



Expand degree programs at colleges

To help more young people find successful careers, Ontario must provide more degree programs at colleges.

We already know that college graduates get jobs. However, Ontario's post-secondary system must respond to the growing demand in the innovation economy for people with degrees who also have career-specific skills and qualifications.

While most college programs award diplomas and certificates, a number of Ontario colleges offer four-year degrees, and independent research for the provincial government has confirmed the four-year degree programs are successful. These degrees align with the colleges' mission to provide applied education that leads to good jobs.

It's time to build on this success. A key reform will be to allow colleges to start offering three-year degrees.

Currently, colleges must award diplomas to graduates of the three-year programs.

This puts Ontario at a distinct disadvantage with most of the world. In most OECD countries, there is a better appreciation of

the value of professional and technical post-secondary programs. In most cases, graduates of career-focused three-year programs earn degrees.

Ontario can be equally competitive. In fact, many three-year college programs in Ontario are already aligned with provincial and international standards for baccalaureate education.

People who are studying at a degree level in an applied environment should receive appropriate recognition for the quality of their education. In many cases, graduates of the colleges' three-year programs should be awarded degrees.

Expanding the degree programs at colleges is especially important if Ontario is to attract more international students, as the diploma credential is not understood outside of Canada. It would also allow college graduates with three-year degrees who decided to pursue higher-level credentials to do so with greater ease.

TO ELEVATE HIGHER EDUCATION IN ONTARIO TO INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS, THE PROVINCE MUST:

- Allow colleges to offer three-year degrees.
- Expand the range of four-year degree programs at colleges.
- Make the college sector responsible for degree approvals at colleges.

Ontario needs more college graduates. Expanding the degree programs at colleges will encourage more students to pursue college education and ultimately produce a stronger workforce.