

# ONTARIO'S PATHWAYS TO POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION FOR ADULT LEARNERS

## COMPANION GUIDE

A Manual to Clarify the  
Pathways Flow Chart

March 2015

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ONTARIO**

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# **Ontario's Pathways to Postsecondary Education For Adult Learners Companion Guide**

**A Manual to Clarify the Pathways Flow Chart  
March 2015**

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# ONTARIO'S PATHWAYS TO POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION FOR ADULT LEARNERS

ADULTS MAY ENTER A PATHWAY TO POSTSECONDARY DIRECTLY

OR

ADULTS MAY TRANSITION THROUGH

English Second Language Programs

Out-of-Province Prior Learning Evaluation

Adult Upgrading – LBS

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## ONTARIO SECONDARY SCHOOL CREDIT PROGRAM

- Originally entered an Ontario high school before 1999
- No prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR) available
- Resident of Ontario

### SECONDARY SCHOOL GRADUATION DIPLOMA (SSGD)

- Original high school entry between 1974–1984
- 27 credits: compulsory & optional determined at registration
- Up to 12 maturity credits

### ONTARIO SECONDARY SCHOOL DIPLOMA (OSSD)

- Original high school entry between 1984–1999
- 30 credits: 16 compulsory, 14 optional
- Up to 12 maturity credits

- Originally entered an Ontario high school 1999 or after
- All out-of-province adult learners
- Required for any student who wishes to access the PLAR for Mature Students Process
- Resident of Ontario

### ONTARIO SECONDARY SCHOOL DIPLOMA (OSSD)

- 30 credits (18 compulsory)
  - PLAR 9/10 assessment = 16 credits
  - PLAR 11/12 challenge or equivalency = 10 credits
  - 4 final credits
- Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test or Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course
- 40 hours community involvement

- **School Board** delivery is through adult day programming, summer school, night school, correspondence or e-learning, full-time or part-time
- **Independent Learning Centre** delivery is predominantly e-learning with correspondence available for some courses
- **Private School** delivery is fee-based

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## ACADEMIC AND CAREER ENTRANCE PROGRAM (ACE)

- 19 years or older
- Out of school
- Students with or without a secondary school diploma are eligible
- Resident of Ontario

### ACE CERTIFICATE OR COURSES

- ACE certificate requirements: Communications (English/Français), Mathematics, and any 2 other ACE courses
- Students may choose to acquire the ACE certificate or to take only postsecondary prerequisite ACE courses
- ACE courses provide postsecondary prerequisites which are equivalent to secondary school credits
- 12 ACE courses include Communications, Sciences, Mathematics, Computer Fundamentals and Self Management

- **Community College** delivery is year-round, days, evenings, full-time, part-time, in-class or via e-learning

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## GENERAL EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (GED)

- 18 years or older
- Out of school for a year
- No secondary school diploma
- Resident of Ontario

### GED

- High school equivalency certificate
- 5 tests:
  - Language Arts Writing
  - Language Arts Reading
  - Mathematics
  - Social Studies
  - Science
- Some postsecondary programs require additional prerequisite courses for admission

- Optional GED preparation from local adult education providers
- GED preparation manuals available in many bookstores
- GED testing through the **Independent Learning Centre**

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## MATURE STUDENT STATUS

- 19 years or older
- Out of school one year
- No secondary school diploma or equivalent
- Resident of Ontario

### MATURE STUDENT TEST

- Not available at all colleges
- Areas tested may include English/Français, Mathematics
- Other areas may be tested depending on college and program
- Individual colleges determine required scores
- Test used varies from college to college

- Contact individual College Registrar's Office to determine availability and process
- Unsuccessful test writers may be referred to ACE programming
- Some postsecondary programs require additional prerequisite courses for admission

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- 21 years or older by December 31 in the year of application
- Not completed a postsecondary program
- Away from formal education for at least two years
- Not eligible for admission as a secondary school graduate
- Canadian citizen or permanent resident

### OUAC 105D APPLICATION

- Admittance upon successful completion of secondary-level courses in the prerequisite subjects for the intended program of study
- Apply via the OUAC website (<http://www.ouac.on.ca/>). Mature applicants must complete an OUAC 105D application
- If the applicant attended a postsecondary institution within Ontario, there will be a request for a transcript through the OUAC 105D application

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\* See companion guide for clarification.

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# SECTION 1



## Introduction

Ontario has an increasing number of adults who are seeking to improve their education and subsequent career opportunities by returning to a variety of publicly funded postsecondary institutions and programs. These postsecondary options include apprenticeship, community college, and university. The *Pathways Flow Chart* provides an overview of the routes adults can follow to prepare for entry and success in a postsecondary program. It is important to note that in Ontario mature students may have options and pathways that are different from youth who are currently attending a mainstream secondary school.

The focus of *Ontario's Pathways to Postsecondary Education for Adult Learners* and the *Companion Guide* is on publicly funded postsecondary destination programs. There are numerous private career colleges with programming available on site and/or online. Ontario's private career colleges are regulated by the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities. For more information, visit private career college's websites or go to [www.tcu.gov.on.ca](http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca).

This *Companion Guide* is a manual that contains all essential information that facilitates full use of the pathways flow chart. It serves as the project's guiding document on specific aspects of the programs available to adult learners in Ontario for whom postsecondary education is an identified goal path. It is divided into four key sections:

- ◆ Introduction
- ◆ Transitions to the Pathways that Lead to Postsecondary Destinations
- ◆ Clarification of the Four Pathways, Identified on the Flow Chart, that Lead to Postsecondary Destinations
- ◆ Factors to Consider When Deciding On a Postsecondary Destination

These resources will be of particular interest to counsellors and advisors working with adult learners by providing information and advice for effective decision making. Adult learners may cross-reference terms and phrases that appear on the chart with section three of the *Companion Guide* to find the best route to postsecondary for each individual. The flow chart demonstrates that there is more than one route to postsecondary education.

*Ontario's Pathways to Postsecondary Education for Adult Learners* and the *Companion Guide* are current as of March, 2015. Pathways to publicly funded postsecondary programs change from time to time and adult learners are encouraged to speak with postsecondary institutions to ensure that the pathways identified in these documents remain current.

# SECTION 2



## Transitions to the Pathways that Lead to Postsecondary Destinations

**M**any adults are well prepared to enter directly into one of the pathways leading to postsecondary education. Others may require some additional programming. This section refers to and describes in greater detail these transition programs which are presented in the upper right hand corner of the flowchart.

### Items to consider when thinking about entering a transition program to prepare for postsecondary

1. Is the learner both academically and personally ready to enter and be successful in one of the programs that lead directly to a postsecondary destination?
2. What is the learner's prior educational background?
3. Is the learner aware of the time commitment required to complete transition programming?

The three most common transition programs are as follows:

### 1. Adult Upgrading - LBS as a Transition to the Pathways That Lead to a Postsecondary Destination

Adults who require foundational skills, especially in communications and mathematics, can upgrade these skills through a school board, college, or community-based program. These adult upgrading programs are funded through the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities by Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) and are free of charge to eligible individuals. In addition, participants may receive financial assistance to offset transportation and child care costs.

These programs use the *Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF)* to plan and assess learner progress. To review the six OALCF competencies visit [http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/publications/OALCF\\_Tools\\_and\\_Resources\\_Oct\\_11.pdf](http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/publications/OALCF_Tools_and_Resources_Oct_11.pdf).

Students who demonstrate the necessary academic preparedness can proceed directly to secondary school credit courses, community college delivered Academic and Career Entrance (ACE) programming, or elect to write the General Education Development (GED) assessments.

To learn more about how LBS-funded programming prepares adults for the pathways that lead to postsecondary destinations visit [http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/publications/OALCF\\_GPD\\_Secondary\\_School\\_Credit\\_Oct\\_11.pdf](http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/publications/OALCF_GPD_Secondary_School_Credit_Oct_11.pdf)

## **2. English Second Language Programs as a Transition to the Pathways that Lead to a Postsecondary Destination**

An adult learner, for whom English is a second language, should achieve *Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) Level 5/6* to enter a pathway leading to a postsecondary destination. The CLB website provides detailed information on the benchmarks. To access the Language Benchmarks document go to the following: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/language-benchmarks.pdf>.

