

Specialist High Skills Major

Student Success is about meeting the individual learning needs of each and every student. Schools are providing students with more opportunities to customize their high school experience and build on their strengths and interests through a variety of new and enhanced learning options. One of those options is the Specialist High Skills Major.

What is a Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM)?

- The SHSM is a ministry-approved specialized program that allows students to focus their learning on a specific economic sector while meeting the requirements for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) and assists in their transition from secondary school to apprenticeship training, college, university, or the workplace.
- An SHSM enables students to gain sector-specific skills and knowledge in the context of engaging, career-related learning environments and helps them focus on graduation and on pursuing their postsecondary goals.
- Every SHSM must include the following five components, which are outlined in detail in individual guides for each sector:
 1. a bundle of 8–10 Grade 11 and Grade 12 credits that includes:
 - i 4 major credits that provide sector-specific knowledge and skills
 - ii 2–4 other required credits from the Ontario curriculum, in which some expectations are met through learning activities contextualized to the sector
 - iii 2 cooperative education credits that provide authentic learning experiences in a workplace setting, enabling students to refine, extend, and practise sector-specific knowledge and skills
 2. sector-recognized certifications and/or training courses
 3. experiential learning and career exploration activities within the sector
 4. “reach ahead” experiences connected with the student’s chosen postsecondary pathway
 5. development of Essential Skills and work habits required in the sector, and the use of the Ontario Skills Passport (OSP) for purposes of documentation
- In the 2009–10 school year, SHSMs are being offered in the following sectors:

Agriculture	Forestry
Arts and Culture	Health and Wellness
Aviation/Aerospace	Horticulture and Landscaping
Business	Hospitality and Tourism
Community Safety and Emergency Services	Information and Communications Technology
Construction	Manufacturing
Energy	Mining
The Environment	Transportation

How does an SHSM benefit students?

- An SHSM allows students to experience a range of customized learning opportunities in an area that interests them, and helps to engage them in their school program.
- An SHSM program gives students the opportunity to explore, identify, and refine career goals and make informed decisions related to postsecondary education or training and next steps towards a career.
- An SHSM helps students gain confidence in their ability to succeed, and see the connections between their studies, the world beyond high school, and their future careers.
- The experiential learning opportunities provided in an SHSM enable students to develop Essential Skills and work habits that are required in the sector, and have their performance of those skills and work habits assessed and documented, using tools connected with the Ontario Skills Passport.
- Through an SHSM, students begin to establish relationships and networks in their chosen field.
- Students who have earned an SHSM can provide evidence of their achievement of the required components (e.g., sector-recognized certifications and training programs) to prospective employers and postsecondary educational or training institutions.

How is successful completion of an SHSM documented?

- Successful completion of an SHSM is indicated on the student's Ontario Secondary School Diploma by a red seal.
- The student receives an SHSM Record that documents his or her achievement of the required components, including sector-related certifications earned and/or training courses completed.
- Successful completion of an SHSM is indicated on the student's Ontario Student Transcript (OST).

Where are SHSM programs being delivered?

- In the 2009–10 school year, SHSM programs will be available in all school boards across the province. About 430 schools will offer SHSMs in one or more of the sectors, for a total of more than 700 SHSM programs province-wide.

How do I find out more?

- Individual guides for each sector, as well as the *SHSM Implementation Guide*, are available at: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/studentssuccess/pathways/shsm/>
- For additional information, contact your school board's Student Success Leader or the lead for the SHSM programs at your local secondary school.

District School Board/School Information: