

MEMORANDUM TO: Directors of Education
Secretary Treasurer, James Bay Lowlands School Authority
Director of Provincial Schools Branch
Supervisory Officer of Centre Jules-Léger

FROM: Mary Jean Gallagher
Chief Student Achievement Officer of Ontario
Assistant Deputy Minister
Student Achievement Division

Raymond Théberge
Assistant Deputy Minister
French-Language Education, Aboriginal Learning
and Research Division

DATE: December 5, 2011

SUBJECT: **Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) Application Process for 2012-2013**

We are pleased to provide you with information about the application process for Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) programs for 2012-13.

The SHSM is a specialized career-focused program for students to customize their learning to suit their individual interests and strengths while meeting high standards and the requirements for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). The career focus and the SHSM requirement for each program to have pathways to apprenticeship training, college, university and the workplace supports the strategic goals of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. Growth in 2011-2012 continued to increase with approximately 34,000 students participating in over 1,300 SHSM programs in over 630 schools.

Priorities for SHSMs in 2012-13

The Ministry of Education's priorities for 2012-13 are to ensure high quality SHSM programs and to support the expansion of SHSM programs:

- continue support for current high quality SHSM programs
- deepen implementation in all boards, provincial schools and one school authority (where applications qualify)
- promote alignment between approved SHSM pathway programs and approved dual credit programs, managed under the separately administered School-College-Work Initiative
- promote partnerships of coterminous and/or neighbouring boards
- increase the number of programs and services that could impact positively on student retention and success in the French-language education system.

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Applying for a Specialist High Skills Major Program

Boards have the opportunity to submit SHSM applications in 18 economic sectors: agriculture; arts and culture; aviation and aerospace; business; construction; energy; environment; forestry; health and wellness; horticulture and landscaping; hospitality and tourism; information and communications technology; justice, community safety and emergency services; manufacturing; mining; non-profit; sports; and transportation.

Once approved, boards must ensure, over the two-year implementation period, that their SHSM programs offer the five required components:

1. a bundle of 8-10 required credits with pathways to the four destinations: apprenticeship training, college, university and the workplace. Each bundle of credits consists of
 - 4 major credits
 - 2 to 4 other required credits
 - 2 cooperative education credits
2. prescribed certification and training courses/programs
3. career exploration and experiential learning such as job shadowing, job twinning, and work experience
4. 'reach ahead' opportunities where students participate in authentic experiences in their postsecondary option of choice, whether in apprenticeship training, college, university or the workplace
5. development of Essential Skills and work habits and the use of the Ontario Skills Passport (OSP) for purposes of documentation.

In addition, approved SHSM programs must be offered in partnership with local business, industry, and/or community organizations, and where applicable, postsecondary educational institutions and training centres. Advisory committees comprised of local stakeholders, and board and school staff are required for SHSM programs.

Application Details

In all cases, the Ministry of Education's approval is required to offer an SHSM and to enable students to earn an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) with the SHSM red seal designation. Boards are required to submit applications for each proposed SHSM program to start in 2012-13, update information for SHSM programs that started in 2011-12, and project enrolment for all SHSM programs offered (existing or proposed) in 2012-13.

The application content focuses on the five required components of the SHSM and the partnership capacity described above. This year, all applications will be submitted online at <https://www.psa.gsa.gov.on.ca/>. Live Adobe Connect training sessions were held for all SHSM board leads.

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Key dates in the application and approval process for 2012-13:

November 18, 21 - Adobe Connect training on the online applications
December 5 - memo to directors sent electronically to each board
December 12 - applications available online
January 20, 2012 - applications due electronically to the ministry
February 2012 - notify boards of the approved sectors and schools
February 2012 - boards confirm sectors and schools

Funding will be contingent upon successful fulfilment of prior program commitments and funds being appropriated by the Ontario Legislature, as per current practice. Please note that, as in the past, boards are encouraged to use a portion of the funding provided for Student Success through the Learning Opportunities Grant (LOG) to support the implementation of SHSM programs.

Dual Credit Programs and the SHSM Application

Students in SHSM programs may benefit from access to dual credit learning opportunities in college courses and apprenticeship training programs related to their SHSMs' sectors. Boards applying to the Ministry of Education to offer an SHSM in 2012-13 may wish to consider submitting a proposal to the School College Work Initiative (SCWI) for the SHSM's college and/or apprenticeship training pathways' components in order to offer dual credit learning opportunities within their proposed SHSM programs. The timing of both the SHSM and dual credit application processes have been coordinated to facilitate alignment where appropriate.

We look forward to receiving your application by January 20, 2012. For further information, please contact, Aldo Cianfrini at (416) 325-2669, aldo.cianfrini@ontario.ca

Thank you for your commitment to Student Success.

Original signed by:

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Mary Jean Gallagher

Raymond Théberge

c: Marie-Lison Fougère, Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic Policy and Programs Division
Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
Laurie LeBlanc, Assistant Deputy Minister - Employment and Training Division
Richard Franz, Director, Student Success/Learning to 18 Strategic Policy Branch
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Regional Office Managers
Regional Office Leads for SHSM
Student Success Leaders
SHSM Board Leads