



# Steps to an Apprenticeship

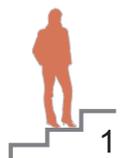


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## Introduction:

There are a number of different paths to an apprenticeship in Ontario today. Although most people still follow the traditional route of finding an employer who will do the training, increasing numbers are pursuing the various options described below.

1. **Traditional Route** – The person seeking an apprenticeship is responsible for finding an employer who will sponsor him or her. The employer and apprentice register with the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Apprenticeship Office, sign a Contract of Apprenticeship and the apprenticeship training period officially begins.
2. **Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program** – Young people, with the help of their OYAP coordinator, register as apprentices while still in secondary school. These students complete a cooperative education placement in a skilled trade. They receive credit for the skills they develop and demonstrate to their employer during the apprenticeship. Some OYAP students can even receive credit for their Basic Level in-school training. A successful OYAP placement can lead to paid employment and continuation of an apprenticeship after graduation. Employers may be eligible for both wage subsidies and tax credits and should contact a local Employment Service office for further information about the subsidy. Interested students should speak with a guidance counsellor or cooperative education teacher at their secondary school.
3. **Union or Industry Approved Training** – Some unions or trade associations run their own training centres and hold Contracts of Apprenticeship with the apprentice, rather than the employer. Intake can be selective and may take place only at certain points in the calendar year. Links to unions and trade associations can be found at:  
<http://www.apprenticesearch.com/Hotlinks/Index>
4. **College Route** – Many of Ontario's colleges of applied arts and technology offer diploma programs related to skilled trades. These programs require successful completion of secondary school and can take two or three years to complete. Many of the programs involve a hands-on paid workplace component. A college graduate with a diploma in a skilled trade may be successful in finding an employer willing to register him / her as an apprentice.
5. **Coop Diploma Apprenticeship Programs** - These programs were recently introduced by the Ontario government, allowing a student to pursue both a college diploma and an apprenticeship at the same time. Apprentices are assigned to employers during the program; successful placements can lead to a continuation of an apprenticeship after a diploma is awarded.



6. **Pre-apprenticeship Programs** – These programs provide training in a specific trade to help prepare for apprenticeship. They are less than 52 weeks in length. Organizations offering these programs often assist with job placement. Additional information is available at: [http://www.apprenticesearch.com/fpWhats\\_new/programs.asp](http://www.apprenticesearch.com/fpWhats_new/programs.asp)

7. **Private Career Colleges** – These programs vary in time, length, expense and effectiveness in placing students in apprenticeships. Further information is available on the Service Ontario website: <http://www.serviceontario.ca/pcc>



Steps 1, 2 & 3 apply to anyone considering any of the paths to an apprenticeship.

## 1. Explore your career options with a trained career counsellor

Career counsellors are equipped with the information, resources and tools to help you. Most secondary and post-secondary schools and colleges have counsellors available to meet with students.

Many community agencies also provide free career counselling services.

Career counsellors can help:

assess your skills, interests, personality traits, strengths, aptitudes, weaknesses and abilities.  
match your personal profile to a suitable career.

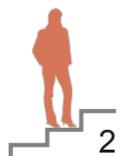
Skilled trades are comprised of four sectors:

- Construction
- Service
- Industrial
- Motive Power

Search out what specific trades exist in each sector!

Self-understanding is essential to making wise career choices. Skilled trades are not for everyone – each trade requires specific aptitudes, skills, and interests. Learn about yourself and discover which trade or trades are most suitable for you. Each of the over 130 trade descriptions listed on the [www.apprenticesearch.com](http://www.apprenticesearch.com) database feature short self-rating quizzes that highlight the aptitudes and interests essential to that trade.

Visit <http://www.apprenticesearch.com/AboutTrades/> to use these quizzes.



## 2. Research! Research! Research!

Gather timely and relevant information about the trade or trades that interest you before pursuing an actual apprenticeship. It is vital to your success to do some background research.

The internet can provide up-to-date and easily accessible information. An excellent place to start with would be [www.apprenticesearch.com](http://www.apprenticesearch.com).

The following are some techniques to help you with your research:

### **Information Interviews**

An information interview involves speaking to someone working in a trade, company or career of interest. The purpose is to gain current information from an “insider” point of view. The goal is not to obtain an apprenticeship but to gather information and advice about a trade from the tradesperson’s perspective.

### **Who to Contact**

Ask family, friends, neighbours, instructors, career counsellors and anyone else for the names of people to contact. You can also create your own contacts through information interviews. Use the following sources for leads:

- Yellow pages
- Business directories
- Unions/associations: their publications and websites
- Articles in the newspapers
- Trade magazines
- Internet research

### **What to Say**

Follow the general guidelines for making a cold call found on page five. Speak to a career counsellor if you are unfamiliar with these guidelines. You simply need to alter your script to suit your request for an information interview.

