MANITOBA’S SKILLS, TALENT AND KNOWLEDGE STRATEGY
The Skills, Talent and Knowledge Strategy provides a vision and set of critical actions for our education, training and immigration systems in both the short- and long-term. Over the next three years, this vision will guide us to enhance the quality of life in our great province.

Economic disruptions from the COVID-19 pandemic will have lasting effects on the global economy. We are protecting jobs and growing our economy through training now and the future. Manitoba continues to take a carefully balanced, phased approach to re-opening our businesses while keeping Manitobans safe as we learn to live with the virus. We continue to rebuild our economy with a focus on safety, resilience and recovery, and taking action to help Manitobans to learn and work.

Manitoba’s diverse economy gives us flexibility to pivot when unprecedented situations such as COVID-19 impact our markets. Our province’s collaboration and close working relationships across economic sectors has enabled us to minimize disruption to many sectors. We need to continue to work together to successfully drive the restart of our economy.

The pandemic has underscored the need for ensuring that individuals gain the skills and competencies needed by our employers in order to grow our economy, create jobs, and promote prosperous communities where all individuals can enjoy a high quality of life. Last spring, the Premier appointed a team of Manitoba leaders to help guide our actions to restart the economy, the Premier’s Economic Opportunities Advisory Board. A subset of this team is focusing on post-secondary education and skills development, and their advice has been to focus on the skills and competencies needed in the emerging economy through flexible, nimble systems.

Our people are the province’s greatest asset. Manitobans are industrious, inventive and talented, and the diversity of our workforce is a solid foundation on which to build future progress.

Our #RESTARTMB approach focuses on resilience, efforts to accelerate recovery and promote prosperous communities, where all individuals can enjoy a high-quality life. To help us reach this goal, we are creating the conditions to thrive – harnessing the foundation of our vibrant business community, educational institutions and strong partnerships.

We are proud to launch the Skills, Talent and Knowledge Strategy to support efforts to create jobs in our new landscape. The goal of the strategy is to ensure we have people with the right skills at the right time, to quickly rebound from the pandemic, ensure resilience and support economic growth, now and in the future.

Collaboration has been key to our success in Manitoba, and we will work with our partners across the province, including industry, community and educational institutions, as well as Indigenous leaders, communities, businesses and organizations to build on our strengths, diversify our efforts and achieve even greater outcomes for all Manitobans.
Manitoba does many things well. However, we can and need to do more and we cannot be complacent. We need a focused approach across the province, to ensure that our youth can connect to good jobs, and that we build the skills, talent and knowledge that our labour market needs, both now and for generations to come.

Our post-secondary institutions want to work collaboratively with government and employers on a positive vision for the future. The Horizon Manitoba report, co-developed by universities and colleges and the Business Council of Manitoba, is commendable. The Horizon initiatives will help to further many elements in Manitoba’s new Skills, Talent and Knowledge Strategy.

Together, we can leverage our collective strengths, support the growth of local talent, and create a brighter future for the province. We are moving forward together to advance the work of the strategy, promote a strong economic recovery and ensure even greater opportunities and successes today and for future generations.

Hon. Wayne Ewasko
Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Immigration
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Skills, Talent and Knowledge Strategy is a shared vision and call to action to advance economic prosperity and positive outcomes for individuals, communities and businesses. This work has been informed by robust stakeholder engagement, research and leading practices including national and international comparisons.

Manitoba businesses have consistently said attracting and retaining talent is one of their most significant challenges, and this has remained true for many despite the workforce impact of the pandemic. Companies need increasing numbers of skilled workers, journeypersons and people who are knowledgeable or re-trained in new technologies. In addition, Manitoba’s employers need creative and critical thinkers, and team players who are skilled in analysis, communication and cultural awareness. These skills are crucial in all organizations, regardless of size, and are equally important for intrapreneurs and entrepreneurs.

In Manitoba, we need more students accessing and completing post-secondary education. We also aspire for all university and college students to have work experience included in their course of study. Students who connect to employers while pursuing their studies will move quickly into employment upon graduation. We want students to connect to good jobs and stay in Manitoba.

