions in CaMS at exit, as well as support our collective understanding of the relevance and efficacy of culminating tasks as an indicator of transition readiness.”

Note: CaMS in the above quote refers to Employment Ontario Information Systems – Case Management System EOIS-CaMS.

This means that the Ministry expects culminating tasks to be included and documented in every learner plan. This expectation does not mean that every learner must complete a culminating task; however, it does mean that every learner plan must include a culminating task that relates to the learner’s goal. The Ministry does see the completion of culminating tasks as important.

Culminating tasks are added to a learner plan at the start of a Get SET program and are intended to be administered when the learner is ready to transition to their next step, at the end of the learner plan, just prior to exit. This means that practitioners need to design learner plans with learning activities and milestones that will help learners build the skills needed to reach their goal. The expectation is that if a learner successfully completes their learner plan, they will have the skills and knowledge needed to attempt the culminating task, if the culminating task selected accurately aligns with their goal.

Note: CTs are for internal purposes only. They are not required by employers, apprenticeship programs, or educational institutions for admission or registration. They do not replace formal credentials such as a secondary school diploma, ACE certificate, GED/CAEC certificate, or industry certifications.

Section One: Overview of Culminating Tasks

Purpose

There are three reasons for using culminating tasks (CTs):

1. **CTs help both the practitioner and the learner understand the learner's readiness for their next steps.** They show whether the learner can manage expectations related to their goal path. They provide a clear target to work toward; they offer an opportunity to realize achievements and end their training on a positive note. While successfully completing a CT does not guarantee success, it is one way to demonstrate that the learner has the transferable skills, knowledge, and confidence needed for their next step.
2. **CTs support practitioners in developing learner plans and designing targeted training.** CTs are well researched so they can be used to provide insight into some of the key skills required for learner success in both individual and group training. They can be used to inform practitioner decisions about tasks, activities, and milestones for learner plans or training programs.
3. **The Ministry views culminating tasks as important because they support assessment and accountability within the Get SET program.** They align with the fair assessment principles used throughout Get SET and apply to all learners, regardless of delivery mode (in-person, online, or blended).

Design

Culminating tasks are comprehensive assessment activities designed to evaluate a learner's skills. They combine multiple competencies and task groups, sometimes at different levels of complexity. They are designed to demonstrate the learner's overall skill level and readiness for their next steps.

Development

It is important to understand the development process to fully understand the value in culminating tasks.

History

- 2012 - Introduction of 6 Culminating Tasks
- 2014 - Addition of 12 more Culminating Tasks
- 2022 - Development of 33 new Culminating Tasks
- 2025 - Development of 37 new Culminating Tasks
- 2026 – Development of 5 Secondary School Credit and 3 Postsecondary Culminating Tasks

The Ministry currently funds the development of culminating tasks through the Learning Networks of Ontario and Provincial Support Organizations. Culminating tasks are developed by knowledgeable consultants with experience in literacy.

CTs are developed following three critical steps. The following outlines the three steps in the development of a CT for the employment and apprenticeship goal paths. The process for developing CTs for the other goal paths follows a similar process.

1. Research

Interviews: Developers speak with industry professionals to understand actual job responsibilities and day-to-day tasks.

- Authentic documents: Whenever possible, original workplace documents are collected or recreated. These documents are used to design tasks that reflect actual job demands.
- Sources: Learning materials and occupational training resources are reviewed to strengthen accuracy and relevance of the CT. Labour market information is gathered from a variety of sources and used to inform the development of each CT.

2. Writing the Culminating Task

Assessment

- Job responsibilities are analyzed and broken into specific skills.
- The key job skills are identified and then linked to the OALCF competencies.
- Sample questions that guide developers
 - Which skills are essential for this job/apprenticeship/activity?
 - Which documents are central to the role? E.g. workplace documents
 - How do these documents connect to the competencies?
 - How can tasks be created to show understanding of both the documents and the required skills?

Developing tasks

- Developers use authentic documents and create task-based questions intended to assess comprehension and skill application.
 - Examples of authentic documents: Retail store invoices, automotive technical service bulletins, user guides for electricians
- If there are multiple sections, each section is built around at least one document or task with multiple related questions to ensure thorough understanding.

