

Ministry of Training,  
Colleges and Universities

Minister

Mowat Block  
Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1L2  
Telephone (416) 326-1600  
Facsimile (416) 326-1656

Ministère de la Formation  
et des Collèges et Universités

Ministre

Édifice Mowat  
Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1L2  
Téléphone (416) 326-1600  
Télécopieur (416) 326-1656



## Sessional Paper No. P-10

---

P-10 – Ontario College of Trades Petition (Sessional Paper No. P-10)  
Mr. McDonnell, Mr. McNaughton and Mr. Smith, MPP (Tabled March 4, 2014)

---

### Response

I have received your petition requesting the discontinuation of the Ontario College of Trades. As the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, I am pleased to respond and correct any misinformation including claims in the petition regarding the Colleges of Trades' membership fees as a "trades tax".

Similar to other professionals, like teachers and physicians, people in the skilled trades in Ontario now have their own self-governed regulatory college. The Ontario College of Trades represents all trades in Ontario. Instead of the government making decisions for the trades, industry members can now make their own key decisions. The College is the first of its kind in Canada.

Membership fees are not a "tax" on tradespeople in Ontario. Like other self-regulatory bodies, the College needs fees to support its services to its members and to the public. Membership fees to support these activities are the lowest of any regulatory college in Ontario, and are tax deductible. Membership fees do not go to government, they are used to provide services to the College's members. Journeypersons pay \$120 per year; apprentices pay \$60 per year, and employers are not required to pay fees at this point. The College will not cost its members \$84 million annually. The College's annual budget is approximately \$20 million a year.

Our government is committed to supporting a high quality apprenticeship system that ensures public and workplace safety, and ensures that the next generation of skilled workers are ready to meet future labour market demands. In Ontario, there are approximately 120,000 apprentices learning a trade today – which is 60,000 more than in 2002-03. New annual apprenticeship registrations have grown from 17,000 in 2002-03 to more than 30,000 in 2012-13. In 2012-13, the ministry exceeded its target for new apprenticeship registrations by more than 10%.

The idea of an all-trades governance institution, College of Trades, was recommended by Tim Armstrong in 2008. Mr. Armstrong, who is a mediator, arbitrator and labour lawyer with expertise in Ontario's apprenticeship and trade certification system, made this recommendation in his study on whether trades in Ontario should be compulsory.

This report was followed by the *College of Trades – Report of the Advisor to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities* by Kevin Whitaker. Mr. Whitaker's report solicited submissions from skilled tradespeople across the skilled trades sector. After extensive consultation with stakeholders from the sector, including employers, journeypersons, apprentices and laypersons, Mr. Whitaker made recommendations on the implementation of the proposed Ontario College of Trades, including the College's governance structure, scope and mandate. In 2009, based on these recommendations, the College was established through legislation.

The College is an industry-driven organization, independent of the ministry, governed by the people who make up the trades in Ontario. It has a board of governors, divisional boards and trade boards that are comprised of entrepreneurs and tradespeople who are eager to make the trades in Ontario more accountable, more responsive to the needs of Ontarians, and more attractive as occupations.

Membership in the College began on April 8, 2013. Similar to other professionals, like teachers and physicians, people in the skilled trades in Ontario now have their own self-governed regulatory college. Instead of the government making decisions for the trades, industry members can now make their own key decisions. The College was created to ensure representative decision-making. In the past, there was not a consistent process for decision-making that was open to direct input from skilled workers. Some of the benefits of a professional self-regulatory body for the trades include:

- promotion of skilled trades careers in order to attract people who contribute to the renewal and growth of the industry;
- opportunities for skilled trades professionals to speak out about key issues affecting their careers;
- a complaints, investigation and discipline process that protects the public;
- a public register that provides consumers with confidence that members are qualified to do the work in their trade; and,
- industry-driven processes where tradespeople and employers can make submissions to recommend changes for a trade (e.g., journeyperson to apprentice ratio reviews, trade classification reviews).

The benefits to being a member of the College of Trades outweigh the relatively low annual cost of membership. Members' names will appear on a public registry letting customers and potential employers know that the member is a professional, certified journeyperson.

Ontario needs to maintain high standards in the skilled trades to make sure we have the qualified workforce we need and to protect public and workplace safety. As with any new program or product, building awareness takes some time but we expect industry to benefit from the College.

  
Hon. Brad Duguid