Improved business intelligence and labour market information is critical for Manitoba’s post-secondary, training, and immigration systems. We need a robust approach to data analysis and forecasting the employment and skills needs in our communities, to inform programming.

Universities and colleges need to work in partnership, developing more laddering types of programs so that students can obtain a range of skills and credentials. To support greater responsiveness, strong partnerships are essential between post-secondary institutions and industry. This alignment will help students adapt to the changing skills in the workplace, and more broadly, increase the system’s labour market intelligence and opportunities to commercialize research and innovation. While the K-to-12 education system is critical to developing skills and competencies, this strategy is intentionally focused on educational and career pathways after high school.
The strategy sets out the vision and actions needed to achieve success, focused on four high level objectives:

1. **Anticipate skills needed for the future.**
   We need to focus on emerging trends in industry, innovation and technological advancements in the workplace. We also need to incorporate improved data and labour market information into planning our post-secondary, training, and immigration systems.

2. **Align education and training to labour market needs and help students succeed now and in the future.** We need to cultivate greater partnerships between employers and training and post-secondary systems, so that students gain the skills and competencies needed for success.

3. **Foster entrepreneurial and innovative skills.** Building our innovation, start-up and scale-up ecosystem through greater connections between students, researchers, academics and industry, will enable greater commercialization and positive outcomes for all.

4. **Grow, attract and retain talent.** Manitoba has labour and skills shortages. We also have people who need good jobs. We can succeed by bringing our systems together. We have an opportunity to draw on our strengths, such as our Indigenous population, to promote positive outcomes for our communities and our economy. We also have to be more vocal about the great things Manitoba has to offer, to encourage those who have left our province to return home, and to attract talent to our province.

An all-hands-on-deck approach is important, where all sectors do their part to improve our outcomes. Outstanding partnerships emerged during the global response to the pandemic, and we will build on these connections to proactively modernize our systems and develop new approaches. The Manitoba government expends over one billion dollars annually on our post-secondary system, in addition to funding for workforce development, adult learning and literacy, industry support and immigration efforts. Together, we can maximize our return on investment and harness our energies and efforts.

**Vision**

Manitobans will have the right skills, talent and knowledge to succeed in their careers, enjoy a high-quality life, strengthen communities and grow the economy.
MANITOBA’S STRENGTHS

To enable the conditions for economic resilience, growth and successful outcomes for all stakeholders, our work builds on and promotes Manitoba’s strengths:

- established skilled and diverse workforce
- diversity of economic opportunities, with stable and emerging industries
- high quality of life – affordable housing and living costs, clean, green energy and water, abundant natural and cultural recreational opportunities
- leading-edge universities and colleges, with strong programs
- innovative research facilities and talent
- support for students – scholarships, bursaries and wrap-around services
- strong Indigenous communities and leadership
- a responsive and proven immigration program, and integration supports for newcomers
- partnerships based on strong relationships and the needs of communities
- streamlined approaches to business expansion and attraction, and skills and workforce development

ENGAGEMENT

Manitoba held a wide range of engagements with numerous stakeholders (online and in person) to inform this strategy.

Post-secondary presidents were provided an opportunity to review a draft of this strategy and provided feedback. Since the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been multitudes of engagements with stakeholders, from industry sectors to academic institutions and student groups, informing the strategic direction. The newly established Premier’s Economic Opportunities Advisory Board that is providing advice for economic recovery and growth is also engaged in moving our skills strategy forward. As we work together to shape implementation plans, there will be significant opportunities for further engagement in the important priorities in this plan.
OBJECTIVES

1. ANTICIPATE SKILLS NEEDED FOR THE FUTURE

Create an informed ecosystem that focuses on the skills needed in the short, medium and long term – emerging trends, industry growth and economic opportunities for the province.

**Identify shifts in work stemming from the pandemic, and support individuals who have been displaced to augment their skills and reconnect to the labour market; bring more Manitobans back to work.**

Numerous initiatives are currently underway to support individuals and employers and enable more people to come back to work. Collaborative efforts across sectors are taking place to restart Manitoba’s economy and lead in recovery.

The disruption of the pandemic may result in shifts to how we work – some jobs and lines of business may be significantly, permanently altered. Work is needed to examine the impact of the pandemic on our industry sectors, across different communities in our province, to determine what skills are needed, as well as short-term training interventions, to assist people whose jobs may have shifted to gain the skills needed to thrive.

**Focus on workforce trends and technological advancements.**

Building a resilient and adaptable workforce is critical to economic growth. Artificial intelligence, machine learning, and digitization will vastly transform jobs and the skills required to perform them. The growing application of these technologies in workplaces will lead to increasing automation of existing jobs or the tasks within jobs.

While technical expertise is essential, experts also identify the need to sharpen competencies such as critical thinking, communication, creativity and teamwork to fully leverage and realize the potential of these advancements.

**Improve data, information and intelligence on jobs and skills needed now and going forward, and use this to inform education, training and immigration systems.**

Enhanced labour market data, forecasting tools and business intelligence from local leaders are needed to anticipate emerging skills and future opportunities. These insights can help identify skill requirements, plan for system capacity, prioritize our education and training investments in growing sectors, and ensure balance between the supply and demand for skilled workers.

“At invest in the creative community, as it is a magnet for employee recruitment and contributes to retention, especially for Manitoba’s emerging tech industry.”

*Manitoba Works Survey participant*

**What will success look like?**

- Individuals whose jobs have shifted in the pandemic access education and training programs that top-up their skills, and they reconnect to work.
• We will have business intelligence and labour market information that is accurate, timely and reflects voices from across Manitoba’s communities and sectors.

• Industry, sector council partners and post-secondary institutions will have access to information to jointly plan for better ways to meet labour market needs.

• Workers – both existing and new entrants – will be equipped with the skills and knowledge that will help them adapt to rapid changes, including skills they can transfer across jobs and sectors.

• Continuous learning – both in the workplace and outside of it – will help people upgrade their skills or re-skill entirely, to adapt to changes in the workforce.

• Students’ education and training choices will be informed by accurate labour market information.

Immediate Action:

• Ongoing, direct engagement will be held with economic growth partners and business organizations to understand changing and emerging talent needs post-pandemic.

• Industry, training and education partners will work together to identify short-term programming needed to help those who have lost their jobs during the pandemic to connect to good jobs.

• An online portal will be established where post-secondary institutions, business and industry, government, and other stakeholders can access provincial economic development and labour market intelligence.

• The renewed Sector Council Program will increase investments in workplace training that drive business expansion objectives and respond to industry needs to promote recovery.

• Climate and Green Plan partners will identify the knowledge and skills needed for opportunities in the emerging low carbon economy, such as financial markets shifting to include environmental considerations into investment decisions.

• A whole-of-government approach will be used to leverage federal dollars and programs wherever possible, and ensure we are creating synergies with connected strategies, such as the Manitoba-First Nations Mineral Development Protocol and related work of the Minister’s Liaison Committee, Manitoba Protein Advantage, the Provincial Tourism Strategy, International Talent Attraction Missions, the Criminal Justice System Modernization Strategy and Look North. This will allow us to continue to build on the work and progress made to date.

Medium-Term Action:

• Post-secondary institutions will share their labour market insights and information about how academic programs support careers with current and prospective students, to help inform decisions about educational pathways.

• Explore potential mechanisms to connect tuition to labour market demand.

• Assess successful industry-post-secondary partnership models, like the Engineer-in-Residence program, to determine their application to other disciplines like advanced manufacturing.

• Post-secondary institutions, regulated professions, industry sectors and government will improve foreign qualification recognition, and expedite newcomer skills and talent into our economy.

• Develop new skills training to advance opportunities in the new, low-carbon economy.

• Supporting Manitobans that are more distant from the labour market through innovative supports, including retraining and engaging individuals to acquire the right skills to allow them to be nimble and adapt.

• Increased flexibility in adult learning centres will bridge labour market needs with adult learning programming and essential skills training, providing the skills needed in the workplace.
2. ALIGN EDUCATION AND TRAINING TO LABOUR MARKET NEEDS AND HELP STUDENTS SUCCEED NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

Increase participation in post-secondary education, skills training and employment.