English second language learners who are not currently enrolled in an English Second Language (ESL) or Language Instruction for New Canadians (LINC) program will be directed to visit a Language Assessment Centre/CLARS Centre where their language skills will be evaluated. Here they will receive a referral to a second language training program in their community. This training is provided at no cost to the learner. In the case of LINC programming, day care for the children of learners may be provided.

Second language programs are delivered by some school boards, several colleges and a number of community agencies through LINC and/ or ESL programming funded by the federal (CIC) or provincial (MCI) governments. Some colleges deliver second language “bridging” programs that lead to postsecondary programs. Postsecondary tuition may be required.

Information on provincially funded programs is found at [www.ontarioimmigration.ca](http://www.ontarioimmigration.ca) and federally funded programs at [www.settlement.org/ontario/education/english-as-a-second-language-esl/linc-program/what-is-the-language-instruction-for-newcomers-to-canada-linc-program](http://www.settlement.org/ontario/education/english-as-a-second-language-esl/linc-program/what-is-the-language-instruction-for-newcomers-to-canada-linc-program).

## **3. Mature Students from Out-of-Province Processes as a Transition to the Pathways that Lead to a Postsecondary Destination**

Mature students who are new to the Ontario’s secondary school credit system and wish to complete a secondary school diploma started in another province or country can access Ontario’s Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) for Mature Students process .

The PLAR for Mature Students process is an official program funded by the Ministry of Education and is delivered without charge by school boards that have a continuing education program. This process allows a mature student to have his or her high school credits, which were achieved outside Ontario, assessed and recognized as equivalent to Ontario credits for the purpose of earning an Ontario Secondary School Diploma. Details on the PLAR for Mature Students process are provided in Section 3, page 13 of the *Companion Guide*.

Learners from out of province, who chose to enter the Academic and Career Entrance (ACE) pathway to a postsecondary destination to complete the ACE Certificate or prerequisite ACE courses, participate in a college intake and assessment process to identify gaps and transfer credits. The process varies from college to college. Students who are evaluated as not “ACE ready” are directed to pre-ACE programming. Students should contact their local community college for information about intake and assessment procedures for upgrading programs.

In cases where there is uncertainty about the student’s equivalent learning from another jurisdiction, the student’s transcript may be directed to the International Credential Assessment Service of Canada (ICAS) <http://www.icascanada.ca> or World Education Services (WES) <https://www.wes.org/ca/> to receive either a grade level or a course by course equivalency.

# SECTION 3



## Clarification of the Four Pathways, Identified on the Flow Chart, that Lead to Postsecondary Destinations

**T**his section references the information shown in the main body of the *Flowchart*. The four pathways available to mature students in Ontario that lead directly to postsecondary entry are as follows:

- ◆ Ontario Secondary School Credit Program
- ◆ Academic and Career Entrance Program -ACE
- ◆ General Educational Development -GED
- ◆ Mature Student Status

Each of these pathways is described in detail in this section.

Ontario's *Pathways to Postsecondary Education for Adult Learners Flowchart and Companion Guide* are current as of March, 2015. Pathways to publicly-funded postsecondary programs change from time to time, and adult learners are encouraged to speak with postsecondary institutions to ensure that the information provided in this section is current.

### Ontario Secondary School Credit Program

#### Overview

Detailed information about the requirements of the Ministry of Education that govern the policies and programs of all publicly funded elementary and secondary English-language schools in Ontario is available in the *Ontario Schools Kindergarten to Grade 12: Policy and Program Requirements, 2011* document online at <http://edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/policy/os/index.html>. It is important, however, to understand that while the courses and credential issued for an adult are the same as those for youth enrolled in a traditional high school, adults are eligible for additional pathways. Not all school boards offer a secondary school credit program to adults.

### Items to consider when selecting this pathway:

1. Ontario Secondary School courses are the standard against which other programming, ACE and GED, are evaluated in order to determine equivalency.
2. Ensure that courses have been selected that meet the identified prerequisites.
3. Confirm that courses can be completed within the timelines for the postsecondary application process.

### Eligibility

Adult learners who previously attended school in the province of Ontario are eligible to graduate, with a secondary school diploma, under one of three sets of diploma requirements depending on the school year in which the student began the first year of a secondary program in Ontario.

The Secondary School Graduation Diploma (SSGD) pathway is available for adult learners who entered grade nine in Ontario in 1973-74 to 1983-84.

The Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) is available to adult learners through two tracks:

- ◆ using OSIS (Ontario Schools Intermediate and Senior Divisions) requirements for learners who entered grade nine in Ontario between 1984-85 and 1998-99
- or
- ◆ using OSS (Ontario Secondary Schools) requirements for learners who entered grade nine in the 1999 – 2000 school year in Ontario or subsequent years

Note: The Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) pathway using OSS/OS is available for any adult learner to choose regardless of the first year the student began secondary school but is required for learners who entered grade nine in Ontario in the 1999–2000 school year or subsequent years. Many adults returning to school elect to graduate using these most current and more rigorous graduation requirements as it may enhance their opportunities for employment or acceptance into subsequent postsecondary education and training. Students who register in the OSS program are also eligible to participate in the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) for Mature Students process (see page 13) which significantly reduces time spent earning a diploma.

### Intake Process

While intake processes and registration procedures will vary in Ontario school boards,

- ◆ An adult learner can expect that providing a secondary school transcript will be necessary. The transcript is available from the last school or school board the student attended. A fee to acquire the transcript may be charged.

- ◆ Newcomers to Canada, who are entering the secondary system from an English second language (ESL or LINC) program, will be expected to have achieved Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) level 5/6.
- ◆ Students entering the secondary school system from an adult upgrading /LBS program will be expected to have demonstrated specific skills identified from the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF). (See Section 2 page 4.)
- ◆ Students who enter a school board secondary school program without any secondary credits may be required to complete a literacy /numeracy assessment and will be redirected to an adult upgrading /LBS program, if appropriate.

Many school boards provide adult education registration on a continuous intake basis. Unlike mainstream schools for youth, adult education centres also offer multiple semesters during the school year, which increases entry opportunities.

## Types Of Courses

As part of the registration process students are given documentation that lists all the courses offered at the school in that school year. The student meets with a qualified guidance teacher who explains how to use the list to make course selections. Together the adult learner and guidance teacher build the student a timetable. A student returning to school who left school before 1999 can expect to find that much has changed.

In grades 9 and 10, four types of courses are offered; academic courses, applied courses, essential/locally developed courses and open courses. In grades 11 and 12 courses are offered to prepare students for their anticipated destination i.e. college, university, college/university and workplace. Open courses are also available in grades 11 and 12 and are designed to prepare students for further study and to enrich their education.

Secondary school credit courses are listed in the documents students are issued during registration, using coded letters and numbers. The codes identify the subject, the grade and the destination the course prepares the student for.

Grade nine courses are identified by 1, grade ten courses by 2, grade eleven courses by 3 and grade twelve courses by 4.

“U” identifies a university preparation course

“C” identifies a college preparation course (this will include apprenticeship preparation)

“M” identifies a university/college preparation course

“E” identifies a preparation for the workplace course

“O” identifies an open course

## Delivery/Instructional Methods

Adult learners will find that they may have access to a variety of delivery options. Learners entering an adult program should request information on the options available to ensure that their learning styles will be adequately addressed. Delivery may be available through:

- ◆ day school teacher-directed in class instruction
- ◆ correspondence/home study
- ◆ e-learning
- ◆ blended learning (e-learning and in class instruction)
- ◆ summer school teacher-directed in class instruction
- ◆ night school teacher-directed in class instruction
- ◆ adult specialized co-op
- ◆ other Ministry of Education approved adult delivery models

## Assessment, Evaluation And Reporting

Adult students returning to school often find the biggest change they encounter is in the area of assessment and evaluation. Adult students need to understand that the current Ministry mandated processes have been created to help teachers make consistent judgements about the quality of the learner's work and provide clear information that facilitates student success.

