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# ADaPT: Digital competencies

## Partners

[Technation Canada](#)

[Diversity Institute](#)

**535** job-seekers

**\$4.223** million

## Locations

[Alberta](#), [British Columbia](#), [Nova Scotia](#), [Ontario](#)

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## Topics

Career Services  
Innovation and  
scaling  
Pathways to Jobs

## Related Tags

[career pathways](#),  
[Digital Divide](#),  
[employer driven](#),  
[entrepreneurship](#),  
[job matching](#),  
[skills assessment](#)

Due to rapidly shifting digital skills needs, a disconnect exists between the skills of many post-secondary graduates and the technical skills required by employers.

Post-pandemic, digital skills will be more critical than ever before. The pace of digitalization has accelerated across sectors and research shows that digital skills include a wide range of competencies. Finding alternative pathways for students and graduates not in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), as well as ways to up-skill and re-skill existing employees, are among the greatest challenges facing Canada's workforce.

These digital skills are sought in combination with other competencies, including innovation, entrepreneurship, an understanding of the technology adoption processes, as well as skills such as communication, creativity, and adaptability. Innovative approaches are needed to better define the digital competencies required to fill this talent gap and create new opportunities.

## Skills Development

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# Stories: ADaPT



On  
May  
19,  
2021,  
Ryerson  
University's  
Diversity  
Institute  
and  
TECHNATION,  
Canada's  
leading  
national  
technology  
industry  
association,  
announced  
the  
expansion  
of  
the  
*Advanced*  
*Digital*  
*and*  
*Professional*  
*Training*  
*(ADaPT)*  
*skills*  
*development*  
*and*  
*work*  
*placement*  
*program,*  
*Defining*  
*Digital*  
*Competencies*  
*project.*  
The  
new  
FSC

investment  
of  
\$4.2  
million  
will  
enable  
the  
Diversity  
Institute  
at  
Ryerson  
University  
and  
TECHNATION  
to  
expand  
the  
Defining  
Digital  
Competencies  
project,  
to  
reach  
more  
job  
seekers  
and  
support  
the  
building  
of  
their  
digital  
and  
professional  
development  
competencies  
and  
skills  
of

job  
seekers,  
while  
addressing  
the  
ongoing  
shortage  
of  
skilled  
talent  
within  
the  
technology  
sector.



ADaPT  
explores  
new  
approaches  
to  
defining  
digital  
competencies  
and  
creates  
new  
pathway  
opportunities  
into  
digital  
roles  
for  
non-  
STEM  
graduates,  
internationally-  
educated  
professionals,  
and  
high-  
potential  
workers  
who  
lack  
traditional  
credentials.  
This  
project  
delivers  
unique  
skills  
training  
through  
a  
blended  
approach  
to  
foster  
digital  
and  
professional  
competencies  
among  
the  
participants.

The program has demonstrated its success in transitioning graduates from a variety of disciplines into digital jobs. With an average job placement of over 87 per cent over eight years, and a 94 per cent placement rate during the pandemic, the innovative ADaPT model has proven its value. The program responds to research that identified a disconnect between supply and demand for skills, as well as gaps

in  
perceived  
levels  
of  
competency.

ADaPT  
has  
helped  
transition  
more  
than  
900  
post-  
secondary  
graduates  
into  
meaningful  
careers  
while  
providing  
employers,  
particularly  
in  
the  
information  
and  
communications  
technologies  
(ICT)  
sector,  
with  
talent  
to  
fill  
the  
acute  
skills  
demand.  
By  
combining  
practical  
digital  
and  
technical  
skills  
with  
professional skills  
and Communications  
and  
interpersonal  
skills,  
as  
well  
as  
career  
coaching  
and  
placement,  
the  
program  
has  
created  
opportunities  
for  
youth  
facing  
barriers  
–  
fully  
75  
per  
cent

of  
participants  
are  
from  
designated and  
under-  
represented groups in  
the  
workforce (women,  
racialized  
people,  
persons  
with  
disabilities  
and  
Indigenous  
people).

The  
ADaPT  
program's  
regional  
focus  
on  
Ontario,  
Alberta  
and  
Atlantic  
Canada  
will  
remain,  
but  
the  
additional  
investment  
will  
foster  
greater  
engagement  
with  
remote  
communities.  
It  
will  
also  
allow  
for  
testing  
of  
affordable  
and  
accessible  
delivery  
approaches  
that  
serve  
diverse  
Canadians,  
especially  
women,  
racialized  
minorities,  
Indigenous  
peoples,  
persons  
with  
disabilities,  
and  
members  
of  
the  
LGBTQ+  
community.  
This  
next  
phase  
of  
the  
project  
will  
aim  
to  
provide  
meaningful,  
paid

work  
placement  
to  
more  
than  
500  
trained  
participants.  
The  
goal  
is  
to  
create  
pathways  
into  
digital  
roles  
and  
the  
information  
and  
communication  
technology  
(ICT)  
sector  
for  
the  
participants.

By expanding the current ADaPT model to more participants across different Canadian communities and rural areas, this project strives to enhance career pathways and address challenges faced by underrepresented groups and immigrants, including those who have experienced trauma through racism or violence. Personalized supports, including coaching and advocacy to employers, will be available to participants. Training will take place either through virtual classrooms or through self-guided



work,  
with  
career  
counselling  
support  
available  
to  
address  
the  
needs  
of  
participants  
in  
gaining  
knowledge  
and  
experience.

TECHNATION  
and  
Ryerson's  
Diversity  
Institute  
will  
build  
upon  
established  
partnerships  
with  
industry  
and  
employers  
to  
support  
community  
engagement,  
dissemination,  
training,  
and  
placement  
of  
ADaPT  
graduates.  
TECHNATION's  
successful  
Career  
Ready  
Program,  
containing  
a  
network  
of  
more  
than  
1,000  
companies  
–  
as  
well  
as  
its  
CareerFinder  
platform  
–  
will  
be  
leveraged  
to  
support  
program  
participants.

## Evaluation Strategy

This project is evaluated using tools and approaches aligned with its goals, context, and stage of development. The evaluation focuses on generating the right evidence at the right moment to move the intervention forward. [Read more about our evaluation strategy.](#)



Between September 2020 and June 2021, six ADaPT cohorts were delivered in Toronto, Calgary and Halifax. Given the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, ADaPT pivoted their original program plans to meet the project objectives. As FSC's evidence generation lead, Blueprint worked with the Diversity Institute and TECHNATION to conduct an evaluation of ADaPT from September 2020 to October 2021. This report summarizes the findings from this evaluation.

The Future Skills Centre acknowledges that the Anishinaabe, Mississaugas and Haudenosaunee share a special relationship to the 'Dish With One Spoon Territory,' where our office is located, bound to share and protect the land. As a pan-Canadian initiative, FSC operates on the traditional territory of many Indigenous nations across Turtle Island, the name given to the North American continent by some Indigenous peoples. We are grateful for the opportunity to work in this territory and commit ourselves to learning about our shared history and doing our part towards reconciliation.

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