

council of federal, provincial and public representatives to advise the Labour Minister on matters relating to vocational education. At that time, most vocational institutions were administered by a variety of provincial government departments such as labour, agriculture, commerce and industry.

During the 1950s, a shortage of technical manpower prompted federal officials to give the provinces more aid for vocational training. By 1960, about 30 technical institutes had been opened. The Technical and Vocational Training Assistance Act, designed to encourage the provinces to extend and improve facilities, was passed in 1960. Thereafter, new comprehensive schools frequently incorporated vocational programs. Federal participation increased after 1967 with adoption of the Adult Occupational Training Act and purchase of courses given in various types of provincial institutions. Under this Act, the federal government took a more active role in decisions about the selection of trainees, types of training and geographic distribution of training. Employer-centred training was brought within the scope of the Act by a 1972 amendment.

This legislation was replaced in 1982 by the National Training Act, which established the National Training Program. The program was operated in partnership with the provinces and territories and administered through Canada Employment Centres across the country. The National Training Program supported training for which there was labour market demand through the purchase of courses from community colleges and vocational schools, a shared-cost incentive training program with employers, and establishment of a fund to provide or improve training facilities.

In 1985, the federal government revamped its approach to training with the Canadian Jobs Strategy, designed to increase job security for Canadians and contribute to economic growth.

Programs and institutions. Trade/vocational programs emphasize the performance of established procedures and techniques. Most programs can be completed in less than a year, and courses for less complex occupations may last only a few weeks.

As well as public trade schools, institutions offering trade/vocational training include the trade divisions of community colleges and schools for specific occupations such as forestry, police and firefighting. Nursing assistant (nurses' aide) programs are offered in public trade schools, hospital schools and establishments that operate solely as nursing assistant schools.

Public trade schools and vocational centres concentrate on teaching one or more vocational skills. Most such schools are under the administration of a provincial department of education. They should not be confused with public vocational or technical secondary schools administered by local school boards. Trade schools may be separate establishments or divisions of a community college. Not all community colleges provide trade-level training, but those that do usually have separate divisions or centres.

Only people who have left the regular school system and are older than compulsory age may attend. High school graduation is not usually required. Depending on the province and the trade, admission standards can range from Grade 8 to Grade 12.

In Quebec, trade/vocational training is organized somewhat differently, based on the province's definition of an adult student. "La loi sur la formation professionnelle des adultes" defines adult students as people 16 and older who have not attended school for at least 12 consecutive months. Most adult vocational instruction takes place in "les écoles polyvalentes", which are the equivalent of Quebec high schools. Although both the regular secondary level and adult training programs are administered by local school boards, the administration of each level is separate. The écoles polyvalentes are the main source of public trade/vocational training in Quebec, although specialized establishments and some community colleges also have enrolment at this level of instruction.

A number of institutions offer academic upgrading designed to raise trainees' general level of education in one or a series of subjects. Courses may be taken to qualify for admission to higher academic studies or vocational training. However, completion of levels corresponding to the final grades of secondary school does not give high school graduation status.

Rather than attend an educational institution, individuals may acquire training related to a specific trade or occupation as they work. On-the-job training is organized instruction offered in a production environment.

Apprenticeship programs combine on-the-job training with classroom instruction. Persons contract with an employer to learn a skilled trade and eventually reach journeyman status. Apprentices may be registered with a provincial or territorial labour or manpower department. The department sets standards for journeyman qualification: minimum age, educational levels for admission, minimum wages, duration of apprenticeship and the ratio of apprentices to journeymen.