Assessment and evaluation of secondary school courses is based on Ministry of Education curriculum expectations and provincial achievement levels. These achievement levels range from level four (80% to 100%) to level one (50% to 59%). Students who fail to meet at least level one achievement will not receive a credit. Level three (70% to 79%) is the provincial standard and indicates that the student working at this level is well prepared to work at the grade level or next course.

Students are evaluated in each course using four categories of knowledge and skills:

- ◆ Knowledge/Understanding
- ◆ Thinking/Inquiry
- ◆ Communication
- ◆ Application/Making Connections.

Student achievement is communicated using the Provincial Report Card. This report card documents the student's achievement in every course, at specific points during the school year. The report card also contains separate sections for recording attendance and evaluating the student's learning skills as well as a teacher comment.

The credits that a student earns are recorded on an Ontario Student Transcript (OST). The transcript is issued to the adult learner at graduation or upon request. Adult learners are able to show their transcript for the purposes of employment, promotion in the work place and/or entry into postsecondary programming.

## Graduation Requirements

**Graduation Requirements For The OSSD Using OSS/OS Diploma Requirements**  
(To clarify this information consult pages 54- 56 of the document found at <http://edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/policy/os/ONSchools.pdf>).

Students who entered secondary school in Ontario in the 1999-2000 school year or a subsequent year or those adults who elect to re-enter secondary school using OSS regulations must:

Earn 30 credits

◆ Earn 18 compulsory credits:

4 credits in English (1 credit per grade)	1 credit in the Arts
3 credits in Mathematics (at least one credit from grade 11 or 12)	1 credit in Health and Physical Education
2 credits in Science	1 credit in French as a Second Language
1 credit in Canadian Geography (grade 9)	0.5 credit in Civics
1 credit in Canadian History (grade 10)	0.5 credit in Career Studies

and:

3 additional credits consisting of 1 credit from each of the following groups:

- Group 1: English (including the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course), French as a second language, classical languages, international languages, Native languages, Canadian and world studies, Native studies, social sciences and humanities, guidance and career education, cooperative education
- Group 2: French as a second language, the arts, business studies, health and physical education, cooperative education
- Group 3: French as a second language, science (Grade 11 or 12), computer studies, technological education, cooperative education

Note: The following conditions apply to selections from the above three groups:

- A maximum of 2 credits in French as a second language may count as additional compulsory credits, 1 credit from Group 1, and 1 credit from either Group 2 or Group 3.
  - A maximum of 2 credits in cooperative education may count as additional compulsory credits, selected from any of Groups 1, 2, or 3.
- ◆ Earn 12 optional credits from the school's course calendar.

- ◆ Complete 40 hours of Community Involvement.  
Students must complete a minimum of 40 hours of community involvement activities during their years in the secondary school program. This requirement is to be completed outside the student’s normal instructional hours and in a variety of settings. Students may not complete the hours through activities that are counted towards a credit, through paid work or by assuming duties normally performed by a paid employee.
- ◆ Pass the Ontario Secondary Literacy Test.  
Adult learners may opt to enroll in the Ontario Secondary School Literacy course or take the test.

Students using this pathway may earn up to 26 credits using the PLAR for Mature Students process. (See page 13 of this document).

The credential issued to students on this pathway is the *Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD)*.

### Graduation Requirements for the OSSD using OSIS Diploma Requirement

Students who entered secondary school in Ontario between 1984-1985 to 1998-99, must:

Earn 30 credits

- ◆ Earn 16 compulsory credits
 

5 credits in English	1 credit in Health and Physical Education
2 credits in Mathematics	1 credit in French as a second language
2 credits in Science	1 credit in business or technological studies
1 credit in Canadian Geography	1 additional credit in the social sciences
1 credit in Canadian History	(Senior Division)
1 credit in the Arts	

- ◆ Earn 14 optional credits from the school’s course calendar  
Students using this pathway are eligible for maturity credits but cannot earn credits using the PLAR for Mature Students process. They may be recommended for one or more of the following types of equivalency credit:
  - life and work experience since leaving secondary school coded as QMA - Maturity Credit
  - successful completion of courses not usually considered secondary school subjects (this could be certification or designation in a specific program that required a minimum of 110 hours of instruction or training) coded as QEE - Equivalent Education Credit
  - successful completion of each period of an apprenticeship program (for example, electrician, hairdresser or mechanic) coded as QAP- Apprenticeship Credit
  - recognized out of province equivalency credits coded as QSE – Out of Province Secondary Equivalency Credit

The credential issued to students on this pathway is the *Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD)*.

## Graduation Requirements for the SSGD using Circular H.S.1

Students who entered secondary school in Ontario between 1974 –1975 to 1983-1984 must:

Earn 27 credits

The breakdown of course requirements, including compulsory and optional, varies depending on the specific year of entry. The adult learner who elects to graduate under these requirements must have his or her transcript thoroughly scrutinized by the school at time of registration.

Students using this pathway are eligible for maturity credits but cannot earn credits using the PLAR for Mature Students process. They may be recommended for one or more of the following type of equivalency credit:

- life and work experience since leaving secondary school coded as QMA - Maturity Credit
- successful completion of courses not usually considered secondary school subjects (this could be certification or designation in a specific program that required a minimum of 110 hours of instruction or training) coded as QEE - Equivalent Education Credit
- successful completion of each period of an apprenticeship program (for example, electrician, hairdresser or mechanic) coded as QAP- Apprenticeship Credit
- recognized out of province equivalency credits are referred to as QSE – Out of Province Secondary Equivalency Credit

The credential issued is the *Secondary School Graduation Diploma (SSGD)*.

## PLAR for Mature Students

Note: While PLAR for Mature Students is not an actual pathway to a postsecondary destination, it is a distinct pathway within the OSSD secondary school credit program.

### Overview

Ontario's Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) is the formal evaluation and credit-granting process whereby 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 programming. Students may have their knowledge and skills evaluated against the expectations outlined in provincial curriculum policy documents in order to earn credits towards a secondary school diploma. The PLAR process for mature students involves two components: "equivalency" and "challenge". Principals determine the number of credits, including compulsory credits, that a mature student needs in order to meet diploma requirements following the student's PLAR assessment.

### Items to consider when thinking about participating in the Ontario PLAR for Mature Students' process:

1. If one of the other secondary school graduation pathways is an option, is graduation using the OSS requirements, which are mandatory for participation in PLAR, the best choice? For instance, will the student be successful with the OSS compulsory credit requirements? Does the student have adequate prior learning to be eligible for most, or all, of the ten possible senior equivalent credits?
2. The OSS requires a student to write the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) in order to graduate. Adults however, unlike students of regular school age, have special allowance from the Ministry of Education to go directly to the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC). The OSSLC can only be delivered to students in a classroom/teacher-directed delivery or online. These options are not available in all school board adult education programs which means students in some programs must write the test. It is important to check the timing of the OSSLT and the release of official results to ensure that the student's timeline for graduation can be met.
3. Is graduating from secondary school quickly important? PLAR for Mature Students provides the possibility of a learner earning up to 26 equivalent credits. However, a student can, under some circumstances, be awarded up to 26 equivalent credits under other graduation diplomas available to eligible adults. Checking with the adult education school counsellor, is important in order to determine the best option.
4. If the student is new to Canada, would it be to the benefit of the student to request that the grade 9/10 Canadian history and Canadian geography assessments be deferred until closer to graduation?