Manitoba has lower participation and attainment rates than the national average. Improving outcomes for all students – urban, rural, northern, Indigenous and international – is a priority. We know that post-secondary graduates are more likely to participate in the labour market and have a job than those without post-secondary credentials. At the same time, industry and employers often indicate that new graduates are not prepared for the world of work, regardless of credentials. Action is needed to increase the number of individuals attending and completing post-secondary training, and who are prepared for entering the workforce.

Promote truth and reconciliation.

Manitoba’s Path to Reconciliation Act and The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s Calls to Action are integral to promoting truth and reconciliation. Full participation of Indigenous people in Manitoba’s economy is critical to improving quality of life and to building a stronger social and economic fabric in our province. Education and training is fundamental for reconciliation. Collaboration with Indigenous communities will be essential to ensure that Indigenous students and peoples can access and successfully complete their studies and training, gaining the skills needed for success and secure employment.

Connect students to employers and increase experiential learning in school.

While students who graduate from bachelor programs in arts and sciences acquire critical thinking, analysis and other essential skills, they often do not have work experience included in their course of study. Students can therefore experience delays in connecting to employers upon graduation. A focus on work-integrated learning is essential to set them up for future success.

Studies show that students who see how their education links to their future career have a stronger and more successful educational pathway and achieve better outcomes. We know that early access to apprenticeship programs results in long-lasting connections to employers and individuals attaining their red seal or related certifications. Methods like online learning, work-integrated learning, micro-credentials, laddering, seamless credit transfers, joint programs, and private-public partnerships, offer places from which to start and build modern and innovative approaches.
Increase alignment of post-secondary and immigration systems to labour market need.

There are post-secondary education programs that are graduating more students than are needed in the labour market, and others where there are gaps or not enough graduates. Ultimately, post-secondary education must examine the complement of programs offered, build closer relationships with industry to understand their needs and make decisions to cease or shift programs to provide greater opportunities in areas of high demand.

“Greater investment by employers in creating work-integrated learning opportunities at the post-secondary levels is key to exposing future employees to the multitude of sector options available.”

Manitoba Skill Survey participant

What will success look like?

- A greater percentage of Manitobans will access and complete post-secondary education.
- Indigenous students will succeed in post-secondary education and training and in Manitoba’s workforce.
- All students in Manitoba post-secondary programs will have some work experience included in their course of study, and will more quickly connect to work upon graduation.
- More students will be employed in their field of study upon graduation.
- Universities and colleges will work in partnership to develop more laddering types of programs to obtain a range of skills and credentials and have seamless educational pathways.
- Manitoba will have more skilled journeypersons in the labour market, including under-represented groups in non-traditional trades.
- More women will become entrepreneurs, take up senior level positions in business, and work in the non-traditional trades.
- The private sector will have greater supports for students to encourage access and successful completion of programs in need, with more funding for scholarships and bursaries.

Immediate Action:

- Post-secondary institutions and industry will develop appropriate mechanisms, so all students are exposed to work during their studies. This can include cooperative work placements, internships, land-based learning or practicums, as well as resources to improve awareness for businesses.
- Enhance capacity to provide a more refined match between employers and students, and match employers to apprentices.
- Universities and colleges will meet the challenge of becoming more nimble and responsive, and identify ways to shift programming more easily and quickly. The Manitoba government will modify its program approval process. Post-secondary institutions will be tasked to identify and shift programs that oversupply the labour market, as well as program opportunities in high demand areas. They will work in partnership with industry to re-balance programs and resources to align with industry needs.
- Employers and employment service organizations will expand demand-led training, and customize training opportunities that lead to jobs.
- The expansion and modernization of apprenticeship and trades will enable more skilled journeypersons to meet our skills needs. This will include changes to supervision of apprentices that will enable greater skill development, expanding the number of high school apprentices through the High School Apprenticeship Program, as well as high school technical vocational programs, especially in identified areas of unmet need.
- Engage with institutions to design a new centralized data model to track student success, and create a new post-secondary funding model based on outcomes and performance.
- Work closely with industry to rebuild our economy and support businesses to thrive in a post-pandemic economy, supporting skills needed going forward including shifts in supply chain and trade.
• Under #RESTARTMB, support business plan development with a pilot expansion of the Innovation Growth Program that focuses on women entrepreneurs and the green economy, and launch an initiative to promote women’s entrepreneurship and leadership.

