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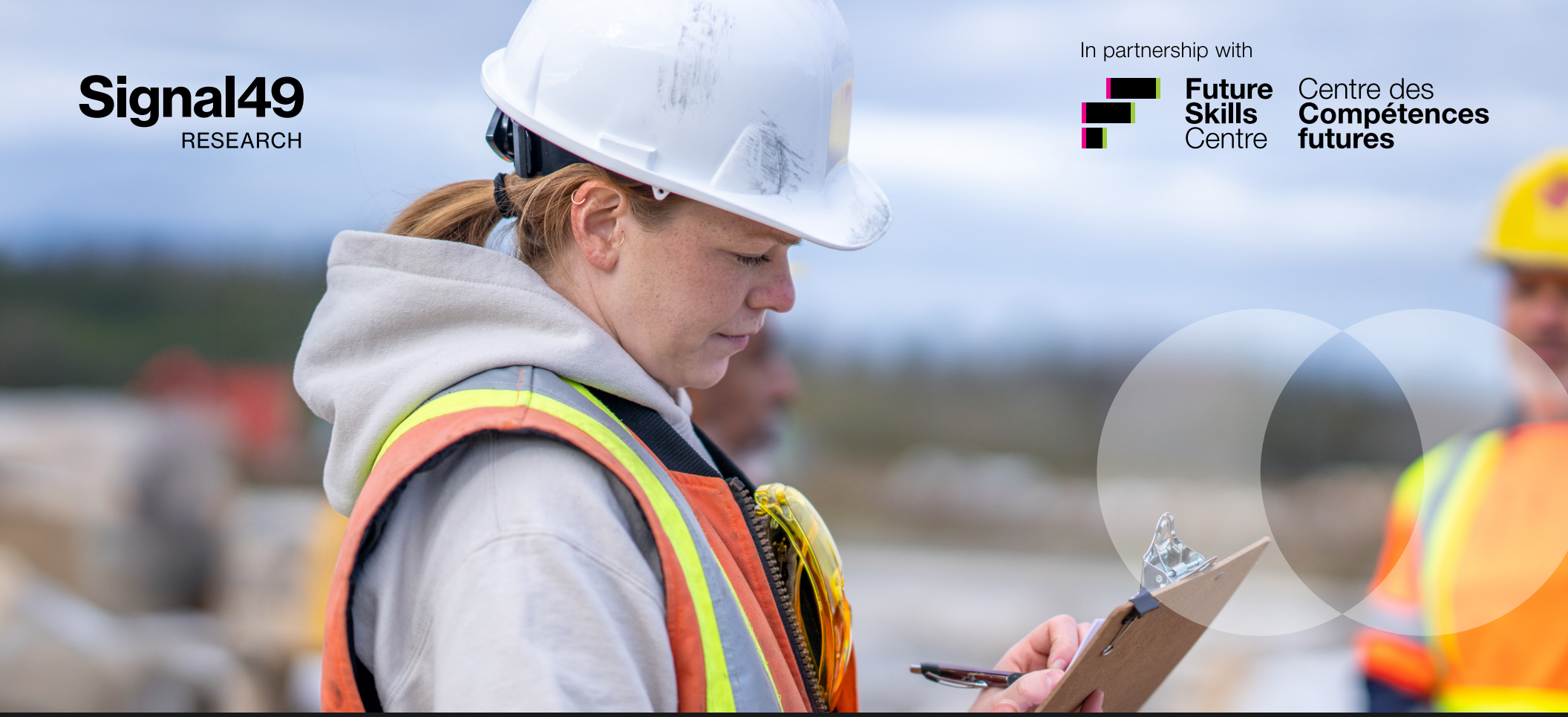

Building Tomorrow

Strengthening the Skilled Trades Workforce in Construction

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Formerly operating as The Conference Board of Canada

Future Skills Centre | Centre des Compétences futures

The Future Skills Centre (FSC) is a forward-thinking centre for research and collaboration dedicated to driving innovation in skills development so that everyone in Canada can be prepared for the future of work. We partner with policymakers, researchers, practitioners, employers and labour, and post-secondary institutions to solve pressing labour market challenges and ensure that everyone can benefit from relevant lifelong learning opportunities. We are founded by a consortium whose members are Toronto Metropolitan University, Blueprint, and Signal49 Research, and are funded by the Government of Canada's Future Skills Program.