### Eligibility

To participate in the PLAR for Mature Students process the student must be a mature student. A mature student is someone who:

- ◆ is at least 18 years old
- ◆ has not attended a traditional school (i.e. secondary day school) for at least one year
- ◆ is enrolled in a secondary school credit program for the purpose of obtaining an OSSD

A student may be eligible for PLAR credits if he or she:

- ◆ started high school in Ontario after September 1, 1999 or
- ◆ is new to the Ontario secondary school system as of February 1, 2004 or
- ◆ has selected the OSS/OS pathway, regardless of the high school start date

## Intake Process

Adult students wishing to participate in PLAR for Mature Students must meet with a guidance teacher to:

- ◆ assess the student's transcript to determine graduation requirements
- ◆ complete a PLAR application

## Types Of Assessments

### Grade 9/10 Equivalency Process

An “equivalency” process for mature students may involve individual assessment for the purpose of granting Grade 9 or 10 credits. Up to 16 Grade 9 and 10 credits may be granted to a mature student through this process. Each mature student who does not have a transcript indicating successful completion of the first two years of secondary school in the Ontario education system – or in an education system outside Ontario or Canada that is comparable to the Ontario system – will be required to successfully complete an individual assessment before being granted any Grade 9 and 10 credits.

The grade 9/10 equivalency process consists of assessment in English, mathematics, science, as well as Canadian history and Canadian geography.

### Grade 11/12 Challenge and Equivalency Process

Mature students may earn 10 of the 14 remaining Grade 11 and 12 credits needed to meet diploma requirements using the PLAR for Mature Students process by:

1. Demonstrating achievement of the required secondary school curriculum expectations through the “challenge” process which involves a series of assessment activities. Mature students may challenge for credit for a course only if they can provide reasonable evidence to the principal that they would likely be successful in the challenge process. Mature students may use certificates or other records of accomplishment earned outside Ontario classrooms as reasonable evidence of eligibility to challenge for credit for a related course within the Ontario curriculum.  
or
2. Demonstrating achievement of the required secondary school curriculum expectations through an equivalency process. The following types of credentials and other documentation may be accepted for the purpose of determining whether to grant Grade 11 and 12 equivalent credits:
  - formal transcripts issued by a recognized educational or training institution or a government ministry in Ontario or outside Ontario (e.g., a secondary school, a provincial college of applied arts and technology or a university)
  - Certificates of Apprenticeship and Certificates of Qualification for apprenticeships granted by or recognized by the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
  - other appropriate documentation of learning gained from other programs, courses, or work /life experiences

## Delivery/Instructional Methods

While some school boards may offer preparation for the PLAR grade 9/10 subject-based assessment through an adult upgrading-LBS program, it is generally understood that a learner entering into the PLAR process has the knowledge and skills acquired, in both formal and informal ways, outside secondary school.

## Reporting

The credits an adult acquires through the PLAR for Mature Students process are recorded on the student's Ontario Student Transcript (OST).

## Graduation Requirements

Mature students must earn a minimum of 4 Grade 11 and 12 credits while enrolled as a mature student by taking the necessary courses through the delivery methods described on page 10 of this document bringing his or her total number of credits earned to 30, including the same 18 compulsory credits as students of regular school age, as well as successfully achieving the provincial secondary school literacy requirement (either by passing the test or taking the literacy course) and completing 40 community involvement hours before they will be eligible to receive an OSSD.

## Academic and Career Entrance Program - ACE

### Overview

Academic and Career Entrance (ACE) programming has been delivered as a secondary school equivalent program since the inception of the college system in 1967. Previously referred to as Basic Training for Skills Development (BTSD), in 2004 the grade 12 equivalent level of the program was renamed Academic and Career Entrance (ACE) and updated to ensure equivalency to current secondary school guidelines. ACE is delivered by Ontario's publicly funded community colleges. In a few communities, ACE is delivered by community-based literacy providers in partnership with the local community college. Students have the option of taking just the prerequisite courses required for admission to postsecondary college programs or completing the four courses required to receive an ACE Certificate. ACE courses and grades are recorded on an official college transcript.

### Items to consider when selecting this pathway:

1. The ACE credential and courses are recognized by all Ontario Community Colleges as equivalent to the OSSD and OSS credits for the purposes of registering in a college certificate or diploma postsecondary program. ACE courses have been designed to provide the specific academic skills needed in postsecondary programs. At some colleges, students may receive transfer credits for ACE courses for first semester postsecondary courses reducing subsequent postsecondary course loads.
2. The ACE Certificate and courses are officially recognized in Apprenticeship legislation as meeting the academic requirement to register as an apprentice.
3. The ACE credential and courses may not be recognized by some universities as secondary school equivalent. Some colleges have been very successful in working with their local universities to secure recognition for ACE programming. Many colleges have articulation agreements with one or more universities to enable students with college postsecondary courses, certificates or diplomas to transition to degree programs with transfer credit. Visit [Ontransfer.ca](http://Ontransfer.ca) for more information.
4. Because ACE programming is relatively new, it is not well known by all employers in the province. Consequently an employer may question whether it is OSSD equivalent and meets hiring and/or promotion criteria. An increasing number of employers not only recognize ACE, but are also partnering with ACE deliverers to provide upgrading to employees.

### Eligibility

Adults who are Ontario residents 19 years or older with or without an OSSD, SSGD or GED can participate in ACE programming.

### Intake Process

Intake processes and frequency vary from college to college. Students meet with an intake advisor to discuss enrolling in the upgrading program, to arrange for academic assessment to determine placement in pre-ACE or ACE programming and to develop an Individual Training Plan. Students who meet the required academic levels in literacy and numeracy can proceed directly into ACE programming. Students whose academic levels indicate they require targeted upgrading will be placed in pre-ACE courses. Students whose academic levels indicate they need considerable upgrading may be referred to another deliverer in the community. Other deliverers include school board and community-based programs. Intake advisors may also counsel students to complete their OSSD if the number of credits they have indicates this is the fastest route to a credential.

## Types Of Courses

ACE programming is very focused on the skills and academic prerequisite courses required to enroll and succeed in college postsecondary programs.

ACE courses have been evaluated by an independent evaluator, Curriculum Services Canada, to confirm equivalency with specific OSSD courses. The following chart summarizes this equivalency. Please note: Physics, Biology and Chemistry courses have been determined to be university destination equivalent.

ACE/OSSD Table of Equivalencies		
ACE Course	Equivalent OSS Course	OSS Course Code
ACE Communications	English, Grade 12 to College	ENG4C
ACE Apprenticeship Math	Foundations for College Mathematics, Grade 12	MAP4C
ACE Business Mathematics	Foundations for College Mathematics, Grade 12	MAP4C
ACE Technical Mathematics	Mathematics for College Technology, Grade 12	MCT4C
ACE Core Mathematics	Mathematics for Work and Everyday Life, Grade 12	MEL4E
ACE Biology	Biology, Grade 11 to College	SBI3C
ACE Biology – University Prep	Biology, Grade 12 to University	SBI4U
ACE Physics	Physics, Grade 11 to University	SPH3U
ACE Physics	Physics, Grade 12 to College	SPH4C
ACE Chemistry	Chemistry, Grade 12 to College	SCH4C
Chemistry – University Prep	Chemistry, Grade 12 to University	SCH4U

While pre-ACE or LBS programming focuses primarily on the literacy and numeracy skills required to advance to ACE (Grade 12 equivalent) programming, students also acquire the necessary computer and, study skills as well as orientation to a college learning environment.

## Delivery/Instructional Methods

College delivery of ACE and pre-ACE programming is primarily modularized and delivered in a classroom setting with qualified faculty providing one-on-one instruction as students require. This delivery approach enables students to progress at a flexible pace. Students should expect to regularly work on their studies outside of class hours. Faculty closely monitor student progress and provide advice if student progress is deemed to be too slow or if the student is struggling academically.

Students can attend:

- ◆ full time ( 18-25 hours per week)
- ◆ part time (10 to 17 hours per week)
- ◆ days or evenings (at some colleges) or a combination of both
- ◆ year round

Some ACE and pre-ACE courses may be delivered in a more traditional teacher-led classroom environment.

## ACE Distance

In addition to on site delivery of ACE programming, students can also choose to participate online through ACE Distance.

Students choosing the online option should go to [www.acedistancedelivery.ca](http://www.acedistancedelivery.ca) to learn more about this option and to enroll in the 20 hour prerequisite module, Learn to Learn (L2L). Intakes for L2L are weekly through this website. Students have 30 days to complete the 20 hour module.

