

CONSULTATION PAPER:

Accelerated Apprenticeship Pathway

Ministry of Education

Fall 2023

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PURPOSE

On March 8, 2023, the Premier of Ontario announced the government's intention to consult with various stakeholders about ways to make it even easier for young people to enter a career in the skilled trades.

As the government continues to build Ontario by investing in highways and key infrastructure, and developing 1.5 million homes by 2030, the demand for skilled trades workers will only continue to rise. Businesses across the province are already recognizing the important role a robust workforce will play in ensuring the province's economic success. To support more people to access careers in the skilled trades, the government is exploring approaches to implement an accelerated apprenticeship pathway.

The Ministry of Education is launching consultations to receive feedback on possible models for an accelerated apprenticeship pathway, starting in Grade 11. This consultation is connected to, but separate from the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development's consultation on exploring the potential of lowering Academic Entry Requirements (AERs) for apprenticeship registration for trades set at a Grade 12 level.

The Ministry of Education is seeking feedback from the following stakeholder groups through this Consultation Paper (feedback may also be sought from these and/or other stakeholder groups through different means):

- A. School Boards and Education Federations/Unions/Associations
- B. Employers/Training Delivery Agents/Trade Unions
- C. Parents/Parent and Community Groups and Students/Student Groups/Associations
- D. Postsecondary Education Institutions
- E. Indigenous Partners

To support the consultation, the Ministry of Education is proposing two models for consideration to implement the accelerated apprenticeship pathway. While these models may not be the only approaches to implementing an accelerated apprenticeship pathway, they are being proposed through the consultation for the purposes of supporting stakeholders in providing targeted feedback and input. The two models being proposed for consideration by stakeholders are:

1. **Equivalent Apprenticeship Learning** whereby the student remains a student of their school board while pursuing apprenticeship learning full time.
2. **Employer Supervised Apprenticeship** whereby the apprentice would no longer be a student of the school board and would be excused from attendance at school while pursuing apprenticeship learning full time.

These models will form the basis of feedback from stakeholders for input on implementation. The ministry will then consider stakeholder feedback to develop the approach to implement the accelerated apprenticeship pathway.

The parameters for both models under consideration include the following:

- Students would participate after having completed 16 credits (i.e., after completing Grade 10).

- Students would need to have a Registered Training Agreement in place, which requires an individual to be at least 16 years old, and would be working towards their Certificate of Apprenticeship.
- This consultation paper is focused on a *full-time* apprenticeship pathway outside of opportunities that currently exist, including Specialist High Skills Majors and the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program or Dual Credit Level 1 Apprenticeship training, towards the Ontario Secondary School Diploma or Ontario Secondary School Certificate.

This Consultation Paper is focused on the accelerated apprenticeship pathway, starting in Grade 11. It includes information on the proposed models and outlines how individuals and organizations can provide feedback and input.

CONTEXT

Ontario’s Skilled Trades and Apprenticeship System

In 2021, the Ontario government introduced the *Building Opportunities in the Skilled Trades Act, 2021* (BOSTA), legislation designed to make the province’s skilled trades and apprenticeship system more efficient, accessible and easier to navigate. BOSTA came into force on January 1, 2022. Skilled Trades Ontario (STO), an agency of the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development, was continued under BOSTA and is responsible for establishing apprenticeship programs, including developing curriculum and training standards.

Apprenticeship programs may include on-the-job and in-class training for individuals seeking certification in Ontario in the skilled trades. Apprentices work with, and learn from, experienced individuals and earn wages during their apprenticeship (subject to any exceptions in the *Employment Standards Act, 2000*). Apprentices also learn in classroom settings (in-class training) from skilled instructors. It can take between two to five years to complete an apprenticeship.

Currently, secondary school students can begin working towards an apprenticeship during Grades 11 and 12 through the following options:

- [Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program \(OYAP\)](#)
- [Specialist High Skills Major \(SHSM\)](#) program
- [Dual Credit](#) program
- Courses in [technological education](#) and/or [cooperative education](#) offered in their secondary school.

OBJECTIVES

The objective of the proposed models is to help more students enter the skilled trades faster and address Ontario’s labour shortages through a full-time apprenticeship program.

The proposed changes are designed to:

- **Improve access into the skilled trades:** Create more opportunities for students to pursue a career in the skilled trades.

- **Address labour market supply challenges:** Enable more students to enter the skilled trades faster and bolster Ontario’s skilled trades workforce.

