



# MSVU Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM) Plan Draft Framework

*Strategic Enrolment Management* (SEM) is a deliberate and targeted approach to enrolment that considers the whole of the institution and the overall student experience (academic and university) and progression from recruitment to completion. A *SEM plan* identifies priorities and areas of focus to help direct resources in a way that has the most effective impact, while also ensuring that we remain focused on what matters to MSVU and its mission. Much like the world today, the postsecondary sector continues to face challenges and uncertainty. The SEM plan attempts to provide MSVU with a roadmap to guide us through the next five years, ensuring that MSVU can continue to offer a strong academic and university experience to all its students. This document provides a high-level overview of the direction and focus of MSVU's first SEM plan.

With this SEM plan, MSVU aims for a modest increase in overall enrolment achieved through recruitment and retention initiatives outlined in this plan. In keeping with MSVU's history and commitment to social justice and providing access to education for underrepresented groups, the SEM plan affirms MSVU's commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility (EDIA), increasing access and removing barriers to education.

MSVU is committed to balanced and sustainable enrolment that recognizes current infrastructure and resources (human and financial) as well as the need for consistent and reliable enrolment. When measuring enrolment, this SEM Plan considers both the number of students and the number of courses they take in terms of the resources required to provide these students with strong academic and university experiences. Within the broader context of enrolment at MSVU, the SEM plan focuses on the following areas:

- **Strengthen domestic student enrolment**, particularly in Undergraduate programs and Graduate Professional Studies & Arts programs.
- **Diversify enrolment across all faculties**, with a focus on *prioritized student groups*, including African-Nova Scotian and Indigenous students, students with disabilities, 2SLGBTQIA+ students, first generation students, mature students, and transfer students.
- **Stabilize international enrolment and programs of study**. Maintain balance between international and domestic students at all academic levels. Ensure international students from diverse geographic regions are represented in all academic departments throughout the university.
- **Maintain a strong academic and university experience for all students**. Improve transition efforts with a focus on students in their first and second years of study as well as transfer and online students. Reduce barriers to completion to support student persistence and progression.
- **Continue to build on MSVU's commitment to access and impact**. Expand *flexible learning opportunities* and ensure an equitable experience for all students across all modes of delivery. Improve the educational outcomes and university experiences of prioritized student groups.

## Enrolment at MSVU

MSVU has experienced fluctuating enrolment over the past five years. The peak enrolment years of 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 were followed by a general decline in overall enrolment numbers. It should be noted, however, that the decline in enrolment is less significant when measured by *full-time equivalencies (FTEs)*. Enrolment varies by program and academic level, with Education (B.Ed.) and Graduate Education Cohorts experiencing growth over the past five years, and Undergraduate enrolment declining since 2020. Between 2020 and 2023, MSVU's decline in domestic student enrolment was offset by an increase in international student enrolment. However, the recent Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) changes to study permit and immigration regulations have resulted in a decline in international student enrolment at MSVU. These changes are most evident in Undergraduate programs and Graduate Professional Studies programs.

Within this context, the SEM plan uses enrolment targets to guide initiatives and provide focus for the overall goals and tactics. Instead of using an arbitrary number, the SEM Plan attempts to achieve balanced and sustainable growth by using levers of enrolment such as retention and the *conversion* of applicants to students. To build on MSVU's commitment to access and impact, the SEM plan highlights the experiences of *prioritized student groups* and the balance between domestic and international students.