3. Review and revision

- Draft CTs undergo extensive content review by Get SET professionals, across cultural streams (Anglophone, Francophone, Indigenous, and Deaf) and delivery sectors (community-based, school board, and college) and by experienced evaluators who have been trained in the task-vetting process
- Reviewers assess competency levels, accuracy, clarity and ease of understanding and appropriateness of difficulty.
- Feedback is collected, and revisions are made until the task meets quality standards.
- CTs are translated and posted in the OALCF Repository.

Current as of February 2026

Options

Currently there are 88 culminating tasks across all five OALCF goal paths:

- Apprenticeship: 28 CTs (including some for short-term skills training)
- Employment: 36 CTs (covering roles from administrative assistant to winery assistant)
- Independence: 9 CTs (focused on daily living skills)
- Postsecondary: 9 CTs (preparing for further education)
- Secondary School Credit: 6 CTs (supporting credit completion)

Each time a culminating task is used providers must download the most current version from the OALCF Repository because changes and revisions are ongoing. Master copies are not to be stored in-house on agency systems.

Note: Completed culminating tasks and associated materials must be stored securely in the learner's file in accordance with privacy requirements.

Versions

Each culminating task has two versions:

- **Learner Version:** Includes clear instructions and all documents or materials the learner needs.
- **Practitioner Version:** Includes administration guidelines, marking schemes, and evaluation criteria to support consistent assessment.

Storage and Access

- All CTs are stored in the password-protected OALCF Repository managed by Contact North.
- Access is arranged by Service Provider Registration Authority (SPRA) designate who submits a request to echannel@contactnorth.ca with the name and email of the individual who requires access.

EOIS-CaMS Reporting

Culminating task completion is one of the three indicators in the Ministry's Completion of Goal Path measure. At the time of publication, this measure does not count in EOIS-CaMS.

When closing the learner's file in CaMS, providers must choose one of the following:

- **Yes** – the culminating task was successfully completed.
- **No** – the culminating task was attempted but not successful.
- **No response** – the learner exits early, or the learner and practitioner decide not to complete the culminating task, or the learner earns required external credentials without completing the culminating task.

Note: If a No Response answer is selected in CaMS, it is a good practice to include the reason for this selection in the Learner's file.

Note: Actual scores are **not** entered into CaMS. Copies of the completed CT are to be stored in secure, confidential learner files.

Section Two: Best Practices for Get SET Organizations

Policies and Procedures

Get SET organizations are encouraged to develop policies and procedures that guide how culminating tasks are used in their organizations. Along with the OALCF Culminating Tasks User Guide, the following questions can guide discussion, planning, and decision-making in implementing culminating tasks in each Get SET organization.

Current Readiness

- To what degree does your organization currently use culminating tasks?
 - Just starting or very experienced?
- Does your agency have a plan to increase the number of learners completing CTs?
 - How might you encourage more learners to participate in completing a CT?
- Does your agency have a plan that ensures all staff/practitioners are fully trained on the use of CTs with learners?
- Are all staff familiar and comfortable implementing the steps in the OALCF Culminating Task User Guide?
- Are your staff familiar with culminating tasks currently available?
 - Have staff reviewed the new CTs posted in the OALCF Repository over the last few years? Have staff reviewed any CTs in detail?
 - Have staff participated in any workshops related to CTs?
 - Do all practitioners use CTs equally, or do some use CTs more often?
 - Do practitioners have preferred CTs?
 - Does your organization have a way for practitioners to share their CT experiences and recommendations with other practitioners?
- What are the strengths and limitations of your current approach to implementing culminating tasks?

Selecting Culminating Tasks

- Does your organization use all available culminating tasks, or have you identified a selected group of CTs that practitioners can choose from?
 - Are there CTs that align with your existing training programs? e.g. Secondary School CTs.
 - If CTs are not pre-selected what is the process practitioners follow to make their selection?
- How are learners involved in the selection of CT?

Documentation

- How does your agency document the culminating task in the learner plan?
 - If you are not using the Ministry learner plan template, does your agency-specific template have a place to track CTs?
- Are there additional notes in the learner's file that record why a CT was selected, or the learner's achievement or outcome?
- If "no response" is selected in CaMS reporting, is the reason clearly documented in the learner file?
- How does the information get transferred to the CaMS administrator?

Shared Protocols with Other Get SET Organizations

When learners are working with two Get SET organizations, the organizations can coordinate a plan to have one organization administer the culminating task. However, both organizations can record the results. Each organization must document how the training they provided contributed to the learner's success. These shared protocols help ensure learners are not asked to complete multiple culminating tasks unnecessarily.

