

Ontario College Credentials



What is an academic credential?

“Credential” often refers to academic/educational qualifications such as a degree or diploma. A credential obtained outside of Canada is called an “international credential” and may need to be evaluated to be used in Canada.



How long is an academic year?

An academic year is typically eight months in duration.



How long is a semester?

A semester is typically four months in duration.



Undergraduate credentials

Undergraduate credentials are designed for students with a minimum of a high school diploma or equivalent. In Ontario, there are four types of undergraduate credentials: certificates, diplomas, advanced diplomas, and degrees.



Graduate credentials

Graduate credentials (also called postgraduate credentials) are designed for students who are seeking more advanced study. Entry to a graduate credential usually requires a minimum of a college or university undergraduate credential.



*Scan the QR code for diploma to degree bridging options.
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Credential Type	Certificate	Diploma	Advanced Diploma	Honours Degree	Graduate Certificate
Duration	1 year / 2 sem	2 years / 4 sem	3 years / 6 sem	4 years / 8 sem	1 year / 2 or 3 sem

What to expect

Introduction to a specific or broad field of study	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Foundational courses that will help prepare you for entry to more advanced credentials	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Industry and sector-specific courses that will help prepare you for employment		✓	✓	✓	✓
Further specialization in the field of study along with opportunities for work-integrated learning			✓	✓	✓
Focused attention on a specific field of study					✓

Career opportunities

Entry-level positions involving known routines and procedures	✓				
Entry-level positions within a range of technical and/or administrative requirements		✓	✓	✓	
Employment in new and emerging fields requiring advanced credentials					✓
Advancement from entry-level or general roles to more specialized positions					✓

Academic opportunities

Some courses may be transferrable to other credentials like diplomas and reduce the time of completion	✓				
Some courses may be transferrable to other credentials like advanced diplomas and degrees*		✓	✓		
Some diplomas, often with a combination of work experience, may qualify you for postgraduate certificates		✓	✓		
Some honours degrees, often with a combination of work experience, may qualify you for postgraduate certificates and typically required for entry to most Master's degrees				✓	
Some universities may accept transfer courses into Master's degree programs					✓