CONVERSION & MELT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▲ Increase the number of domestic Undergraduate applicants converting to registered students by 15% by 2030</li> <li>▲ Increase the number of domestic Graduate applicants converting to registered students by 10% by 2030</li> <li>▼ Decrease domestic Undergraduate <i>melt rate</i> to 10% by 2030</li> <li>▼ Decrease domestic Graduate melt rate by 10% by 2030</li> <li>◆ Ensure <i>conversion and melt</i> rates for prioritized student groups reach these same targets</li> </ul>
RETENTION & TRANSITION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▲ Increase Undergraduate retention rates to 85% by 2030</li> <li>▲ Increase retention between first and second year by 5% by 2030</li> <li>▲ Increase Graduate retention rates to 90% by 2030</li> <li>— Maintain B.Ed. retention rates at 95%</li> <li>◆ Ensure retention rates for prioritized student groups reach these same targets</li> </ul>
DOMESTIC STUDENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▲ Increase domestic student enrolment in Undergraduate programs by 5% by 2030</li> <li>▲ Increase domestic student enrolment in Graduate Professional Studies &amp; Arts programs by 10% by 2030</li> </ul>
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS
<p>The following guidelines will be used to help stabilize international enrolment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ International students should comprise no more than 25% and no less than 15% of MSVU's overall enrolment</li> <li>◆ Ensure diversity of geographic regions. No more than 25% of international students should come from one region.</li> <li>◆ Diversify international student programs of study. By 2030, international students should comprise no more than 50% of any program's enrolment</li> </ul>
PRIORITIZED STUDENT GROUPS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▲ Increase number of students from prioritized student groups enrolled at all academic levels by 10% by 2030</li> <li>▲ Increase distribution of prioritized student groups across all academic departments</li> </ul>

## Goals and Strategies

### Recruitment and Conversion

<b>Goal 1: Strengthen domestic student enrolment, stabilize international enrolment, and increase the diversity of the overall MSVU student body with a focus on prioritized student groups.</b>
Strategy 1: Ensure balanced and sustainable enrolment across all academic levels.
Strategy 2: Increase access and improve pathways to MSVU.
Strategy 3: Increase the diversity of MSVU's student population, with a focus on prioritized student groups.
Strategy 4: Ensure that financial aid, financial practices, and scholarships reflect the realities of current and future MSVU students.
Strategy 5: Increase awareness of MSVU's programs and level of demand.

### Retention, Persistence, and Completion

<b>Goal 2: Create a supportive environment that removes barriers and helps facilitate a smooth pathway for students from the beginning of their program through to completion.</b>
Strategy 1: Develop student-centred and data-informed course scheduling practices.
Strategy 2: Develop a data-driven and student-centred approach to program progression and completion.
Strategy 3: Improve the educational outcomes and experiences of prioritized student groups.
Strategy 4: Increase transition to postsecondary support for all students, including an awareness of academic and cultural expectations.
Strategy 5: Increase flexible learning opportunities available to students at all academic levels.
Strategy 6: Support students in their development of career readiness.

<b>Goal 3: Ensure MSVU provides students with an engaging, consistent, and cohesive experience that meets their needs in an accessible and culturally responsive environment.</b>
Strategy 1: Create a student and campus engagement culture that is unique to MSVU.
Strategy 2: Improve internal communication with students.
Strategy 3: Improve the user experience of the MSVU website and utilize it more effectively as a communications tool.
Strategy 4: Identify and address procedural barriers and systemic issues.
Strategy 5: Ensure student services meet the university-related needs of MSVU's students.
Strategy 6: Facilitate connections between departments and units to ensure a cohesive and consistent student experience.

### SEM Culture

<b>Goal 4: Integrate SEM practices into MSVU's culture and structure.</b>
Strategy 1: Foster a SEM culture across MSVU that establishes awareness of and accountability for enrolment across MSVU.
Strategy 2: Establish consistent data and reporting structures that enable effective and data-informed decision making

## Implementation

The current SEM Plan governance will be adapted to ensure the implementation of the SEM plan. The Steering Committee will return to SEMC and will be responsible for overall oversight of the plan. The

Planning Committee will become the Implementation Committee and will be responsible for developing annual tactical plans and supporting the work required to achieve the goals and tactics of the SEM plan. Working groups for smaller projects will be developed as necessary.

