

# The Skilled Trades

Pursuing a skilled trade is an excellent way to find a rewarding and in demand career. Whether you are interested in building, fixing, designing, or creating, there is a career path for you.

## What are the skilled trades?

The skilled trades are occupations that require applied skills and knowledge, which are typically gained through the completion of an apprenticeship program. These skilled trades are usually divided into five categories: construction, manufacturing and engineering, transportation, services, and information technology. Currently, there are more than 300 designated trades to choose from in Canada.

<p><b>Construction</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refrigeration and Air Conditioning</li> <li>• Bricklayer</li> <li>• Welding</li> <li>• Plumbing</li> <li>• Carpentry</li> </ul>
<p><b>Manufacturing &amp; Engineering</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Industrial Mechanic</li> <li>• Mobile Robotics</li> <li>• Precision Machining</li> <li>• Mechatronics</li> </ul>
<p><b>Transportation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heavy Vehicle Technology</li> <li>• Automobile Technology</li> <li>• Aerospace Technology</li> <li>• Outdoor Power and Recreation Equipment</li> </ul>
<p><b>Services</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hairstyling</li> <li>• Cooking</li> <li>• Fashion Technology</li> <li>• Baking</li> </ul>

### Information Technology

- Web Technologies
- Video Production
- Photography
- Graphic Design Technology

## What is an apprenticeship?

Apprenticeships are a post-secondary pathway that leverages on-the-job and in-class technical training, which typically takes between 2 and 4 years to complete. Over the course of the apprenticeship, students spend the majority (80%) of training on-the-job learning from skilled journeypersons about how to succeed in their trade; the remainder of the time (20%) is spent receiving technical training at an approved institutions (i.e., polytechnic, public college, private training organization).



After fulfilling all the provincial/territorial requirements of the apprenticeship program, such as on-the-job hours and in-school training, students may be expected to complete a certification exam. After receiving their Certification of Qualification, apprentices are recognized as journeypersons and are able to start their promising career.

## What is the Red Seal Program?

The Red Seal Program sets common standards to assess skills of tradespeople across Canada. The program is a partnership between federal, provincial, and territorial authorities responsible for apprenticeship training and trade certification.

Following the successful completion of the Red Seal examination, apprentices receive their Red Seal endorsement on their Certification of Qualification. The Red Seal endorsement demonstrates excellence, instills pride, and facilitates labour mobility for journeymen across Canada. Currently, there are 54 recognized Red Seal trades in Canada, some of these include:

- Agricultural Equipment Technician
- Automotive Service Technician
- Boilermaker
- Carpenter
- Construction Electrician
- Drywall Finisher and Plasterer
- Hairstylist
- Iron Worker
- Machinist
- Plumber
- Roofer
- Tool and Die Maker
- Truck and Transport Mechanic

## The Benefits of Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships provide a variety of benefits to those who wish to pursue the skilled trades. Some of the more compelling benefits include:

- Applying skills and technical knowledge to solve practical problems.
- Earn while you learn, greatly reducing debt incurred from post-secondary education.
- Work with advanced technology on-the-job and in technical training.
- Nationally and internationally recognized credentials.
- Opportunities for career advancement.

## Steps to Joining the Trades

There are several steps involved in the apprenticeship process, from finding an employer to writing a final examination. However, it is important to research the different requirements which may be in effect in your province or territory. Although simplified, the following are the basic steps in the apprenticeship process:

### 1. Find a Trade

- Evaluate your interests, skills and abilities.
  - Research the available apprenticeships available in your province/territory.
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### 2. Find an Employer/Sponsor

- Sponsors will be responsible for guiding you through the apprenticeship program.
  - Consider talking to a school counsellor, college, union and/or trade groups about your options
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### 3. Register your Training Agreement

- Working with your employer, register your training agreement with your provincial/territorial apprenticeship authority.
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### 4. Track Working Hours and Technical Training

- Download your logbook to track your progress.
  - Make sure your employer is signing off on your progress.
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### 5. Financial Aid and Earnings

- Access financial aid throughout your apprenticeship, there are several scholarships to support your education.
  - Make sure to talk to your employer about making an income while you learn.
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### 6. Certification

- After completing the in-class and on-the-job training, apply to receive your journeyman certification.

## Pathways into Apprenticeships

There are several entry points to jump starting a career in the skilled trades. Although many people begin their apprenticeships after completing high school there are several entry points.