- Does your organization have agreements with other Get SET organizations in your region for sharing culminating tasks?
 - Do you already have procedures in place for sharing milestones with other service providers? If so, can they be expanded to include sharing culminating tasks?
 - With all information sharing, learners must provide written consent.

Onboarding and Staff Training

It is important that training in administering CTs is provided, and practitioners understand the process. The following questions support the development of consistent onboarding to ensure everyone has the information they need.

- How do staff learn about the value of CTs, the process and options and how do they gain access to the OALCF Repository?
 - The information in Section Three of this Guide will offer information to help build your onboarding process.

- How does your organization ensure that staff responsible for discussing and administering culminating tasks with learners receive specific training in:
 - Selecting CTs
 - Using CTs to build learner plans, select milestones, select tasks and build targeted training programs
 - Talking to learners about CTs
 - Completing all documentation, including learner plans and files and CaMS
 - Administering CTs including applying the marking scheme
 - Providing feedback to learners

- How do you ensure that practitioners have a strong understanding of the competencies and skills being assessed?

- How are other staff cross-trained to support continuity?
 - How do you ensure that all staff, regardless of role, understand the purpose and value of culminating tasks, when they are used, and how they support learner plans?
 - How do you divide CT responsibilities – e.g. do you have one or many CT administrators?
 - Who enters results into CaMS?

Note: Organizations are encouraged to integrate this guide into onboarding and annual professional-development planning.

Section Three: Best Practices for Practitioners

Practitioners are responsible for discussing and facilitating the culminating tasks with learners.

Practitioners who use CTs advise that it is important to support learners and maintain the Get SET culture. This includes ensuring learners know that a CT is not a test and they are not mandatory. They provide an opportunity to celebrate all that the learner has achieved and their readiness to take the next steps and transition from a Get SET program.

Supporting Learners

How culminating tasks are introduced can strongly affect learner confidence, motivation, and engagement. Practitioners should approach these conversations with care, respect, and a focus on learner strengths.

Introduce the idea of a culminating task during learner plan development and select a culminating task to include. Talk to the learner at this stage so they know that the CT is included in the plan but optional.

Consider ways to encourage and support learners and involve them in the discussion throughout their training program.

Use learner-friendly language to reduce anxiety. Replace the term culminating task with terms such as culminating activity, final activity or review activity.

For example: “Near the end of your training, you have the option of doing a review activity that brings together the skills you have been working on. It will show you how much you’ve learned, and it will build your confidence for taking your next steps.”

Tips from Practitioners

- Present culminating tasks as an activity.
- Listen more than you talk – let the learner’s perspective guide the conversation.
- Focus on growth, not perfection – emphasize progress and learning.
- Be flexible – adapt how you explain the task based on learner needs.
- Provide encouragement – be honest and reinforce confidence.
- Follow through – honour any supports or check-ins you commit to.

Sample Language for Talking with Learners

Set a Supportive Tone

“You’ve been making good progress in your learner plan. The culminating activity is a chance to bring together what you’ve learned and use it in a real-world way. It’s not a test; it’s a way to show how your skills connect to your goals.”

Connect CTs to their Goals

“This final activity relates to your goal of [employment / education / independence]. It lets you practise the kinds of tasks you’re likely to see next.”

Address Support and Readiness

“We’ll use the same supports you’ve had throughout your training. The tasks are presented in manageable steps. You won’t be doing this alone.”

Implementation

Aligning CTs with a Learner Plan

Depending on organizational policies, practitioners may use a pre-selected list of culminating tasks, or they may independently search for and select culminating tasks based on individual learner needs, goals, past experiences, or confidence. Learners should be involved in the selection of the CT.

- Consider how the learner plan can be designed to support learner success
 - Which learning activities and milestones support the development of skills, competencies and levels needed for success in reaching learner goals, which ultimately supports the learner successfully completing a relevant culminating task?
- What other skills or knowledge will support learner success in achieving their overall goal, including the culminating task?

When Are Culminating Tasks Completed?

They are intended as a final review or wrap-up activity that brings together the learning activities, milestones, and skill development completed throughout the learner plan, so they are done when the learner is close to leaving the program.

- To reasonably expect success, learners should only complete a culminating task after sufficient skill-building has taken place.