### **How to Prepare**

Treat an information interview like you would a regular job interview.

Things to consider about specific apprenticeships:

- Educational requirements
- Training
- Pre-apprenticeship courses
- Time required to complete an apprenticeship
- Wages
- Educational costs
- Cost of tools
- Present and future employability outlook
- Work environment
- Challenges of the trade
- Unionized vs. non-unionized work environments
- Life-long learning opportunities

### **Job shadow**

Job shadowing allows you the opportunity to accompany a tradesperson during a typical workday. This can help clarify whether you would enjoy this particular trade.



### 3. Set out a plan of action

A plan involves setting goals and creating strategies to achieve those goals. Individuals who set specific, realistic and attainable goals generally experience greater success than those who do not. Consider having the following to assist you in your job search:

**Resume and cover letter** – These should be customized to target specific jobs. Seek assistance from a career counselor and see the Resume and Cover Letter Guide available on the [www.apprenticesearch.com](http://www.apprenticesearch.com) website.

- **Business/Networking card** – This is a great tool to use when networking or when you are unable to carry your resume with you
- **Portfolio** – A portfolio is like an expanded resume, showcasing your strengths, achievements and abilities in a visual format. It should include information that is relevant only to your trade of interest
- **Letters of recommendation**
- **Transcripts from courses**
- **Pictures of work you have done** – They could come from hobbies, volunteering or actual paid work experience including before, during and after photos to demonstrate your abilities.
- **Anything else that demonstrates your abilities** – be creative!

#### Action Plan

Here are some factors you may need to consider while creating your plan:

- Training timelines
- Upgrading current education, i.e. obtaining a high school diploma
- Cost of tools and training
- Financial and family situation
- Time to complete apprenticeship

### 4. Search for an employer to sponsor you following the Traditional Route

A well-rounded search for an apprenticeship involves many methods and techniques. The following are some strategies to assist you:

- **[www.apprenticesearch.com](http://www.apprenticesearch.com)**

This free website helps match people looking for apprenticeship training with employers offering apprenticeship training and jobs. You can create a profile, post a resume and apply for positions. You may also use the Google search feature within the website to search for information and resources.

- **Networking**

The term networking means making connections. By talking and connecting with people you will be able to hear about unadvertised opportunities. It's a valuable method to find an apprenticeship. Well over half of all job opportunities are filled via word of mouth rather than through advertising. If you have made a contact, leave a business/networking card to increase your chances of being contacted in the future.

- **Information Interviews**

Conducting information interviews as described on page three will help to increase your network of contacts in a specific trade.



- **Classified Ads in the Newspaper**

Keep in mind only 3-5% of jobs are ever advertised. It is good to keep your eye on the classifieds, but definitely do not make them your sole focus.

- **Internet**

There are many internet sites that post employment opportunities. Here are a few to try:

[www.jobbank.gc.ca](http://www.jobbank.gc.ca), [www.workopolis.com](http://www.workopolis.com), [www.monster.ca](http://www.monster.ca),  
[www.automotivejobs.ca](http://www.automotivejobs.ca).

## 5. Practise and carry out “cold calls” to search for work opportunities

Newspaper job ads generally create a flood of resumes for employers to sort through. Cold calling helps you avoid this steep competition and tap into the many positions that go unadvertised. The call, by telephone or in person, is usually made to a person who is not expecting to hear from you and doesn't know who you are. Try the sample “starter scripts” contained on this page. A career counsellor can help you learn and practise this important technique. Locate phone numbers and other important contact information by using the yellow pages, business directories, or internet search engines.

### Cold Calls: What to say

Develop a short 30-40 second script for yourself to help organize your thoughts. General guidelines for your script:

- Introduce yourself
- Ask to speak to the person in charge of hiring; be sure to obtain their name
- Ask if they have time to speak with you; if not, ask when is a good time to call back
- Explain the reason for your call and be sure to market your skills and abilities
- If they are interested in what they hear, be prepared for questions

The objective is to get the employer to accept your resume and consider you for a future opportunity. You may also obtain other names to contact.

### ***Some sample “starter scripts” for cold calls:***

“Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I'm completing grade 12 this year at Eastdale Secondary School and now I'm interested in finding out more about full-time jobs and apprenticeship positions. Would this be a good time for us to talk for a few minutes?”

“Good morning, Mr. Jones. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm currently job searching and looking into companies in the \_\_\_\_\_ sector. I was looking at your website yesterday and I had a few questions about your company. I wonder if you have a few minutes to give me some information.”