### **Trades and Technology Courses/Co-op/Work Placement**

In many high schools across Canada, students have the opportunity to learn about the trades through technology and skilled trades courses. These courses introduce students to the preliminary skills and knowledge needed to launch a career in the trades.

Moreover, high schools may have opportunities for interested students to participate in co-op and work placements where students can further refine the skills needed for a life in the skilled trades. In accessing these opportunities, students can gain hands-on learning, test-drive career options, and earn credits through work experience.

### **Youth Apprenticeship Program**

High school students who have determined a skilled traded they would like to pursue can participate in specialized Youth Apprenticeship Programs before graduation. Youth programs allow students to get a head start on their apprenticeship and gain valuable hands-on experience. Below are the programs available in each province/territory:

- [Registered Apprenticeship Program](#) (Alberta)
- [SkilledTradesBC](#) (British Columbia)
- [High School Apprenticeship Program](#) (Manitoba)
- [New Brunswick Teen Apprenticeship Program](#)
- [Youth Apprenticeship Summer Program](#) (Newfoundland and Labrador)
- [Schools North Apprenticeship Program](#) (Northwest Territories)
- [Youth Apprenticeship](#) (Nova Scotia)
- [Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program](#)
- [Youth Apprenticeship Program](#) (Prince Edwards Island)
- [Vocational and Technical Education Program](#) (Quebec)
- [Saskatchewan Youth Apprenticeship](#)
- [Yukon Secondary School Apprenticeship Program](#)

### **Pre-Apprenticeship**

Pre-apprenticeship programs are one of the best ways to enter the skilled trades, providing participants with both practical and technical skills. Pre-apprenticeship students receive academic upgrading, safety training, trade-readiness instruction, and job development coaching.

### **Trades College Diploma**

In this pathway, students attend a College trade program where they learn the technical skills for a skilled trade. Following the successful completion of the program, students may enter an apprenticeship to become recognized journeyman.

### **Employment in the Skilled Trades**

In this pathway, high school graduates enter directly into the workforce, and through work experience they enter into an apprenticeship agreement.

## Trades Apprenticeship Programs

### **Nationwide**

- [red-seal.ca](http://red-seal.ca)
- [EllisChart.ca](http://EllisChart.ca)
- [Canada.ca](http://Canada.ca) - provincial and territorial apprenticeship programs
- Support for skilled trades and apprenticeships

### Alberta

- [Alberta.ca](http://Alberta.ca)
- [Apprenticeship and industry training | Alberta.ca](#)
- [Women's Organizations | Directory](#)

### British Columbia

- [WorkBC.ca](http://WorkBC.ca)
- [TradestrainingBC.ca](http://TradestrainingBC.ca)
- [Trades Program | ITA BC](#)

### Manitoba

- [Apprenticeship Manitoba](#)
- [Manitoba Building Trades \(mbtrades.ca\)](http://mbtrades.ca)
- [Office to Advance Women Apprentices](#)

### New Brunswick

- [New Brunswick | Apprenticeship Program](#)

### Newfoundland and Labrador

- [Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Division](#)
- [Indigenous Skilled Trades Office - TradesNL](#)
- [Office to Advance Women Apprentices](#)

Northwest Territories

- Apprenticeship Trades | Northern Lake College
- Apprenticeship Training | Northern Alberta Institute of Technology

Nova Scotia

- Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency
- Nova Scotia Community College | School of Trades and Transportation
- Nova Scotia | Skilled Trades & Related Learning
- Nova Scotia | Training and Certification
- Nova Scotia | Labour Market Information

Nunavut

- Nunavut | Apprenticeship Trade and Occupations Certifications
- Nunavut Women in Trades

Ontario

- Skilled Trades Ontario | Trade Information
- Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program
- Women in Trades | OCAS

Prince Edward Island

- Apprenticeship Program | Prince Edward Island
- Apprenticeship Training and Skilled Trade Certification | Prince Edward Island

Quebec

- Become an Apprentice – Learning a Trade While Receiving a Salary |  
Gouvernement du Québec
- Elles de la Construction

Saskatchewan

- Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission
- Saskatchewan Polytechnic | Centre for Continuing Education
- Office to Advance Women Apprentices

Yukon

- YWiTT
- Yukon | Apprentices and Trades
- Skills Yukon

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