L2L mirrors the face-to-face processes of college intake and assessment procedures. Students receive academic assessment, goal advising, acquire the computer skills required for online learning and develop an Individual Training Plan (ITP) with an online advisor. The ITP identifies both the courses to be enrolled in as well as the schedule for enrolling to ensure postsecondary program application dates are met. Students who require targeted academic upgrading before moving on to ACE Distance courses may be referred to an online Communications or Math review course. Students whose current academic proficiency is determined to be too low will be referred to other delivery options to prepare for ACE.

Once students have successfully completed L2L, they are eligible to register for an ACE course. Registration for ACE courses is done through individual community college Distance Education departments. Courses begin the first week of the intake month. Students have 22 weeks to complete each of the 80 to 120 hour courses. L2L advisors assist students with registering for an online ACE course. Availability of free ACE programming depends on Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities funding. Currently free intakes are four times a year: March, April, June, and September. In the other months, students have the option to pay fees to participate.

## Assessment, Evaluation And Reporting

Assessment is ongoing throughout both ACE and pre-ACE programming. Students are assessed either before registering or in the first few weeks of classes to determine accurate placement in courses. Students may also be assessed once placed in courses to determine which modules must be completed. Because of the modular design of the courses, students identify when they are ready to write tests and/or complete other required assessments. Assessment may include tests, quizzes, presentations and written assignments.

Because college upgrading programs subscribe to the principles of *Mastery Learning*, students must achieve clearly defined grades in order to successfully demonstrate they have learned the required skills and information to move on to the next module and/or course. The grades required range from 80% in pre-ACE programming to 70% in ACE.

Upon completion of each course, final grades are recorded on an official college transcript. This transcript follows students through their postsecondary studies. It is this transcript which will be submitted to OCAS as documentation to support postsecondary program applications.

Students may request a copy of their transcript at any time. A processing fee may be required.

## Graduation Requirements

Students can choose to just take specific ACE courses, or they can opt to take the four courses required to qualify to receive an ACE Certificate.

These four courses are as follows:

- ◆ Communications (English, Francais\*)
- ◆ Mathematics (There are four mathematics courses to choose from- Apprenticeship, Business, Core or Technology.
- ◆ Any two other courses from the remaining 10. These courses can be selected based on the student's postsecondary or employment goal.
- ◆ Summary of ACE Courses: English, Francais\*, Anglais Langue Seconde\*, Core Mathematics, Business Mathematics, Apprenticeship Mathematics, Technology Mathematics, Chemistry C-stream, Chemistry U-stream, Biology C-stream, Biology U-stream, Physics, Computer Fundamentals, Self-Management/Self-Direction.

\* These courses are available only at the two Francophone Colleges.

Students receive an official college-issued ACE Certificate. An application to the Registrar's Office may be required to receive the ACE Certificate. A processing fee may be required.

# General Educational Development - GED

## Overview

GED Testing is for adults who left high school without a diploma. The GED was established in 1942 and is recognized throughout Canada and the United States. People who take and pass the GED tests in Ontario earn an Ontario High School Equivalency Certificate. The Independent Learning Centre is the exclusive provider of GED Testing in Ontario. [http://www.ilc.org/pdfs/ged/ged\\_handbook\\_en.pdf](http://www.ilc.org/pdfs/ged/ged_handbook_en.pdf)

The GED Tests provide adults who did not complete a formal high school program the opportunity to demonstrate high school level knowledge and skills.

The GED certificate may be accepted as meeting secondary school graduation requirements for purposes of employment, promotion, licensing, and further education.

### Items to consider when selecting this pathway:

1. There is no guarantee that the GED certificate will be accepted by all employers or postsecondary institutions or trainers in every instance. Some community colleges and universities accept satisfactory GED scores as one factor in their assessment for admission as a mature student.
2. In addition to the GED certificate, postsecondary programs (college and university) may require that an applicant also has specific OSSD or ACE courses.

## Eligibility

An adult learner electing to participate in the GED Testing process must:

- ◆ be at least 18 years old
- ◆ have not graduated from high school
- ◆ have been out of the school system for at least one full year
- ◆ be a resident of Ontario

## Intake Process

To register for GED Testing at the Independent Learning Centre an applicant must:

- ◆ Check the GED Test Schedule on the ILC website and identify a convenient time and location.
- ◆ Print out and complete the GED Tests Application form from the website.
- ◆ Make a copy of a document that proves the applicant to be 18 or older. This can be a birth certificate, driver's licence, photo health card, or passport.
- ◆ Candidates who are 18 years old must provide a date of leaving letter from the last high school they attended. Home-schooled candidates must provide a letter from their Board of Education indicating that they have been home-schooled.

- ◆ Mail the completed application, along with the required fee and documentation to the ILC:

GED Coordinator at the Independent Learning Centre  
PO Box 200, Station Q, Toronto, ON M4T 2T1

If paying by credit card, applicants can fax the completed application to 416.484.2750 or email it to [ged@tvo.org](mailto:ged@tvo.org). Payment can be made by certified cheque, money order, or credit card. The application must be received at least three weeks prior to the testing date selected.

The ILC keeps applications on file for a period of one year. After that time an applicant is required to reapply if he or she has not written the GED Tests or if a rewrite of one or all of the tests is required.

## Types Of Courses

Passing the GED Tests requires some preparation for most adults. While many people prepare intensively by taking classes or studying GED preparation books and other materials, some are comfortable with simply brushing up on a few of the subject areas where they feel they need practice.

To help determine how best to prepare for the tests adult learners can contact local adult education programs. In some cases the staff at these locations will be able to:

- ◆ assist applicants on what, and how best to study for the five GED Tests
- ◆ identify GED preparation classes delivered locally
- ◆ recommend GED preparation books available for purchase

The ILC GED web site <http://www.ilc.org/ged> provides:

- ◆ study tips, hints and sample questions and test outlines
- ◆ information on books to purchase on GED test preparation
- ◆ lists of providers of GED preparation services in Ontario (GED preparation services are not regulated in Ontario and may be delivered by school boards, colleges or adult literacy providers.)

## Delivery/Instructional Methods

Providers of GED preparation services may deliver instruction in class or online. In some cases this instruction is fee-based while in others the classes may be associated with adult literacy provision and learners attend without charge. GED preparation books can help in preparing for the tests. They can be purchased directly using the links given in the ILC website or in a local bookstore. Local libraries may also have copies. The ILC does not endorse any particular book or publisher.

## Assessment, Evaluation And Reporting

The GED Tests, a set of five tests in the core high school curriculum, are as follows:

- ◆ Language Arts: Writing
- ◆ Language Arts: Reading
- ◆ Mathematics Part 1 (use of calculator) and Part 2 (no calculator)
- ◆ Social Studies
- ◆ Science

The tests measure important knowledge and skills (such as the applicant's ability to understand and apply information; to evaluate, analyze, and draw conclusions; and to express ideas and opinions in writing) that are usually acquired during a regular high school program of study. The tests used in Canada have been developed specifically for Canadians.

The tests contain questions that require the use of important ideas and thinking skills. Few of the questions ask for isolated details, definitions, or specific facts. Multiple-choice questions are used for each of the five tests. The Language Arts: Writing Test includes an essay component that a candidate must pass in order to receive a score for the test. The Mathematics Test includes the use of standard and coordinate plane grids and a calculator.

The tests are available in English and French. Individual editions and testing accommodations are available to help people with special needs as well as physical and/or learning disabilities that can be documented by a qualified professional. Forms are available to provide this documentation at the Test Centres, and the completed forms are processed by the local Test Centre. Each request is considered on an individual basis. If the accommodations are approved, the local GED examiner arranges to conduct the testing with the approved accommodations. There is no additional cost for accommodations.

### Credential

The GED Testing Program is used to compare an adult's performance on the tests to the same curriculum standard of grade 12 courses. The tests take into consideration the skills and knowledge people are expected to retain from high school, especially the ability to reason, put together information, and draw conclusions.

