

Apprenticeship and Certification Board
2011-2012 Strategic Direction

Presented to:

Honourable Peter Bjornson, Minister

Entrepreneurship Training and Trade

March 21, 2011

Approved:

April 13, 2011

Introduction to the Strategic Priorities 2011-2012

Development of a strategic plan is in keeping with the *Apprenticeship and Certification Act*, which was proclaimed on April 1, 2010, requiring the Apprenticeship and Certification Board (herein “Board”) to prepare an annual strategic plan based on consultations with stakeholders. The goals of this document are twofold. First, it is designed to guide and coordinate the apprenticeship training and certification system by ensuring that the day-to-day activities of Apprenticeship Manitoba, which serves as the administrative body, will be aligned with the priorities the Board is working to achieve. Second, the setting of priorities will promote greater transparency and accountability for the Board.

To support the consultation process, the Board identified subject areas for stakeholder consideration in August 2010. Using these subject areas to initiate discussion, the Board engaged stakeholders through face-to-face meetings and by soliciting written responses from October to December 2010. Comments received during this consultation process have informed the Board’s nine priorities for 2011 – 2012 outlined in this document. Seven priorities were ranked as primary, meaning they are first in order of development, and two were ranked as secondary, meaning the Board will continue to monitor and explore new developments or opportunities as time permits. The priorities have been ranked as follows:

Primary priorities:

1. Updating Program Standards
2. Increasing participation and completion of target groups
3. Promotion of apprenticeship to youth
4. Employer engagement
5. Review designation of new trades
6. Review of Trade Regulations and the General Regulation
7. Clarification of Board processes

Secondary priorities:

8. Exploration of Multiple Assessment Pathways / occupational performance standards
9. Exploring pilot projects

An overarching priority not listed here involves raising public awareness of the benefits that flow from apprenticeship training and certification. The Board commits to engage in outreach and advocacy on behalf of the apprenticeship training and certification system, particularly through the activities of the four standing committees, to promote it at all levels of government, industry, educational system and the general public.

Additionally, the Board encourages the Province of Manitoba to continue to position apprenticeship training and certification as a viable and valuable post-secondary education option of first-choice.

As its next step, the Board will develop an action plan to guide the decision-making process when determining which projects will be pursued in 2011-2012. Additionally, performance measures will be used for reporting successes in the Board's annual report. While the action plan will be consistent with the strategic priorities identified in this document, the Board will respond to unexpected or emerging issues as they arise throughout the year.

Primary Priorities

1. Updating Program Standards

Program standards involve two aspects: technical training standards and regulations. Technical training involves the formal instruction to apprentices including theoretical constructs associated with the trade that are then applied during the on-the-job training. The standards for technical training set the benchmark for curriculum, level tests, examinations and accreditation. Regulations set the rules that outline what is and is not permissible in an apprenticeship program. In order to ensure ongoing relevance, the updating of program standards (i.e. content) is a core responsibility of the Board.

The following trades have been identified for technical training development:

- Gasfitter
- Water and Wastewater Technician
- Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Mechanic
- Residential Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning
- Motor Vehicle Mechanic
- Motor Vehicle Body Repairer/Painter
- Steamfitter/Pipefitter
- Plumber
- Cook
- Transport Trailer
- Pre-Engineered Building Erector
- Construction Craft Worker
- Insulator

The following trades have been identified for regulatory development:

- Steel Fabricator
- Boilermaker
- Ironworker

- Power Electrician
- Motor Vehicle Body Repairer/Painter
- Instrument Mechanic
- Glazier
- Cook
- Bricklayer
- Pre-Engineered Building Erector
- Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Mechanic
- Aircraft Maintenance Journey person
- Water and Wastewater Technician

In addition to updating the technical training standards and regulations for the above mentioned trades, the Program Standards Committee will meet at scheduled points with Provincial Advisory Committees to communicate Board decisions and solicit feedback on priorities with respect to the development or updates to program standards in the trades. The Board also recognizes that the review of “green” technologies and processes in technical training standards is important and it will undertake to review changes in training standards through this lens.

2. Increasing participation and completion of target groups in apprenticeship

Manitoba’s economic success and competitiveness depends on the development of skilled labour. In Manitoba, as elsewhere, labour shortages in the skilled trades have been reported. This, coupled with an aging population and stagnant birth rates¹, means that the apprenticeship needs to target specific populations in the apprenticeship training and certification system including women, persons with disabilities, Aboriginal People and new Canadians.²

As a priority for 2011-2012, the Board is committed to increasing the representation and completion rates of Aboriginal people, women, new

¹ Statistics Canada. (2007). *Births*. (Catalogue number 84F0210X). Retrieved January 20, 2010 from <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/84f0210x/84f0210x2007000-eng.pdf>.

² For details on the representation of women, Aboriginal People and new Canadians, see Samuel Laryea and Kemi Medu. 2011. *National Apprenticeship Survey 2007: Participation of Women, Immigrants and Aboriginal People in Apprenticeship Training*. Ottawa: CCDA/HRSDC. For discussion about specific barriers for these population groups, see Canadian Apprenticeship Forum. 2004. *Accessing and Completing Apprenticeship Training in Canada Perceptions of Barriers*. Ottawa: CAF.