MODELS FOR FEEDBACK

Model 1: Equivalent Apprenticeship Learning

In this model, students would remain a pupil of their school board and be partially funded on the secondary school register. These students would be excused from attending school on a daily basis, while they continue to participate in equivalent apprenticeship learning under the supervision of the board while in a registered training agreement with an apprenticeship sponsor (e.g., an employer). Check-ins with a school or board staff (e.g., teacher, Student Success Teacher, Student Success Lead, OYAP Recruiter, provincial attendance counsellor or other primary contact) would take place on a regular basis, and students would earn secondary school credits while also working toward their apprenticeship.

Students would work towards earning their Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) in addition to their Certificate of Apprenticeship. The credits would be earned through their hands-on apprenticeship experience and could be a combination of the following:

- Cooperative Education focused on skilled trades and apprenticeship.
- Additional secondary school credits to recognize apprenticeship experience deemed to be equivalent learning to courses offered in existing Ontario curriculum (the Ministry of Education would conduct a review to identify course bundles that would be matched with groups of trades that could include for example math, science, and technological education courses).
- New courses/specific assignments could be developed over time to provide apprenticeship-specific learning and/or possibly as an alternative to some mandatory courses which could be earned through flexible models, such as hands-on experience during their apprenticeship time, or through participation in some traditional classroom learning either remotely, in night school or summer school.

Students would have continued access to school board services and supports (e.g., guidance services, Student Success teacher/team). Students could also participate in school-based activities and groups (e.g., school sports, student council, student-led groups) so long as these activities were not in conflict with the student’s apprenticeship schedule. There would be no expectation for students to be in school during instructional days.

Students who choose to be on apprenticeship sites after school instructional hours, on Professional Activity Days, school holidays, weekends, during the summer, or any other time during which students are not in school, may not have access to their school and school board services during those times.

A Supervised Equivalent Apprenticeship Learning Committee could be created at the school board level. Each student could be assigned a contact from the student’s board with whom they could connect regularly and an annual (over the course of two years) Supervised Equivalent Apprenticeship Learning (SEAL) Plan to be designed and implemented for them. The SEAL Plan could include:

- Learning goals, outcomes, checkpoints, certification and training provided through their apprenticeship.

- A transition plan in the event that the intended pathway is no longer viable or in the student's best interests.
- A site visit to ensure appropriateness (health, safety, accessibility, etc.) of the equivalent apprenticeship learning before the student begins and at the start of each year.

Exemptions under the *Building Opportunities in the Skilled Trades Act, 2021* (BOSTA) may be needed and may be similar to those that are currently in place for students who participate in the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP).

Model 2: Employer Supervised Apprenticeship

In this model, students would not be considered pupils of a school board. No secondary school credits would be earned by the student for their apprenticeship experience while they work towards their Certificate of Apprenticeship. Students participating in OYAP are exempt from the requirement to register a Training Agreement (RTA) or hold a Provisional Certificate of Qualification or Certificate of Qualification to engage in a compulsory trade and to be subject to Apprentice to Journeyman ratios, where the trade is subject to ratios. These types of exemptions are not anticipated to be provided to students under this model, since they would no longer be considered as a student participating in cooperative education. Additionally, these students would not have access to school board services and supports.

The Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD) provides information and services that will help students determine if they qualify for an apprenticeship and, if a student's application is approved, will contact the student's employer to sign the RTA. Students would receive assistance from their local apprenticeship office for any questions about RTAs, on-the-job hours, training and sponsorship.

Upon completion of a Certificate of Apprenticeship, the individual, when eligible, could choose to go through a Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) for Mature Students process at a school board to earn/receive their OSSD. The Ministry of Education will work with MLITSD and Skilled Trades Ontario to develop a mechanism to share information on the process to access PLAR for individuals that have completed their apprenticeship.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

The Ministry of Education is seeking stakeholder feedback to help guide the development of policy and programs related to the accelerated apprenticeship pathway.