If a standard score of at least 450 on each of the five GED Tests is achieved, the applicant will receive an Ontario High School Equivalency Certificate. Individual test results are expressed as standard scores ranging from 200 to 800 on each of the five tests. The GED certificate demonstrates that the holder has the potential of a high school graduate and the educational skills to succeed in areas of further training and/or study. However, specific knowledge that a recent high school graduate might have acquired (such as mathematical and chemical formulas or the work of specific authors) is not tested. There is no credit value associated with the GED Tests, and the equivalency certificate is not transferrable for the purpose of granting an Ontario Secondary School Diploma.

The Ministry of Education has designated the ILC as the sole provider of GED testing services for the province of Ontario, and in this capacity it issues the High School Equivalency Certificate.

## Mature Student Status

The majority of students qualify for admission to postsecondary programs based on having a credential (Ontario Secondary School, ACE or GED) and prerequisite courses. Eligible students may also apply using the Mature Student Status category. The application process to apply under the Mature Student Status is different depending on whether the application is to a community college or university.

## Community College Process - Mature Student Test

### Overview

Adults whose pathway to postsecondary is to apply to a community college as mature students must indicate this category on their Ontario College Application Services (OCAS) <http://www.ocas.ca/> application form which is submitted online. All applications to fulltime college postsecondary programs are processed through OCAS. It is recommended that adults intending to apply as a mature student contact the individual college Registrar's office to learn more about applying under mature student status.

### Items to consider when selecting this pathway:

1. Students applying under Mature Student Status will be considered on an individual basis.
2. Students may be required to successfully complete prerequisite courses (OSSD or ACE), especially for oversubscribed programs.
3. There is a fee to write the Mature Student Test (MST).

### Eligibility

Adults qualify to apply as Mature Students if they meet the following criteria:

- ◆ are 19 years of age or older by the postsecondary program start date
- ◆ have been out of school for at least a year
- ◆ do not have an OSSD or equivalent certificate
- ◆ currently reside in Canada (Canadian citizens, permanent residents or those currently studying in Canada on a study permit or other visa)
- ◆ are a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident living elsewhere (not in Canada)

## Intake Process

Students apply directly to the college(s) where they are seeking to enroll for permission to write the MST. At some colleges, students cannot self-refer to write the test. At some colleges, students applying through OCAS who are accepted into postsecondary but need to prove that they have the prerequisite English and math skills receive a letter inviting them to write the MST to demonstrate academic ability. Students wanting to write the MST at some colleges must meet with an academic advisor before being allowed to write. The advisor will determine if writing the MST is a realistic option for individual students.

Once the required fee has been paid, applicants will be advised of a time and location for writing the MST. Students usually write the test in the college's Testing Centre. Individuals should plan to spend 2 -3 hours writing the test. Arrangements can be made to write the test off site in an approved and supervised testing environment. The MST is being used less frequently as a vehicle to qualify for admission to postsecondary programs as prerequisite courses (OSSD or ACE) are still required.

At some colleges, students in a college upgrading program who are running out of time to complete the ACE Certificate or prerequisite courses are advised to write the MST. Even if they are successful in the MST, they are encouraged to complete their ACE courses to get a final grade recorded on their transcript and to be as prepared as possible for postsecondary studies.

## Tests Used

A variety of commercial and in-house tests are used. The two most frequently used are Accuplacer and a version of the Canadian Adult Achievement Test (CAAT) C or D. Applicants to Health Sciences programs may also be required to write the Health Occupation Aptitude Examine (HOAE) - a test used to rank applicants. Other pre-admission testing (outside of HOAE) may be required for specific programs or colleges.

Subject areas most frequently assessed in the MST are Communications and Mathematics. There is typically a standard score in English required and a sliding score for math depending on the postsecondary program. Students not achieving the required score on the MST are advised to meet with an academic advisor to determine the best next-step option: rewrite the MST within a specified time frame and/or register for an adult upgrading or English Second Language programming.

# Mature Student Direct Application To An Ontario University

## Overview

Adults whose pathway to postsecondary is to apply to university as mature students must use the Ontario Universities' Application Centre (OUAC) 105 application process. It is recommended that adults contact individual university admissions' offices to find out about applying under Mature Student Status or Letter of Permission status. The application process is through OUAC. The OUAC processes applications for admission to undergraduate, law, medical, rehabilitation sciences and teacher education programs at Ontario's universities.

### Items to consider when selecting this pathway:

1. In addition to the OUAC application fee, OUAC collects "Supplemental/Document Evaluation Fees" on behalf of universities.
2. To make the most of their application, mature students should contact individual university admissions departments to determine if there are specific mature student conditions.
3. Some university degree programs offered at community colleges may require students to apply through OCAS, which entails an additional application fee.

## Eligibility

Adults are eligible to complete the 105D (Domestic) application if they:

- ◆ currently reside in Canada (Canadian citizens, permanent residents or those currently studying in Canada on a study permit or other visa), or
- ◆ are a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident living elsewhere (not in Canada), and
- ◆ are not currently attending an Ontario high school day program, applicants have to use 105 if they have had a seven month break and/or are not applying with 6 4U/M courses – see OUAC site for which students need to use 101 process. <http://www.ouac.on.ca/>

There is also a 105F (International) application for students who currently reside out of country and are not a Canadian citizen or permanent resident and are not currently attending an Ontario secondary school day program in Ontario or abroad.

## Application Process

### Step 1: Research University Selections

- ◆ Explore and review university publications and university websites/ browse programs online.
- ◆ Record program choices and their OUAC codes.
- ◆ Make a note of all admission requirements and program-specific deadlines.
- ◆ Review the OUAC 105 Instruction Booklet and check the 105 Addenda (available online at <http://www.ouac.on.ca/ouac-105/105-mature>) for important updates.

### Step 2: Apply

- ◆ Create a 105D account or a 105F account, as applicable.
- ◆ Complete all sections of the application.
- ◆ Submit application with payment.
- ◆ Record the OUAC Reference Number issued. This number, along with a password, is required for future access to the application and to respond to university offers of admission.

### Step 3: After Applying

- ◆ After one business day, applicants should log in to their online application to verify the details. Review and make any necessary changes.
- ◆ Ensure spam filters are set to accept email from the OUAC and the universities applied to. E-mail is the primary mode of communication for the universities and the OUAC. The universities will acknowledge they received the student's application.
- ◆ Send all university-requested supporting documents (e.g., transcripts) to the university, not to OUAC. Some universities may require that these documents be sent directly from the issuing school.

# SECTION 4



## Factors to Consider When Deciding On a Postsecondary Destination

Sections two and three of this document explain in detail both transition options and programming that meet the requirements to apply directly for admission to postsecondary programs. This section of the document identifies factors which should be taken into consideration when a student is determining the best route to postsecondary programming. Remember, there is no one pathway that is best for everyone.

*Ontario's Pathways to Postsecondary Education for Adult Learners Flowchart and Companion Guide* are current as of March, 2015. Pathways to publicly-funded postsecondary programs change from time to time, and adult learners are encouraged to speak with postsecondary institutions to ensure that the pathways identified in these documents remain current.

### Developing A Plan To Apply For Postsecondary Programming

**To develop a realistic plan to apply for postsecondary programming a student has many important questions to answer:**

1. Which postsecondary route -Apprenticeship, College, or University? Which institution? Which program?
2. What is the postsecondary program start date?
3. What credentials and prerequisite courses are needed to apply for admission? Does the student have these prerequisites?
4. What are the best transition and/or adult upgrading pathways to promote acceptance and subsequent success in the postsecondary program?

# Selecting A Postsecondary Route: Ontario's Publically Funded Postsecondary Options

The three primary deliverers of postsecondary programming in Ontario are as follows:

- ◆ Apprenticeship
- ◆ Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology
- ◆ University

Excellent sources of information for all three routes are [www.collegeoftrades.ca](http://www.collegeoftrades.ca) or [www.ontario.ca](http://www.ontario.ca). (Choose English, then under Topics, choose Education and training, then under College or University, choose Study in Ontario.)

