

Specialist High Skills Major

Through the Student Success initiative, Ontario secondary schools are offering expanded programs to help meet students' individual learning styles and interests. These programs allow students to customize their high school experience through a variety of new and enhanced learning options. These options include Dual Credits, Specialist High Skills Majors and Cooperative Education.

These programs help to meet the needs, interests and strengths of all students, engaging them in learning and better preparing them for graduation and beyond.

What is a Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM)?

An SHSM is a ministry-approved specialized program that allows students to focus their learning on a specific economic sector while meeting the requirements to graduate from secondary school. It also assists in their transition after graduation to apprenticeship training, college, university or the workplace.

As of the 2012–13 school year, SHSMs are available in the following sectors:

- Agriculture
- Arts and Culture
- Aviation/Aerospace
- Business
- Construction
- Energy
- Environment
- Food Processing
- 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
- Transportation

Key Benefits of a Specialist High Skills Major

Pursuing an SHSM helps students to:

- Customize their secondary school education to suit their interests and talents.
- Develop specialized knowledge and skills.

- Earn credits that postsecondary educational institutions and the sector recognize.
- Gain sector-recognized certification and career-relevant training.
- Develop essential skills and work habits documented through the Ontario Skills Passport.
- Identify, explore and refine career goals and make informed decisions about their future.
- Remain flexible, with the option to shift between pathways, should their goals and plans change.

How is a Specialist High Skills Major recognized?

Students who successfully complete an SHSM receive:

- an Ontario Secondary School Diploma with an embossed red seal
- an SHSM Record documenting his/her achievement
- formal recognition on his/her Ontario Student Transcript.

Where are Specialist High Skills Majors offered? How do I find out more?

In 2012–13, SHSM programs are available in all public school boards across the province. For more information about what is available, please contact your school principal or the Student Success Leader at your school board. More detailed information about SHSMs and how they work can be found at ontario.ca/studentsuccess.

