Specialist High Skills Major and CA’s

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 new 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 post secondary 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 2008–09 school year, SHSMs are being offered in the following sectors:

  Agriculture
  Health and Wellness
  Arts and Culture
  Horticulture and Landscaping
  Business
  Hospitality and Tourism
  Community Safety and Emergency Services

  Information and Communications Technology
  Construction
  Manufacturing
  The Environment
  Mining
  Forestry
  Transportation

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.
The Environment SHSM

**Compulsory Sector-Recognized Certifications**

Global Positioning System (GPS)

**Optional Sector-Recognized Certifications**

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**Note:**

Compass/Map/GPS training is a compulsory sector certification for **Forestry**

GPS training, map and compass use is a combined optional sector certification for **Mining**

**Certification and training courses/programs must:**

- be delivered by a certified trainer – a person recognized by the certification provider or by the sector as an authority.

- include an assessment and evaluation component;

- include, wherever possible, documentation such as a certificate or other proof of completion for the student’s portfolio and the student’s SHSM Record. The SHSM Record will indicate the title of each certification earned or training course/program completed, the number of hours involved, and the date the certification/ training was completed.