## Summary of SEM Planning Process to Date

2021	MSVU's Strategic Plan, <a href="#">Strength Through Community</a> , identified the need to "Develop a strategic enrolment management plan and refine student processes to better meet the needs of students throughout their lifecycle from prospect to alumni" (Transformative Teaching and Learning, Strategy 2c). The Strategic Plan also identified developing and implementing a SEM plan as a strategy to achieve its theme of operational excellence and sustainability (Theme 7, Strategy 1a).
2022	MSVU hired Academica to conduct an internal and external review to begin the process of developing a SEM plan. Using the results of their findings, Academica wrote an Environmental Scan, an Assessments Report, and an Enrollment Funnel Analysis (all available on the <a href="#">intranet</a> ).
September 2023	Senior Advisor, Strategic Enrolment Management (contract position) hired to lead and oversee the development of MSVU's SEM plan.
December 2023 – April 2024	Senior Advisor, SEM conducted a series of community consultations to discuss SEM, areas of concern, and potential areas for focus for SEM plan development. A total of 14 student focus groups and consultation sessions with 15 staff groups and 13 academic departments and committees were held. The results of these consultations are available in the <a href="#">Campus Feedback Report</a> (available on the intranet).
April 2024	Terms of Reference and membership finalized for SEM Steering Committee and SEM Planning Committee (available on the <a href="#">intranet</a> ).
May 2024	The planning phase of the SEM project started with a two-day planning workshop hosted by Academica. Members of the SEM Steering & Planning Committees, Department Chairs, Education Coordinators, Graduate Coordinators, Librarians, and members of <a href="#">CAPP</a> , <a href="#">UCC</a> , and <a href="#">GSPP</a> were invited to attend and contribute to the workshop sessions.
June – September 2024	SEM Planning Committee used results of the workshop and additional documents to develop themes, guiding principles, and areas of focus for the SEM Plan. Committee developed a series of <a href="#">challenge statements</a> (available on the intranet) to structure further MSVU community participation in the SEM planning process.
August – December 2024	SEM Steering Committee engaged in optimum enrolment planning exercises. Identified areas of priority and enrolment targets to structure the SEM plan.
October – November 2024	SEM Planning Committee hosted three workshops where participants were invited to develop strategies, tactics, and solutions for the SEM challenge statements. Workshops were open to all MSVU staff and faculty. Those who could not attend workshops were invited to submit feedback separately. A

	total of 90 individuals (beyond the Steering and Planning Committee members) participated in the sessions, which resulted in over 250 suggested strategies, tactics, and potential areas of focus. A <a href="#">full list of suggested tactics and strategies</a> is available on the intranet.
November 2024 – February 2025	. The SEM Planning Committee used material developed during strategy workshops and previous planning activities to develop a draft SEM plan and SEM plan framework. SEM Steering Committee reviewed and provided feedback on draft plan and framework.
March – April 2025	SEM Plan draft framework circulated for input from MSVU faculty and staff.

## Glossary

Conversion	The rate of accepted applicants who confirm acceptance by paying their confirmation deposit. Confirmed students have a status of SR, DA, and DC in Colleague.
Flexible learning opportunities	Flexible learning means providing students with more choice in how and when they learn. This includes offering more online deliveries, including asynchronous learning, as well as more opportunities for blended and other non-traditional learning. Flexibility can also mean changes in the timing of deliveries, including more evening and weekend courses, and more summer offerings. It could also include the duration of learning, including more compressed offerings outside of the summer terms as well as longer offerings in the summer terms.
Full-time equivalencies (FTEs)	The ratio of overall headcount compared to the number of courses taken by students. This number is reached by dividing billing units by 5.
Melt rate	The percentage of new students who pay their confirmation deposit and/or enroll in courses but do not attend MSVU. Measured by comparing the students who enroll in courses with the students who receive final grades.
Prioritized student groups	Student groups identified in the Strategic Plan, <i>Strength Through Community</i> , including African-Nova Scotian students, Indigenous students, students with disabilities, and 2SLGBTQIA+ students. In keeping with MSVU's mission and historic priorities, we also identify and prioritize first-generation, mature, and transfer students.
Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM)	Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM) is a deliberate and targeted approach to enrolment that considers the whole of the institution and the overall student experience (academic and university) and progression from recruitment to completion.
Strategic Enrolment Management (SEM) Plan	A SEM plan identifies priorities and areas of focus to help direct resources in a way that has the most effective impact, while also ensuring that we remain focused on what matters to MSVU and its mission.

For all inquiries and discussion of the SEM Plan Framework draft, please contact the Senior Advisor, Strategic Enrolment Management at [marisha.caswell@msvu.ca](mailto:marisha.caswell@msvu.ca) or by [booking an appointment](#).