• Explore opportunities for micro-credentials and layering of credentials that could work in a Manitoba context and across jurisdictions, assisting with economic recovery and helping individuals displaced in the pandemic to quickly top-up their skills and connect to the labour market.

• Leverage federal government funding to advance Indigenous education and training, and strengthen ACCESS supports for students who face barriers to completion.

• Support innovative approaches to reconciliation through the Indigenous and Northern Initiatives Fund, particularly those that improve quality of life for Indigenous peoples through economic development, job creation and educational initiatives.

• Align Manitoba’s international education and economic development priorities, and encourage international students to enrol in programs that align with Manitoba labour market needs and make Manitoba a destination of choice.

• In partnership with universities, colleges and Campus Manitoba, design, develop and implement a credit transfer portal to support student mobility and laddering.

Medium-Term Action:

• Set annual targets for work-integrated learning opportunities for post-secondary institutions and industry.

• Increase the number of joint programs between colleges and universities (e.g., engineering pathway).

• Manitoba will examine and enhance opportunities for students and workers at all skill levels for seamless transitions and movement through multiple pathways, including:

  » adult education learning centres and literacy programs
  » employment and training programs for individuals and workers
  » public post-secondary institutions universities and colleges
  » private and not-for-profit training providers, including private vocational colleges
3. FOSTER ENTREPRENEURIAL AND INNOVATIVE SKILLS

Improve the province’s innovative and entrepreneurial ecosystem by leveraging our creativity and ingenuity in post-secondary systems to assist in recovery, spur economic growth, innovation, and research breakthroughs.

**Strengthen partnerships between academia and industry to enable greater innovation.**

Manitoba is working to create the right conditions to encourage institutions and industries to increase their partnerships to support research, development and commercialization. Many large businesses make connections with post-secondary institutions. Extending those partnerships to small and medium enterprises can further Manitoba’s successes. Small enterprises comprise approximately 98 per cent of businesses in Manitoba, and account for 73 per cent of private sector employment.

“Develop plans to turn the economy into an innovative, technology, digital-based economy... Invest in research and innovation.”

Manitoba Works Survey participant
Streamline systems and intellectual property approaches to promote and expedite commercialization.

Post-secondary research brings solutions to problems and contributes to growing our economy. Research results can lead to ideas that can be taken to the next level.

Manitoba has a number of organizations geared at assisting entrepreneurs and businesses with technology and training to support prototyping and new product commercialization, and innovation support for larger businesses and government. Expanding and growing this ecosystem will bring students and others into the innovation and commercialization mix. We also need to ensure our pathways to product development and intellectual property are clear and simple, to promote getting ideas to market in an efficient way.

What will success look like?

- Manitoba will be a destination of choice for post-secondary education, and a leader in cutting-edge research.
- Students and faculty will work in close partnership with industry and assist with innovation needs, with efficient and expedited pathways to commercialization.
- Post-secondary students will gain innovative and entrepreneurial skills and opportunities for innovation while in school, helping them to successfully launch a business or creative endeavour upon graduation.
- Companies will choose to come to Manitoba because of its highly skilled entrepreneurial and innovative workforce.

Immediate Action:

- The Sector Council Program will focus investments in training in new and emerging advancements in their sectors.
- Increase collaboration with Mitacs to promote industry-facing internships for relevant research and development to local and international students.
- Research Manitoba will promote innovation, growth and commercialization to continue to advance Manitoba’s economy.

Medium-Term Action:

- Promote Manitoba as a centre of research excellence to attract the best and brightest to our province.
- Explore new ways to bring employers and students closer together. This will include cooperative opportunities and looking at ways to support industry, young entrepreneurs and students starting their own businesses through unique mentorship and network options, such as the time-limited Futurepreneur Project. It can also include exploring ways to create unique innovation spaces for students and businesses.
- Through post-secondary institutional research, and in collaboration with industry and small and medium enterprises, support entrepreneurial skills for students. Students will be:
  - encouraged to hone their ideas, from pitch to proposal
  - enabled to create new products and solutions for real-world problems
  - encouraged to pursue entrepreneurial opportunities, commercialization and intellectual property development
4. GROW, ATTRACT AND RETAIN TALENT

Grow, attract and retain skilled and talented people to accelerate Manitoba’s economic recovery and growth.

