

Skilled Trades and Apprenticeship Education Act

Stakeholder Briefing

September-October 2021



Alberta

The proposed approach is:

The Minister will set wage rates, as a percentage of a journeyperson's wage, for apprentices in each apprenticeship education program in regulation. Apprentices will continue to fall under the Employment Standards Code, including the minimum wage provisions.

Wage rates will initially follow the percentages currently set in trade regulations, and any future changes will be made in consultation with industry.

What is changing:

- The board will no longer set wage rates, instead the minister will set them in consultation with industry.

The proposed approach is:

The Minister will set apprentice to mentor ratios for each apprenticeship education program in regulation.

Apprentice to mentor ratios will initially follow the ratios set in trade regulations, and any future changes will be made in consultation with industry.

What is changing:

- The board will no longer set ratios, instead the minister will set them in consultation with industry.

The proposed approach is:

Under the STAE Act, the minister may designate trades and may restrict specific activities within a designated trade to be performed only by a certified journeyperson or a registered apprentice. Restricted activities may include all, some, or none of the activities within a trade depending on industry preference. The Minister must prescribe any restricted activities for each designated trade in regulation.

Initially, all trades will be restricted to the same extent that they are today, and the people who can work in a trade will remain the same.

Restricting Activities

Trades currently designated compulsory

All activities in trades currently designated as compulsory certification under the AIT Act will be restricted activities that may only be performed by a journeyperson or registered apprentice.

Trades currently designated optional

All activities in trades currently designated as optional certification will be restricted activities that may only be performed by a journeyperson, registered apprentice, or an individual who is considered qualified by their employer.

What is changing:

- Trades will no longer be designated as compulsory or optional, instead all trades will have the option to restrict all, some, or none of the activities in the trade.
- Cabinet will no longer make decisions on trade designation, and instead the minister will do this in consultation with industry.

What is not changing:

- All activities that are currently restricted under a compulsory or optional trade will continue to be restricted.
- Industry has the ability to influence which activities are restricted.
- The guidelines for restricting activities are largely staying the same.

The proposed approach is:

Under the STAE Act, the current exceptions will continue and will allow anyone who is currently working in a designated trade under an exception to continue to perform restricted activities.

Exceptions for people performing work only on their personal property will continue, and will be expanded to include family farms that are incorporated, where work is not paid.

What is changing:

- Exceptions for personal property are being updated to better reflect inclusion of family farms.

What is not changing:

- Exceptions to restricted activities are being moved under the STAE Act with only minor wording changes, and the intent of the exceptions remains the same.

The proposed approach is:

Self-employed people will be able to register as an apprentice by entering into an apprenticeship education agreement with an eligible sponsor and finding a suitable mentor. In order to remove conflicts of interest and ensure fair and accurate on the job assessments as part of a post-secondary education program, the mentor must not be an employee of the apprentice.

What is changing:

- Self-employed apprentices will no longer be able to be mentored by their employee during their apprenticeship.

What is not changing:

- Self-employed people will continue to be able to register as an apprentice and enter into an apprenticeship education agreement with a sponsor who has agreed to provide mentorship.

Designating Trades and Establishing Apprenticeship Education Programs and Industry Training Programs

The proposed approach is:

Under the STAE Act, there is no longer a requirement for all trades to have an apprenticeship program, and decisions on designating trades and establishing education programs will be made separately. All designated trades that currently have an apprenticeship program will continue to have one.

The Minister will also have the authority to create shorter-term educational programs called Industry Training Programs. Current designated occupations will become trades with Industry Training Programs.

Guidelines for designating trades will be updated to remove criteria related to the need for an apprenticeship program. New guidelines will be developed for establishing apprenticeship education programs and industry training programs.

What is changing:

- Establishing an education program is no longer tied to designating a trade.
 - There may be new designated trades without an education program or new education programs that are not connected to a designated trade.
- There is a new type of education program called industry training programs.
- Designating a trade and establishing an apprenticeship education program or industry training program have separate criteria.
- The Minister will make decisions regarding designating trades and establishing an apprenticeship education program or industry training program rather than Cabinet.

What is not changing:

- Industry, through the Alberta Board of Skilled Trades, will still provide recommendations on designating trades.

The proposed approach is:

Apprenticeship Education Programs:

Under the STAE Act, the Registrar may issue an educational credential to an individual who has met all the requirements of an apprenticeship education program. Each apprenticeship education program will be assigned academic credit based on duration, amount of classroom instruction, and amount of on-the-job instruction. Based on the amount of credit assigned to each apprenticeship education program, the registrar may issue a certificate, diploma, or advanced diploma.

Creating differentiated credentials strengthens pathways to future education and training for graduates of apprenticeship education programs.

The proposed approach is:

Industry Training Programs:

The Registrar may issue a Certificate of Completion to a trainee who successfully completes all the requirements of an industry training program.

Both programs:

People who complete an apprenticeship education program or an industry training program in a designated trade will receive an educational credential as well as a journeyperson certificate. For trades participating in the Interprovincial Standards Red Seal Program, the Red Seal endorsement will be attached to the journeyperson certificate of people who successfully complete the Red Seal examination.