- Learners should complete their regular learning activities and task-based activities successfully at the same level or higher than what the culminating task requires.
- Learners must agree to doing a culminating task
 - They must feel ready and motivated.

Culminating Task Steps

- Provide a quiet, supervised space for learners to complete the CT.
- Explain there is a time limit for the CT
 - The suggested time limit for most CTs is included in the practitioner’s version.
 - Time limits reflect realistic workplace, life or educational expectations.
- CTs are typically completed in one session; however, additional sessions are allowed if needed for accommodation.
- Ask the learner to submit all materials, including rough work, when finished.

Accommodating Persons with Disabilities and Learning Challenges

While practitioners must not change any questions or tasks within a culminating task, they can apply accommodations that were part of the learner’s regular program. For example, extra time, assistive technology, or adaptive supports.

- All accommodations used during the culminating task must be documented in the learner file.

Scoring and Interpretation

- Marking schemes must be followed exactly as written.
 - Some professional judgment is allowed for higher-level critical thinking responses.
- A score of 70% overall is the typical benchmark for success (the benchmark applies to the total score for the task, not to individual sections.)
 - This 70% standard aligns with realistic expectations used in workplaces and training programs.

Debrief: Feedback and Next Steps

When possible, practitioners should review the results with the learner. This debrief includes:

- Showing the completed culminating task and the scoring
- Highlighting their strengths
- Identifying areas for improvement

After the debrief, all materials must be securely stored in the learner's file.

Re-administration

All steps need to be taken to support learner success e.g. ensuring the CT selected aligns with the learner's goals, training, milestones, and the learner has successfully completed the steps in their learner plan before attempting a culminating task. However, it is possible that a learner will not be successful. In that case it is important for the practitioners to review and reflect on the circumstances to identify factors that may have affected the outcome.

- Learners are not required to complete the culminating task a second time, however if the learner was not successful and wishes to try again, it is important for the practitioner to determine why the learner was not successful the first time
 - If re-administration does occur, learners must first have enough time to build the skills they were missing.
- In special cases, such as technical issues or health concerns, practitioners may allow an immediate re-attempt.

Note: If the learner is retaking the culminating task, it is important that practitioners provide general feedback on the first CT without providing the correct answers. Together a plan can be developed so the learner can gain or refresh the skills needed to complete the CT successfully.

Section Four: Integrating Culminating Tasks into Training

Existing Training

When adding a culminating task to an established training program, such as Targeted Training, start by searching for a CT that aligns with the activities and milestones currently used.

Review the Training Program

- What is the focus or topic of the training program?
- Which goal path does it align with?
- Which competencies and skills are being developed?

Review Available Culminating Tasks

- Review the culminating tasks in the Repository that are in the same goal path as the training e.g. if you offer a Customer Service training program, start with the CTs listed in the employment goal path.
- Look for:
 - task titles that align with the training, or
 - general tasks that reflect similar skills.
- Note: If you don't find an exact match, review tasks in other goal paths, focusing on skills rather than topic.

Confirm Alignment

- Review both the Learner Version and Practitioner Version of the culminating task.
- Confirm alignment between:
 - The goal of the training/the learner's goal
 - Competencies
 - Skill focus
 - Levels
 - Content and task expectations

Then ask the following questions:

- Will current learning activities prepare learners to successfully complete the culminating task?
- Are there gaps in skills or competencies that need to be added into the training? E.g. there is a skill or competency in the CT that is not in your current training program?
- Do the existing milestones used in the training align with the CT competencies and levels, or should others be added or removed?

New Training

Targeted training often benefits from intentional use of a culminating task. Culminating tasks can be used to guide the design of new training programs. Consider using the culminating task to develop your training program through reverse engineering.

Note: Culminating tasks can guide training design, without removing broader instructional goals or learner-identified needs.

Clarify the Purpose

- Is the training connected to:
 - a specific job, occupation, or industry, or
 - general employability skills (e.g., communication, teamwork, digital literacy)?

Identify a Culminating Task

- Is there a culminating task that clearly aligns with the training focus?
- If yes, review:
 - the Learner Version (what learners complete), and
 - the Practitioner Version (assessment expectations).
- If you can't find a direct match focus on:
 - the goal path, and
 - the skills being developed rather than the training topic alone.