Meet industry needs for skilled and unskilled labour, and help people connect to good jobs.

Industry and stakeholders indicate that attracting and retaining talent is one of their most significant challenges. In some cases, there are simply not enough workers to fill available jobs. In other cases, people are not trained with the skills that are needed. Rural and northern communities note their skills and talent needs may differ from urban communities, and face their own challenges in retaining and attracting workers, given their unique geographic, demographic, cultural and educational context.

To meet these challenges head on, Manitoba has an opportunity to draw on our strengths, such as the young and growing Indigenous population, as well as employable individuals who may have encountered hardships. This includes newcomers, persons with disabilities and individuals needing a short-term bridge to meaningful employment through temporary social assistance. This demographic represents untapped talent that with some wrap-around supports can provide Manitoba with a competitive advantage.

Focus immigration on unique talent needs in Manitoba.

Immigration is also a lever to address labour and skill shortages, and to attract and recruit international talent. By pairing economic development and growth goals with the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program and international education, trade missions can increase opportunities to recruit newcomers to Manitoba by promoting Manitoba as an immigration destination of choice.

What will success look like?

• There will be greater access to post-secondary education for Indigenous students, and successful completion rates.

• Students in Manitoba’s north and Indigenous students will be supported for success in post-secondary education, with services commencing before they have left their home communities. Immigration will be focused on the unique talent needs of Manitoba’s employers, bringing in talent that is not accessible locally.

• Manitoba will be viewed as a destination of choice for domestic, national and international top talent.

• Individuals facing barriers to employment, such as persons with disabilities, and youth with child and family services care and justice system involvement, will be assisted to connect to training and post-secondary education, and supported to find and keep good jobs. Employers will be able to connect to individuals who can meet their labour needs.
Immediate Action:

- Promote Manitoba across Canada and abroad to recruit top talent where the skill set doesn’t exist in the province, focusing on Manitoba’s many advantages and strengths as well as on labour market needs.
- Regional considerations for attracting and retaining talent will be part of the dialogue among Manitoba’s economic development partners, post-secondary institutions, sector council partners, Indigenous communities, and newcomer and international education stakeholders.
- To retain talent, the Manitoba government will work to improve awareness among employers about how they can access training supports.
- We will work with our partners to enhance successful come home campaigns for executives, to bring home former Manitoba graduates and residents.
- Manitoba post-secondary institutions, as signatories to the Indigenous Education Blueprint, will commit to take steps to advancing excellence in Indigenous post-secondary education.
- Manitoba government, industry, social service agencies and Indigenous partners will identify and implement pathways to existing and future jobs.
- Review Manitoba’s immigration pathways and streamline systems to focus on meeting employers’ needs for unique skilled and talented labour.

Medium-Term Action:

- As the pandemic eases, a Team Manitoba Approach will implement a coordinated plan for international opportunities, including trade missions, immigration and international education. This will provide for greater outcomes and return on investment.
- Build connections, enhance planning and coordination with industry associations, sector councils and post-secondary institutions to maximize resources and outcomes.
- Adapt a new in-demand occupations list to reflect employer needs for skilled labour that is unavailable, and to inform and accelerate skilled talent acquisition through trade and international opportunities.
- Build on and promote the assets and strengths represented by the increasingly skilled and experienced Indigenous workforce in northern, rural and remote communities.
- Build partnerships and explore the potential for a technology talent plan for Manitoba, including a potential immigration stream focused on tech talent, including consideration for supports to ensure high talent retention.

GOING FORWARD

Manitoba is committed to moving forward on the actions outlined in the Skills, Talent and Knowledge Strategy, and is excited to partner with stakeholders across the province to leverage our advantages and transform our approaches and systems. Together, we will ensure the province has the right skills, talent and knowledge to support economic recovery, resilience and growth, now and in the future.
For more information on the Skills, Talent and Knowledge Strategy, visit:

www.gov.mb.ca/mbskills

This document is available in alternate formats on request.