Ontario's Pathways
to Postsecondary Education for Adult Learners

cesba

CSC
COLLEGE SECTOR COMMITTEE FOR ADULT UPGRADING + ACE

Ontario Secondary School Credit Program (OSSD)

- Originally entered an Ontario high school before 1999
- Resident of Ontario
- Mature students under these diploma types can choose to have their prior learning assessed under OSSD 1999 PLAR for Mature Students

Secondary School Graduation Diploma (SSGD)
- Entered secondary school prior to 1984
- 27 credits
- 13 compulsory, 14 elective
- Equivalent allowances may be granted for Maturity, Apprenticeship training, post secondary and out of province. 4 senior final credits must be completed.

Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) under OS:iS
- Entered secondary school 1984–August 1999
- 30 credits
- 16 compulsory, 14 elective
- Equivalent allowances may be granted for Maturity, Apprenticeship training, post secondary and out of province. 4 senior final credits must be completed.

- Originally entered an Ontario high school between 1999–2024
- Resident of Ontario
- Out of Province Learners
- Mature students under this diploma type will have their prior learning assessed under OSSD 1999 PLAR for Mature Students

Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) 1999 under OSS
- Entered secondary school September 1999–August 2024
- 30 credits
- 18 compulsory, 12 elective
- Including: Literacy requirement, 40 hours of community service, Online Learning Graduation Requirement
- Equivalent credits may be granted through Mature PLAR to 26 total credits
- 16 credits (PLE's) via grade 9/10 assessments
- 10 senior equivalent credits via 11/12 equivalency/challenge
- 4 senior final credits must be completed after the assessment process is completed

- Originally entered an Ontario high school September 2024
- Resident of Ontario
- Mature students new to Ontario as of September 2027

Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) 2025 under OS
- Entered secondary school September 2024
- 30 credits
- 17 compulsory, 13 elective
- Including: Literacy Requirement, 40 hours of community service, Online Learning Graduation Requirement
- Equivalent credits may be granted through Mature PLAR to 26 total credits
- 16 credits (PLE's) via grade 9/10 assessments
- 10 senior equivalent credits via 11/12 equivalency/challenge
- 4 senior final credits must be completed after the assessment process is completed

- School Board delivery is through adult day school programming or continuing education programming
- Independent Learning Centre (ILC) delivery is e-learning
- Private school delivery is fee based

- Any adult who provides evidence of a completed Canadian postsecondary program, including degree, diploma or apprenticeship, may qualify for up to 30 credits and an OSSD.

APPRENTICESHIP COLLEGE* UNIVERSITY*

Academic and Career Entrance Program (ACE)

- 18 years or older
- Resident of Ontario
- Eligible to work in Ontario
- Not on an international study visa
- Not attending high school
- With or without a high school diploma

ACE Courses and Certificate
- ACE courses are equivalent to grade 12 'college preparation' courses in the Ontario high school system.
- ACE courses can be used to meet grade 11/12 course specific admission requirements for application to college certificate & diploma programs
- Grade 12 equivalent ACE courses include communications (English/French), sciences, and mathematics
- Take only the courses needed to meet admission requirements or take four courses (communications, mathematics and two others) to complete the grade 12 equivalent ACE Certificate
- For apprenticeship registration in Ontario, the ACE certificate is accepted as a grade 12 equivalent.

- Offered in-class by Ontario's public colleges at 80+ locations
- Contact individual college for locations and scheduling
- Free to eligible applicants
- Also offered fully online through the "ACE Distance" program

APPRENTICESHIP COLLEGE*

Mature Student Status

- 19 years or older
- No high school diploma or equivalent
- Other criteria vary across public colleges and Indigenous Institutes

Mature Student Test
- Available at most colleges for many programs of study
- Areas tested may include English/French, mathematics
- Other areas may be tested depending on college and program
- Tests used vary from college to college
- Individual colleges determine required scores
- Mature applicants must meet program specific admission requirements
- Unsuccessful test-takers may be able to re-write after a waiting period and may also be referred to an ACE program for further preparation/upgrading
- A testing fee may apply

- Contact individual college Admissions Office to determine availability & process
- Submit college application through OCAS Application Services and identify "mature applicant"

COLLEGE*

- 19 or 21 years or older
- No high school diploma
- Away from formal education for a period of time
- Canadian citizen or permanent resident
- Criteria vary by university

Mature Student Process
- Available at some universities for specific programs of study
- Process varies across universities
- Documentation may be required e.g., portfolio, resume, reference letters
- Testing may be required e.g., English/French language proficiency
- Mature applicants must meet program specific admission requirements
- If granted entry, completion of specific courses in first year may be required
- A fee for testing and/or assessing documentation may apply

- Contact individual university Admissions Office to determine availability and process
- Submit university application on the Ontario Universities' Application Centre (OUAC) website; application will be streamed to "Group B" which includes mature students

UNIVERSITY*

Canadian Adult Education Credential (CAEC) - Formerly GED

- 18 years or older
- Ontario resident for at least 6 months
- Not attending high school
- No high school diploma

CAEC
- Available in English and French
- Includes tests in five areas:
  - Reading
  - Writing
  - Mathematics
  - Science
  - Social Studies
- Earn an Ontario high school equivalency certificate
- Does not meet all course-specific admission requirements for college programs
- Not accepted for admission by Ontario's public universities
- For apprenticeship registration in Ontario, the CAEC is accepted as grade 12 equivalent
- CAEC preparation from local adult education providers may be available
- CAEC preparation guides also available for self-study
- A testing fee may apply

- Apply for CAEC testing on the Independent Learning Centre (ILC) website
- CAEC testing is administered online by the ILC at 40+ locations

APPRENTICESHIP COLLEGE*

Updated: **March 2026.** See Companion Guide for further information.

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Ontario

*Ontario's 7 Indigenous Institutes provide access to postsecondary programs through one or more of these pathways. For more information, consult the specific requirements of each Indigenous Institute.