Canadians and people with disabilities in the trades. More specifically, the Board is committed to more accurately defining each specific population group. It also recognizes that each specific population group identified has different challenges and opportunities that require separate strategies to address representation and completion. The Board recognizes that this is a systemic issue that cannot be solved within the timeline of a single year. However, the Board commits itself to advancing efforts to address this complex issue in 2011-2012.

3. Promotion of apprenticeship to youth

The Board has long been committed to promoting apprenticeship and the trades to young people. It designated the High School Apprenticeship Program (HSAP) through regulation to expose high school students to the trades through the option of practical, paid on-the-job work experience. This complements other initiatives that have been undertaken by the Province of Manitoba to raise interest and awareness of the trades among young people include the introduction of a financial incentive for HSAP participants who transition into full time post-secondary apprenticeship training following high school. Additionally, funding has been approved to hire an additional HSAP Coordinator positions at the school division level across Manitoba to provide information to students and teachers.

The Board is committed to working with the broader education system to explore innovative programs and awareness of and participation in, partnerships to develop pathways to increase awareness of the trades and interest in apprenticeship at the high school and junior high school levels. The Board also recognizes the importance of studying the transition for youth as they leave high school in order to understand possible entrance barriers to apprenticeship.

4. Employer engagement

Survey results from the Apprenticeship Futures Commission, a large-scale consultation process generating 23 recommendations in 2008, indicate that almost half of the respondents (46.5%) believe there is insufficient information about apprenticeship provided to prospective employers. Future success of the apprenticeship training and certification system is contingent on the ability to increase the number of employers who register apprenticeship and provide appropriate on-the-job training. The Board recognizes that employer engagement is an important aspect to apprenticeship and it is committed to working with employers to raise awareness of the benefits of apprenticeship training and certification.

5. Review designation of new trades

Designation of apprenticeable trades is an important responsibility of the Board. To date, 56 trades have been designated through regulation. There has been recent discussion as to whether the apprenticeship model, which includes both

on-the-job and technical training, should be extended to occupations that may or may not have been historically associated with apprenticeship (for example, information technology). Based on feedback during the consultation process, the Board remains committed to the designation of new trades as requests come forward from industry. In addition, the Community Liaison Committee will continue to expedite the review of potential trades as they are brought forward through formal requests by industry.

6. Review of the General Regulation and trade regulations

In addition to updating trade-specific regulations as part of the development of program standards, there is also the need to regularly review all trade regulations. To that end, the Board will evaluate the possible harmonization of language regarding wage rates in trade regulations. With the proclamation of the Apprenticeship and Certification Act on April 1, 2010, the Board has the responsibility to ensure that the General Regulation is updated and remains consistent with the new Act.

7. Clarification of Board processes

The proclamation of *The Apprenticeship and Certification Act* in April 2010 has enhanced the structure of the Board through the creation of four Standing Committees. These new Standing Committees are delegated responsibilities in the areas of nominations, governance and planning, program standards and liaising with the community. With this new structure comes an opportunity to review and clarify existing processes in order to increase transparency, access and accountability. Besides nurturing transparency and accountability, such a review will help the Board streamline its governing role and improve accessibility to the Board for stakeholders. To that end, the Board is committed to communicating the new processes in place for the Board and standing committees as result of the new legislation. Through the work of the Nominating Standing Committee, the Board will also review the nomination and orientation processes for Provincial Advisory Committees (PAC).

Secondary Priorities

8. Exploration of Multiple Assessment Pathways (MAP) / Occupational Performance Standards (OPS)

MAP and OPS are two initiatives of the Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship (CCDA). MAP is an assessment method of skills and competencies that relies a variety of tools as a complement to the current assessment that relies exclusively on multiple-choice written examinations. It is designed to improve the success of trades qualifiers in achieving certification. Under MAP, competence is defined as a combination of an individual's knowledge, skills, and attributes that are assessed against industry-validated standards. A trial of the assessment system in a pilot program for the Cook trade

has been run in British Columbia and its success prompted a second pilot for the Heavy Duty Equipment Technician trade.

Comparatively, OPS describes the standard of performance, or competency, expected of a person at work. The purpose of OPS is to strengthen Red Seal designation through greater support for skills acquisition and skills recognition. Foundational competencies are the knowledge and skills considered essential and necessary at the occupational level and across all levels of apprenticeship training which complement and do not replace the current time-based training and certification system.

The exploration of MAP and OPS remains of interest to the Board. As time and resources permit, the Board will maintain association with the CCDA throughout this process to learn of new developments.

9. Exploring pilot projects

Pilot projects, such as exploring on-line delivery of technical training or examining different sequencing approaches to technical and on-the-job training, are a mechanism to test new concepts and delivery methods. The Board will continue to pursue such pilot projects as deemed appropriate to further enhance the apprenticeship training and certification system and promote a culture of innovation.