## Apprenticeship

Apprenticeship is often a career choice which is overlooked. Apprenticeship is an “earn while you learn” model of training. There are a number of definite advantages to pursuing an apprenticeship career: high demand, job security, national and international mobility, wages, benefits, job satisfaction and an active work environment. There are a wide range of careers classified as apprenticeship. These include such occupations as Plumber or Electrician, emerging job classifications in the Information and Green Technology sectors as well as jobs like Early Childhood Educator and Event Planner. Careers in Apprenticeship require strong communications and mathematics skills in order to succeed on the job and during in-school training.

Individuals pursuing an apprenticeship career do not apply to a community college or other training provider. Instead, they must have the following:

- a) a sponsor (employer) committed to hiring them as an apprentice and providing the on-the-job training
- and
- b) the necessary academic requirements for the trade

Most apprenticeships require an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) or equivalent. Ontario equivalent credentials include the Academic and Career Entrance (ACE) Certificate or General Education Development (GED). (See Section 3.)

Potential apprentices who have both a sponsor and the required academic credentials must register with the Ministry of Training, College and Universities (MTCU). The apprentice, the sponsor, and the local MTCU consultant all sign a contract outlining the roles and responsibilities of each party. Apprenticeship registrations take place year-round. Subsequent in-school training is scheduled at various intervals depending on the trade and the community/region. Apprentices who wish to work in Ontario must also be members of the Ontario College of Trades. If there is no sponsor, there is no apprenticeship contract.

While a secondary school diploma or equivalent is the required academic credential, it may not be enough for some sponsors in this highly competitive employment option. Having related work experience as well as completing a Pre-Apprenticeship or Apprenticeship Co-Operative program or graduating from a college postsecondary Pre-Trades or Pre-Technology program may greatly improve chances of securing a sponsor. For information about Pre-Apprenticeship programs, contact the local Apprenticeship office or community college. For college-delivered Co-Operative Apprenticeship and Pre-Trades and Pre-Technology programs, check community college websites or contact the local community college. For Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Programs (OYAP) contact the local school board.

Apprentices who have successfully completed all of the in-school and on-the-job training for the trade (usually three to five years), receive a Certificate of Apprenticeship and are eligible to write the provincial Certificate of Qualification (C of Q) examination. The C of Q is a provincial licensing exam which is required to practice some trades (known as “compulsory” trades), and is optional for other trades (known as “voluntary” trades). Some voluntary trades do not have a C of Q available. An apprentice who passes the C of Q exam is then designated as a journeyperson. For those in a trade classified as “Red Seal”, passing the C of Q exam results in a license that is valid across Canada. For more information about apprenticeship in Ontario go to [www.collegeoftrades.ca](http://www.collegeoftrades.ca) or [www.tcu.gov.on.ca](http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca).

### **Ontario Colleges Of Applied Arts And Technology (CAAT)**

Ontario’s twenty-four publically funded Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (CAAT), referred to in this guide as “community colleges” offer a wide range of postsecondary programming. College programs combine theory and employment skills and range in length from one to four years. Colleges grant certificates or diplomas upon successful completion of a program. Many colleges also offer degree options and collaborative degree/diploma programs in partnership with a university. College program offerings are constantly expanding in response to the changing economy.

An Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) or equivalent (ACE, GED) is the standard requirement for acceptance in a community college postsecondary program. Some postsecondary programs may also identify specific OSSD or ACE courses that are required to be considered for admission; for example, most Health Sciences programs require Biology and Chemistry and/or Physics. Programs may also have non-academic admission requirements such as CPR, First Aid Certificate, Criminal Reference Check, volunteer hours, or a portfolio.

Often there is a high degree of competition for seats in oversubscribed programs. Oversubscribed programs are those for which there are many more qualified applicants than there are seats available. Often it is these oversubscribed programs, especially in the Health Sciences and Technology areas, which are frequently the preferred destination for adult students.

Many colleges have articulation agreements between postsecondary programs, between colleges, and between colleges and universities. These articulation agreements improve student mobility and ensure students are not repeating courses if they change program or institution. A student may be able to move from a college certificate or diploma program to a university degree program and receive credit for courses/material already studied.

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For more information about college programming visit the following:

- ◆ Websites of the 24 colleges
  - ◆ [www.tcu.gov.on.ca](http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca)
  - ◆ For information about articulation agreements: [www.ontransfer.ca](http://www.ontransfer.ca)
  - ◆ For information about the college system: [www.collegesontario.ca](http://www.collegesontario.ca)
- 

## Ontario Universities

There are twenty-three universities in Ontario. These publically-funded universities offer undergraduate and graduate degree programs as well as co-operative education and professional programs. Universities focus on expanding knowledge and understanding in a chosen discipline. In addition to developing critical thinking skills, research techniques and pursuing knowledge, some programs prepare students for specific professional careers, e.g., nursing, law and engineering.

Individual universities and programs identify the prerequisites required for admission. An Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) or accepted equivalent is the standard requirement. However many university programs may also identify specific prerequisite courses for admission consideration. University and program requirements are institution specific. Students are encouraged to contact the prospective institution(s) prior to decision making.

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For more information about university programming visit the following: [www.tcu.gov.on.ca](http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca) or [www.electronicinfo.ca](http://www.electronicinfo.ca).

For information on applying to university go to: [www.ouac.on.ca](http://www.ouac.on.ca).

For information on articulation agreements between colleges and universities visit: [www.ontransfer.ca](http://www.ontransfer.ca).

For more information about the university system visit: [www.cou.on.ca](http://www.cou.on.ca).

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## Identifying The Prerequisites Required To Be Considered For Admission To A Postsecondary Program

Once an individual has decided on a postsecondary program, the next step is to identify the requirements to apply for admission. As previously mentioned, applicants for all postsecondary programs must meet specific entrance requirement including an OSSD, ACE Certificate or GED. (See Section 3.) For many postsecondary programs, specific prerequisite courses may also be required. There may also be minimum grades required for some of these prerequisite courses. Students without a secondary school diploma can also apply to both college and university under the Mature Student Status category (See Section 3 pages 24 to 27), but there may be additional requirements/grades as described above.

It is very important to do the necessary research to determine if an application will be considered. Visiting the websites of all the postsecondary institutions under consideration to identify both the institution as well as the specific postsecondary program requirements is a critical first step. It is also important to pay attention to the identified prerequisite course codes to determine if a workplace, college or university destination secondary school course is required. (See Section 3 page 9.) It is advisable to contact the postsecondary institution if the applicant has a question or needs further information. There are always qualified advisors who can provide specific advice about policies at that institution. In addition, students should ensure they are prepared for the lifestyle changes which postsecondary requires.

## Determining The Student's Postsecondary Start Date

After potential postsecondary applicants have decided the program of choice and the prerequisites required, the next step is to determine when they are planning to start the program. They must also realistically determine the amount of time it will take to acquire any prerequisites. The mistake made most often by individuals planning to participate in postsecondary programming is applying too late, especially for oversubscribed programs. For colleges, all applications for fulltime postsecondary programs are submitted through the Ontario College Application Service (OCAS) [www.ontariocolleges.ca](http://www.ontariocolleges.ca). For universities applications are submitted through Ontario Universities' Application Centre (OUAC) [www.ouac.ca](http://www.ouac.ca). The application cycles for colleges and universities are different, but both begin well before a student is planning to attend.

## Applying To College: Process And Timelines

Applicants should research and plan ahead. Admission requirements vary from program to program and college to college. Allow time to complete admission requirements prior to critical application dates. This is particularly important for learners applying to oversubscribed programs. Go to [www.ontariocolleges.ca](http://www.ontariocolleges.ca) for a complete outline of the application process including dates and contact information. (The majority of applications are for a September intake. There are a number of January intakes as well. Research the application cycle for January intakes as dates are different, but the same "planning ahead" applies.)

“Applications to highly competitive programs must be received by February 1 in order to be considered.” (OCAS website). Students are able to determine which programs are oversubscribed by checking the college calendar and/or the OCAS website where the program listings are found. At some colleges, applicants will be considered eligible for admission if they are able to provide proof that they are currently enrolled in prerequisite courses and meeting with success. At other institutions, students must have already completed prerequisite courses to be considered.

