

What are the high school Skilled Trades course options?
The path usually starts with Skilled Trades 10 or Service Trades 10 (culinary). Students can then choose specialized Grade 11 courses like Construction Trades 11, Culinary Trades 11, Manufacturing Trades 11, or Transportation Trades 11. The final step is Skilled Trades Co-operative Education 12. This path lets students explore the trades first, then specialize in an area of interest before applying skills in a real workplace setting.

What is the Options & Opportunities (O2) program and how does it support students interested in skilled trades?
O2 is a focused, three-year high school path that includes career planning, hands-on learning, and participation in three Co-op work placements which can be aimed at exploring skilled trade careers. O2 provides dedicated guidance and work experience to students who want to explore multiple career paths and the Co-Op experiences can count towards pre-apprenticeship hours when under the supervision of a registered journeyperson.

How many pre-apprenticeship credit hours can a student earn through Co-Op?
Co-Op generally offers up to 80 credit hours toward a future registered apprenticeship with the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency (NSAA) when the student is supervised by a registered journeyperson. These hours reduce the total time needed to complete an apprenticeship after high school. Students can take Co-Op class multiple times.

What is the Youth Apprenticeship Program in Nova Scotia and what is the process for a student to register?
A student aged 16-19 who has a part-time job in a skilled trade can register for free with the NSAA. They must submit a signed agreement with their employer to the agency. It allows a student to get paid and start officially tracking their required work hours before they graduate high school.

Is our school participating in the Nova Scotia High Skills Major (Pilot Program) and what are the sector focuses?
The provincial High Skills Major (HSM) pilot includes Skilled Trades as a focus area at Bay View High, Cole Harbour District High and Woodlawn High.

How does the High Skills Major translate into credit hours toward a registered apprenticeship?
A student earning a High Skills Major certificate will be awarded 200 pre-apprenticeship hours that can be applied to apprenticeship hours if the student registers as an apprentice or youth apprentice with the NSAA. Students can have a maximum of 500 pre-apprenticeship hours. These pre-apprenticeship hours are recognized by the NSAA and reduce the work hours required to complete a full apprenticeship.



Skilled Trades Frequently Asked Questions



How do the high school courses (Skilled Trades 10/11, Co-op) translate into credit hours toward a registered apprenticeship with the NSAA?

If taught by a certified journeyperson, Skilled Trades count for 110 hours and if supervised by a certified journeyperson, Co-Op for 80 hours of Pre-Apprenticeship hours that can be applied to apprenticeship hours if the student registers as an apprentice or youth apprentice with the NSAA. Students can have a maximum of 500 Pre-Apprenticeship hours. These high school credits are officially recognized by the NSAA and reduce the work hours required to complete a full apprenticeship.

What are the required or recommended academic courses a student must take to ensure they meet the entrance requirements for NSCC trade programs?

Most NSCC trade programs require a high school diploma and may have other requirements such as Grade 12 Academic or Applied Math and a Grade 11 or 12 Science credit depending on the program. Check NSCC's admission requirements for each specific program for those requirements. Taking the right courses ensures students meet NSCC's entrance requirements and prevents delays after graduation.

What is the structure of the Building Futures for Youth (BFY), Serve it Up!, or Test Drive summer programs, and how many credits/apprenticeship hours do they provide?

These are competitive, intensive, paid summer Co-Op programs. They provide three high school Co-Op credits and up to 300 pre-apprenticeship hours for a 40 hour training and 200 hour work commitment in construction, culinary, or automotive trades. These highly valued programs offer the fastest way to gain significant credit hours and paid, professional work experience.

What is the process to apply for an official NSAA Apprentice ID Card while in high school?

If a student secures a job with a trade employer, they must complete an Apprenticeship Agreement online at the NSAA site, submit the form to the NSAA, and pay a small fee (under \$20) for the ID card. The ID card is proof they are a registered apprentice, allowing them to officially track hours for the NSAA.

How are Co-Op work placements secured? Are the placements with certified journeypersons?

The school's Co-Op coordinator helps secure the placements. For the hours to count toward an apprenticeship, the placement must be with an employer where the mentor/supervisor is a certified journeyperson. Working with a journeyperson ensures the student receives high-quality, relevant training that is recognized by the trade system.

What mandatory safety training and certifications (like WHMIS, First Aid, or Construction Safety) are included in the high school skilled trades courses?

Students receive mandatory training in WHMIS (Workplace Hazardous Materials), Occupational Health & Safety (OH&S), and general shop and tool safety protocols. First Aid is strongly encouraged and sometimes provided. Safety credentials are non-negotiable and are often required before a student can even begin tools related activities in classes.

Are there any partnerships with local industry groups or organizations like Skills Canada – Nova Scotia that provide competitions or mentorship?

Yes. Industry groups like the Construction Association of Nova Scotia partner directly on programs like the summer co-op program Building Futures for Youth, (BFY), the Tourism Industry Association of NS for Serve it Up!, and the Automotive Sector Council of NS for TestDrive. Students are encouraged to participate in Skills Canada competitions to develop and showcase their abilities. These partnerships provide students with real-world connections, high-level mentorship, and opportunities to win scholarships.

What can I do if my child wants a skilled trades course that isn't offered at their high school?

Students can apply for an out-of-area transfer to another high school (note: some high schools are at capacity and do not accept out-of-area transfers) to take Skilled Trades programming, but there must be an available seat in the course.

Why are Skilled Trades classes capped at only 16 students?

This cap is strictly for safety and supervision. In a high-risk shop or kitchen environment, a teacher must be able to see every student at all times. A smaller class also ensures there are enough workstations and tools for everyone to be active. Unlike a regular classroom, a shop or kitchen requires "eyes-on" supervision for every cut or weld. A cap of 16 also ensures the teacher can provide one-on-one safety checks and that no student is left waiting for equipment.