When deciding on culminating tasks, ask:

- What topics are covered?
- Which competencies are assessed?
- What types of documents are used (e.g., invoices, policies, schedules)?
- What writing is expected (sentences, short answers, emails, business documents)?
- What numeracy skills are required?
- Are there single questions or skill areas that need specific instruction or practise?

Select the culminating task that will best fit the big picture of the skills and knowledge that the learner will need to succeed in the training and in their next steps.

Once a culminating task is selected, identify the topics, skills, competencies and levels that need to be addressed during the training to prepare for the culminating task, and also for the end goal... (i.e., job, educational program, apprenticeship, etc.)

Break down the curriculum needs

- What skills or knowledge are needed for the goal?
- What learning activities are needed to develop the learner's skills?
- What milestones align with the content, skills, and competencies?

Review of the Practitioner Version

- Confirm:
 - competencies and levels
 - scoring expectations
 - requirements for showing work in math
 - expectations for writing (sentences, grammar, structure, content)
- Ensure the required skills are explicitly taught so the learner is prepared to meet the expectations of the culminating task.

Example: Culminating Task for Retail Associate

Competencies, tasks groups and levels included in this culminating task

Competency	Find and Use Information	Communicate Ideas and Information	Understand and Use Numbers
Task Groups and Levels	Read continuous text A1.2 Interpret documents A2.2	Complete and create documents B3.2	Manage Money C1.2

Once you understand the competencies, skills, content and levels expected within the culminating task, move forward with breaking down what needs to be covered for the learner to be successful in face-to-face or online training.

Build Skills Specific to the Goal

Providing context helps learners understand why the skills matter.

- What skills are required for this job or topic?
- What are typical job responsibilities?
- What knowledge and skill levels are expected?
- Review labour market information and Job Bank resources where applicable.

Example: Retail Associate Training - Start with a list of job responsibilities so you know the skills that need to be taught in your training program. These skills will help agencies determine what curriculum they would use with learners and inform which milestones they complete on route to a related culminating task. Note: these lists of skills/job responsibilities can be gained through research online and by contacting your local planning board or employment services.

Cash Desk	Sales Floor	General knowledge
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Point-of-sale system • Cash handling • Making change • Rounding money • Understanding taxes, discounts, coupons, price matching • Canadian currency • Counting/balancing floats • Deposits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer service • Handling difficult customers • Giving and receiving information or instructions • Merchandising • Product knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company policies and procedures • Health and Safety • Schedules • Forms • Teamwork • Problem solving • Time management

Use Milestones

- Identify milestones that align with the culminating task’s competencies and levels.
- Explore additional milestones that support the topic or occupation.

Milestones don’t need to be used excessively but addressing important sections of the culminating task or the job can ensure that the learner’s skills are developed in this area. For example, milestone 38 under “Understand and Use Numbers” requires a learner to review invoices and is an excellent resource for the Retail Associate CT and the job itself.

Use Learning Activities

Learning activities are used to develop and build skills throughout the training. They provide opportunities to learn and practise skills in a variety of competencies and levels.

- Review the areas or topics covered within the CT and source activities that match. Examples for Retail: Invoices, Policies and Procedures, Health & Safety, Cash handling, etc.

Resources

Get SET has numerous resources available to support the Culminating Task process including learning activities that support skill development as learners work towards successful completion of a milestone or a culminating task. Some resources available to practitioners for finding learning activities include

- Task-Based Activities Portal (<https://taskbasedactivitiesforlbs.ca/>)
 - Task-based activities can be searched by goal path, competency, and/or level to make alignment to culminating tasks or milestones easier. Additionally, specific searches (e.g. for job titles or named tasks) can be done using the search bar available on the site.
 - The Culminating Task/Milestone Match Database matches task-based activities and milestones to the competencies and skills outlined in the culminating task <https://lbsresourcesandforum.contactnorth.ca/mod/data/view.php?d=6&mode=single&page=56>
- Resources and Forum: <https://lbsresourcesandforum.contactnorth.ca/>

Note: You will also find supporting material on most Support Organization websites.

Thank You

On behalf of Laubach Literacy Ontario, Learning Connections Hamilton, Learning Ontario Central South, Literacy Link Eastern Ontario, Literacy Link South Central, Literacy Northwest, QUILL Learning Network we thank the participants of the working groups from across Ontario for sharing their insights and recommendations that were critical in helping us to build this document!

