

Ministry of Education
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Ministre de l'Éducation
Édifice Mowat
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1L2



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

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: November 17, 2010

SUBJECT: **Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) Application Process for 2011-12**

We are pleased to provide you with information about the SHSM application process and an invitation to apply for SHSM programs in 2011-12.

The SHSM is a specialized career-focused program for students to customize their learning to suit their individual interests, strengths and needs while meeting high standards and the requirements for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). As such, the career focus and SHSM requirement for pathways to apprenticeship training, college, university and the workplace also support the strategic goals of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. In 2010-11, student access to these specialized programs increased significantly, with approximately 28,000 students participating in over 1000 SHSM programs in 18 sectors.

Priorities for SHSMs in 2011-12

The Ministry of Education's priorities for 2011-12 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 co-terminous 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;

Applying for a Specialist High Skills Major Program

Boards have the opportunity to submit SHSM applications in 18 established 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 provide opportunities for students pursuing all four postsecondary pathways and 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. compulsory 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, public 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 designation. Programs that started in 2009-10 and earlier continue to be approved unless circumstances or program quality changes.

Boards will be required to submit an application for:

- SHSMs that started in 2010-11,
- proposed SHSM programs to start in 2011-12.

In addition, boards will also be required to project enrolment for all other SHSM programs through to 2013-14. These numbers will be used solely to assist us in our future planning.

Submit the board's application to Sudeshna.Dutta@ontario.ca no later than 4:00 pm on December 15, 2010, with copies to your Student Success Leader and the Education Officer with the lead on the SHSM at the board's Ministry of Education Regional Office.

Key dates in the application and approval process for 2011-12:

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|-----------------|--|
| November 17 | - memo and pre-populated application sent electronically to each board |
| November 19, 22 | - teleconference on technical aspects of SHSM application for boards |
| December 15 | - applications due (electronically) to the ministry |
| January 17 | - notify boards of the approved sectors and schools |
| January 21 | - boards confirm sectors and schools |
| May | - Minister's SHSM announcement |

Funding available to support SHSM program implementation is subject to the ministry's budget for 2011-12, and will be based on factors such as the number of SHSM students and the total number of approved SHSM programs. 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 programs related to their majors. Boards applying to the

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Ministry of Education to offer an SHSM in 2011-12 may wish to consider submitting a proposal to the School College Work Initiative (SCWI) for the SHSM's college and/or apprenticeship 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 opportunities where appropriate.

We look forward to receiving your application. For further information, please contact Audrey Cartile at (416) 326-0552, audrey.cartile@ontario.ca or Aldo Cianfrini at (416) 325-2669, aldo.cianfrini@ontario.ca

Thank you for your commitment to student success.

Mary Jean Gallagher

Raymond Théberge

c. to: 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 Implementation, Strategic
Policy Branch
Ginette Plourde, Director, French-Language Education Policy and Programs
Rob Andrews, Director, Student Success/Learning to 18 Implementation, Training
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Patti Redmond, Director, Programs Branch, Ministry of Training, Colleges and
Universities
Kit Rankin, Director, Field Services Branch
Regional Office Managers
Regional Office Leads for SHSM
Student Success Leaders
SHSM Board Leads