The following are reminders of critical steps in the process:

1. The Ontario College Application Service (OCAS) receives and distributes all fulltime applications to college postsecondary programs. Starting in November for programs beginning the following September apply online through [www.ontariocolleges.ca](http://www.ontariocolleges.ca). A non-refundable fee is applicable. Applicants may apply to a maximum of three (3) colleges and five (5) programs with no more than three (3) programs at any one (1) college.
2. It is important that applications, especially for “oversubscribed programs”, be submitted by February 1, “the equal consideration date”. Priority is given to applications received prior to this date. Applications processed after this date are considered on a first come first served basis.
3. Verify that information on the applicant profile is correct and complete. Applicants must also submit all the required documentation to OCAS within the deadlines identified.
  - Ontario high schools graduates may obtain documents from the last secondary school attended. In some cases electronic transmission of documents may be available – visit <http://www.ontariocolleges.ca/apply/transcripts> for more information. Additional fees may apply.
  - College Adult Upgrading applicants need to provide a college transcript. Transcripts are transmitted electronically from the issuing college. Additional fees may apply.
  - If applying using GED results, the applicant should follow the specific instructions issued by OCAS for that credential.
4. OCAS notifies college(s) of applications and transmits all applicant documents to each college.
5. Applicants selected for admission will receive an Offer of Admission directly from each college. For oversubscribed programs with a fall start date, decisions on applications received prior to February 1 will be responded to by March 31st at the latest. Requests received after February 1 will receive a response within a maximum of eight weeks. February 1 is the earliest date that colleges may release offers of admission and applicants can confirm acceptance.
6. It is important to read the Offer of Admission carefully as it may indicate required next steps to continue the application. Colleges may also forward an information package at this time. Read all communications from the college carefully. They may include critical information like directions to make arrangements to write an intake assessment test for the purpose of placement in first semester courses, fees due, deferral dates, or information about Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) applications.

7. Instead of receiving an Offer of Admission individuals may receive:
  - a letter indicating their application to the program of choice has been waitlisted. Contact the college to find out about waitlisting policies.
  - a letter indicating that they did not meet the college and/or program admission requirements. Applicants may be advised to speak to a college advisor to develop a plan to acquire the necessary prerequisites for future admission.
8. Log on to [www.ontariocolleges.ca](http://www.ontariocolleges.ca) to confirm the final choice of college and program by the date indicated in the Offer of Admission. This date is usually in May.
9. Make arrangements to pay applicable deposit and/or fees, usually by mid-June. Payment deadlines and fees vary from college to college.

Remember in developing the plan to register for postsecondary programming to take into consideration the date the postsecondary application must be submitted and the amount of time it will take to acquire the necessary prerequisites to be considered for admission. This will help applicants to select both the preparation pathway as well as the amount of time that must be set aside for preparatory studies. The fastest route is not always the best. Taking the time to be both eligible for admission as well as prepared to succeed is important.

### Internal Community College Pathways

Just as there is more than one pathway a student can follow to qualify for admission to a postsecondary program, there are various postsecondary pathway options within a community college once a student is registered. Increasingly community colleges have designated a staff member within the institution to advise students about program options enabling movement between postsecondary diploma and certificate programs and from these programs to degrees. Students may want to take into consideration in their decision-making process the subsequent programming which the initial program choice opens up to them.

Here are a few examples of internal pathways. Second language learners who successfully complete diploma transition or bridging programs can qualify for admission without further language assessment to other postsecondary programs. General Arts and Sciences (GAS) as well as Pre-Technology, Pre-Business, and Pre-Health are postsecondary programs which facilitate acceptance into subsequent and often oversubscribed postsecondary programs. Determining the ultimate goal is important. For instance, if a student is planning on acquiring a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BScN) degree, college/university articulation agreements may make it possible to break down movement to BScN graduation into steps: e.g. Pre-Health, followed by Practical Nursing (PN), followed by a College-University Bridging program.

## Applying To University: Process And Timelines

Students should research and plan extensively prior to application. University programs and admission requirements vary from university to university, so applicants must be well informed. Allow time to complete prerequisite courses/requirements prior to critical application dates. Since there is no general deadline for the submission of university applications for mature students, applicants must research each university and program as application deadlines will vary. This is particularly important for students applying to oversubscribed programs. Note: some universities will still accept applications after the application deadline – contact the university and program department for more information. For further information about applying as a Mature Student see Section 3 page 26.

### Process

1. Ensure that the proper application is being submitted to the Ontario Universities' Application Centre (OUAC). Application types:
  - I. 105, use if;
    - a. Applicant is a Canadian citizen, permanent resident, international applicant, or studying in Canada on a study permit,  
and
    - b. Applicant is transferring from a postsecondary institution,  
and/or
    - c. Applicant is taking high school courses at night school, by correspondence or other distance education modes of study,  
and/or
    - d. Applicant is currently attending or has attended high school outside the province of Ontario,  
and/or
    - e. Applicant is attending an Ontario high school during the day, but will have fewer than six 4U/M courses,  
and/or
    - f. Applicant has at some point, been out of an Ontario high school for more than seven consecutive months.
  - II. Applicants to common law, medicine, teacher education (consecutive programs) or rehabilitation sciences must use separate online applications found on the OUAC website at [www.ouac.on.ca/applications](http://www.ouac.on.ca/applications).

2. Identify for each university and program the admission requirements, application deadlines, and intended program start. Note the OUAC codes.
3. Create a 105 D or F account (Domestic or Foreign).
4. Complete all sections of the application.
5. Review program selections – “Verify and Agree”
6. Submit application and payment (Note: there is a non-refundable application fee payable to OUAC and additional non-refundable supplementary processing fees required by each university and payable to each university that is applied to. Visit [www.ouac.ca](http://www.ouac.ca) for more information). Record the OUAC reference number for future use.
7. Allow one business day for processing – return to the submitted online application and verify the details.
8. Ensure that applicant has an active e-mail account – communication from the universities is by e-mail. All universities will acknowledge receipt of applications.
9. Support documents, transcripts, etc. (additional fees may apply) must be sent to each university for which an application has been submitted. Do not send information to OUAC. Make sure that the applicant’s assigned OUAC number is on all correspondence.
10. Applications are evaluated individually at each university. Offers are made at different times throughout the processing cycle dependent upon the university and program. Universities communicate offers. Acceptance (or for some universities, a decline) of offers of admission is done through the applicant’s online application at [www.ouac.ca](http://www.ouac.ca).

For complete University 105 application process details, applicants should download the document “105 Instruction Booklet” available at [www.ouac.on.ca/docs/105/b\\_105\\_b.pdf](http://www.ouac.on.ca/docs/105/b_105_b.pdf)

## Summary Of Steps

1. Decide which postsecondary route to follow (Apprenticeship, College, or University).
2. Research the prerequisites (courses and credentials) by checking individual institution websites and/or speaking to an academic/intake advisor at the postsecondary institution.
3. Determine if the applicant has all the prerequisites required to not only be considered for admission but to also succeed in subsequent postsecondary programming.
4. If the answer is yes, research application dates for both fall and winter program start-ups and apply as directed on time with required documentation provided.
5. If the answer is no, the applicant needs to determine through an assessment at a service provider (college, school board or community based) if s/he has the academic skills to pursue a pathway which leads directly to postsecondary programming. These pathways include participating in an OSSD or ACE program, doing GED testing or applying as a mature student. (See Section 3 ) (Remember both the GED and the mature student application process may not meet all prerequisite requirements.)
6. If an applicant does not have the academic foundation to succeed in one of these direct pathways, it will be necessary to participate in one of the transition programs identified in Section 2 of this document.
7. Carefully consider how much time is required to complete all the academic prerequisites required to be considered for admission. This may require rethinking when an applicant is planning to apply for postsecondary. It will also help an applicant to determine the amount of time which must be dedicated to acquiring the academic skills and prerequisite courses and/or credential.

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