“Hi, it's \_\_\_\_\_ calling. \_\_\_\_\_ suggested I give you a call. I'm interested in becoming an apprentice in the \_\_\_\_\_ sector and he / she thought you would be a good person to talk with. Is there some time this week when I could come in and spend a few minutes with you?”



## 6. Ensure your interview skills and your resume are excellent

Resumes and interviews create important first impressions. You need to set yourself apart and accurately market your skills, experience, abilities and attitude. Employers are always attracted to an applicant with a positive attitude and a strong work ethic. It's a good idea to get help from a career counsellor when writing your resume or preparing for an interview.

You can prepare for an interview by anticipating some of the questions you may be asked. Sample questions can be downloaded from the "HR Guide for Employers" on the [www.apprenticesearch.com](http://www.apprenticesearch.com) website.

Some tips for creating an effective resume:

- Underline key words from the job description or want ad; underline words that match your skills
- Group the related skills into categories
- Prioritize the skills – decide which sets of skills are most important to the job being advertised
- Use the top 35 words in a summary statement – pick the top skills from each category and write a summary statement that describes your experience and qualifications for the job. Put the statement at the top of your resume. Remember that the person screening a resume likely spends no more than 30 seconds with each. Don't make them search for relevant information!
- Use the underlined words you have identified when you describe your own experience in greater detail
- A Resume and Cover Letter Guide can be downloaded from [www.apprenticesearch.com](http://www.apprenticesearch.com)

## 7. Follow-up

Following-up means remaining in touch with an employer either by phone, e-mail, or in person. Many job seekers fail to appreciate that a follow-up call displays interest, initiative, enthusiasm and dedication. Many employers welcome follow-up calls. The calls also provide an additional opportunity to market your skills and set yourself apart from the competition.

## 8. Keep positive and stay motivated!

The reality is, looking for an apprenticeship is hard work and can take months. It is important to keep yourself balanced and not become discouraged when things do not seem to be going the way you hoped. Surround yourself with people who are supportive and stay involved in activities you enjoy. Also, keep an open mind and re-evaluate your job search approach periodically.



## 9. You get hired by an employer - what's next?

The employer may want a 'trial period' to assess your learning potential, your attitude and your work ethic. The Conference Board of Canada's Employability Skills chart lists what many employers are looking for. See the following link for information:

<http://www.conferenceboard.ca/topics/education/learning-tools/employability-skills.aspx>

Once an employer is ready to register you as an apprentice, you need to contact the nearest office of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Apprenticeship Branch (MTCU). For the most up-to-date list of local offices go to <http://services.findhelp.ca/eo/tcu/appoff>

### Central District

Toronto (416) 326-5800  
Pickering (905) 837-7721  
Mississauga (905) 279-7333  
Barrie (705) 737-1431

### Western District

Hamilton (905) 521-7764  
Brantford (519) 756-5197  
St. Catharines (905) 704-2991  
Owen Sound (519) 376-5790  
London (519) 675-7788  
Sarnia (519) 542-7705  
Kitchener/Waterloo (519) 653-5758  
Windsor (519) 973-1441  
Chatham (519) 354-2766

### Eastern District

Ottawa (613) 731-7100  
Cornwall (613) 938-9702  
Kingston (613) 548-1151  
Pembroke (613) 735-3911  
Peterborough (705) 745-1918  
Belleville (613) 968-5558

### Northern District

Sault Ste. Marie (705) 945-6815  
North Bay (705) 495-8515  
Sudbury (705) 564-3030  
Timmins (807) 235-1950  
Thunder Bay (807) 346-1550  
Kenora (807) 468-2879

Complete and sign the apprenticeship training agreement/contract of apprenticeship between you, the employer and MTCU. For more detail and links to community partners who can assist you, please visit our website at [www.apprenticesearch.com](http://www.apprenticesearch.com)



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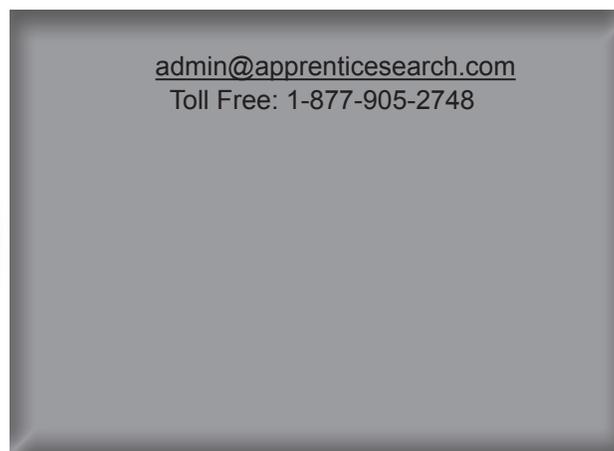
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