- 1) What are the strengths and weaknesses of model 1? Which of these strengths should be included in the final model implemented?
- 2) What are the strengths and weaknesses of model 2? Which of these strengths should be included in the final model implemented?
- 3) For both models:
 - a. What supports would need to be in place to ensure that students' needs related to mentoring and mental health are addressed?
 - b. What would need to be in place to meet the needs of any students with special education needs and/or disabilities who may require accommodations?
 - c. What academic/on-the-job supports would students need?
- 4) How do students need to be supported in Grades 9 and 10 in order to:
 - a. Make an informed decision regarding whether they wish to enrol in the accelerated apprenticeship pathway starting in Grade 11?
 - b. Be effectively prepared to begin an apprenticeship in Grade 11, if they choose this program?
- 5) For model 1:
 - a. What supports would be required from the school board to ensure that students successfully acquire credits during the apprenticeship?
 - b. What supports from the school board would be most effective in ensuring that students continue to engage with their learning?
 - c. Do you have any other considerations or concerns about model 1? Are there specific additions or changes required?
- 6) For model 2:
 - a. What supports would be required to ensure student success in this program? Where would you seek these supports?
 - b. Do you have any other considerations or concerns for model 2? Are there specific additions or changes required?
- 7) What should be included in equivalent apprenticeship learning for apprentices to be prepared for postsecondary education programs?
- 8) Are there any additional issues or considerations for either model that are specific to the needs and outcomes of specific groups of students that need to be addressed?
- 9) Would model 1 or 2 be your preferred model for implementation of the accelerated apprenticeship pathway? Why?

PRIVACY NOTICE TO CONSULTATION PARTICIPANTS

Submissions and comments provided to the Ministry of Education are part of a public consultation process. This process may involve the Ministry publishing or posting your submissions, comments or summaries of them to the internet. In addition, the Ministry may also disclose your submissions, comments or summaries of them, to other parties during and after the consultation period.

Therefore, you should not include the names of other parties (such as the names of employers, employees, sponsors, apprentices, trainers, etc.) or any other information by which other parties could be identified in your submission.

Further, if you, as an individual, do not want your identity to be made public, you should not include your name or any other information by which you could be identified in the main body of the submission.

If you do provide any information which could disclose your identity in the body of the submission, this information may be released with published material or made available to the public. However, your name and contact information provided outside of the body of the submission (such as that which may be found in a cover letter, on the outside of an envelope, or in the header or signature of an email) will not be disclosed by the Ministry unless required by law.

If you provide a submission or comments on behalf of an organization you will be considered a representative of that organization and your identity in your professional capacity as the organization's representative may be disclosed.

The Ministry of Education is authorized to collect and use personal information for the purpose of this public consultation in compliance with subsection 8.1(1) of the *Education Act* and subsection 38(2) and clause 41(1)(b) of the ***Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*** (FIPPA). The Ministry is authorized to disclose personal information in compliance with clause 42(1)(c) of the FIPPA.

If you have any questions regarding the collection or use of personal information as a result of this consultation, you may contact the Skills Development and Apprenticeship Branch, 315 Front Street West, 13th Floor, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 0B8, or by emailing skillsdevelopmentandapprenticeshipbranch@ontario.ca.

CONTACT INFORMATION

All interested parties are encouraged to provide feedback by e-mail to: skillsdevelopmentandapprenticeshipbranch@ontario.ca. Please provide your comments no later than 5:00pm on November 24, 2023.

Please note that you will not receive a direct reply to your comments. Your comments will be considered as the Ministry moves forward in assessing and/or developing a proposed approach for implementing an accelerated apprenticeship pathway, starting in Grade 11.

APPENDIX A: SECONDARY SCHOOL PROGRAM INFORMATION

Cooperative Education: Cooperative education consists of a learning experience connected to a community and a cooperative education curriculum focused on developing skills, knowledge and habits of mind that will support students in their learning, including their education and career/life planning, at school and beyond, today and in the future.

Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP): OYAP provides students with a cooperative education placement in a skilled trade that allows them to participate in training towards an apprenticeship.

Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM): SHSM is a specialized program that allows students to gain credits toward their Ontario Secondary School Diploma and focus their learning on a specific economic sector at the same time, including sectors connected to the skilled trades.

Dual Credits: Dual Credit programs allow eligible students in high school to take college or apprenticeship courses that count towards both their Ontario Secondary School Diploma and a postsecondary certificate, diploma, degree or a Certificate of Apprenticeship.

Supervised Alternative Learning (SAL): SAL enables the Supervised Alternative Learning Committee of a board to excuse students from 14 to 17 years of age from attending school while they continue to participate in learning under the supervision of the board or a school of the board. The goal is to maintain a connection to learning for these students and to support their continued progress towards graduation or achievement of other educational and personal goals.

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR): PLAR for mature students is the formal evaluation and credit-granting process whereby mature students may obtain credits for prior learning. Prior learning includes the knowledge and skills that students have acquired, in both formal and informal ways, outside secondary school.

Ontario's Curriculum and Resources Site: <https://www.dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en/>

Ontario High School Graduation Requirements: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/high-school-graduation-requirements>