In partnership with: Toronto Metropolitan University, Signal49 RESEARCH, Blueprint

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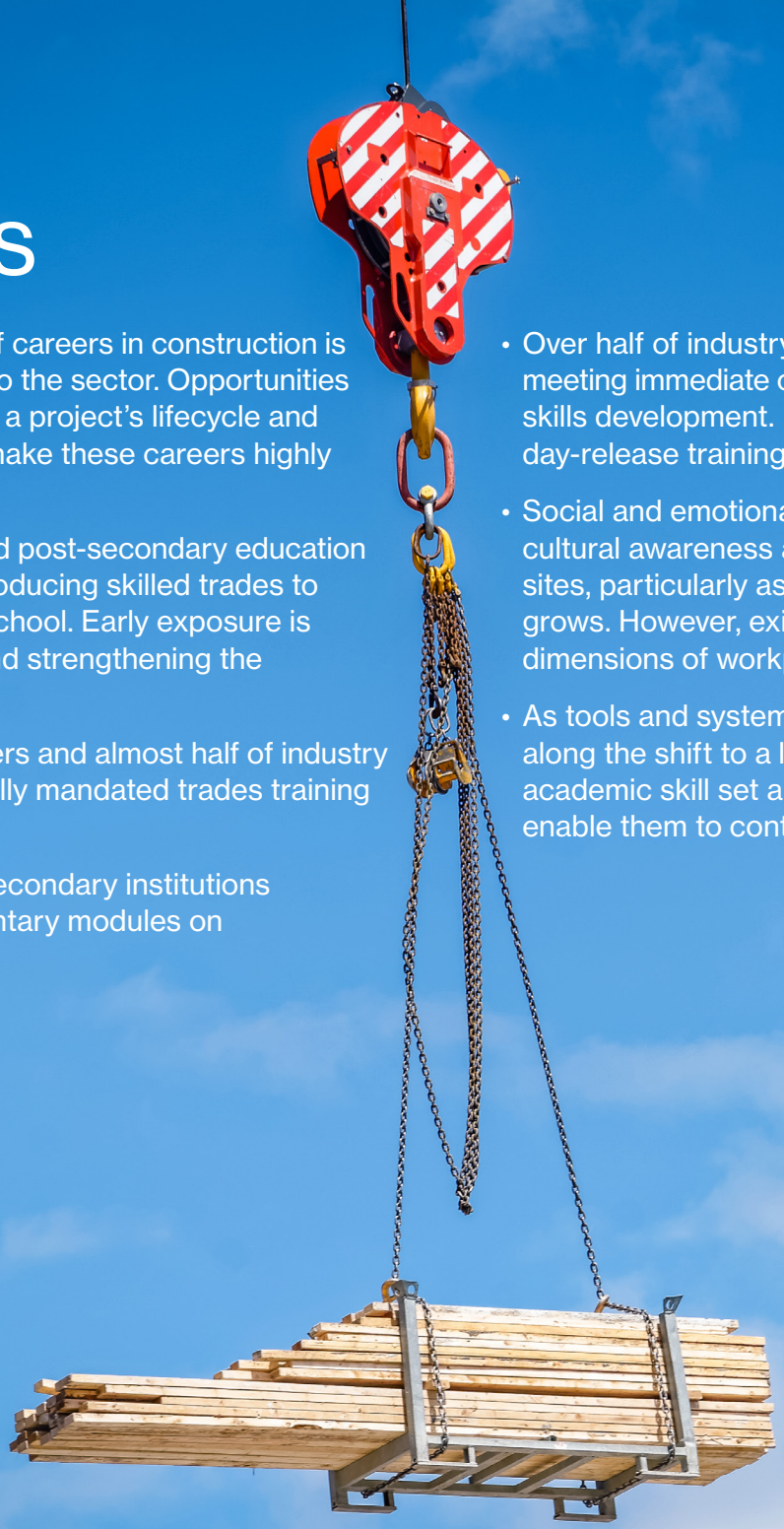
Contents

Key findings

- Showcasing the dynamic nature of careers in construction is essential to attracting new talent to the sector. Opportunities to work across different stages of a project's lifecycle and to advance into leadership roles make these careers highly engaging and rewarding.
- Over half of leaders in industry and post-secondary education want to see more initiatives in introducing skilled trades to students before they begin high school. Early exposure is essential to overcoming stigma and strengthening the talent pipeline.
- One-third of post secondary leaders and almost half of industry stakeholders report that provincially mandated trades training lags behind industry needs.
- To address this gap, some post-secondary institutions are experimenting with supplementary modules on emerging practices.
- Over half of industry stakeholders report a trade-off between meeting immediate operational demands and investing in long-term skills development. Flexible training models—virtual, on-site, or day-release training—could help ease this tension.
- Social and emotional skills such as leadership, teamwork, and cultural awareness are increasingly important on today's job sites, particularly as demand for supervisors and managers grows. However, existing training often overlooks these critical dimensions of workplace readiness.
- As tools and systems become increasingly advanced, particularly along the shift to a low-carbon economy, workers need a strong academic skill set and a solid knowledge foundation that will enable them to continuously learn and adapt.



Actionable insights

Industry representatives seeking to create inclusive and rewarding workplaces for new and current construction tradespeople can explore the following:

- Modernize recruitment strategies by highlighting the construction sector's societal impact and the dynamic nature of its career paths.
- Seek opportunities to participate in job fairs and career development days at schools, particularly K-12 schools, to expose more students earlier to career pathways in the trades.
- Support instructors' professional development by offering short-term job-site placements to help keep their knowledge current with industry practices.
- Increase on-the-job training by promoting flexible formats such as virtual and mobile classrooms. Pilot day-release models, in collaboration with Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), and adapt employment insurance (EI) eligibility rules to prevent income disruptions to workers.
- Work with ESDC and provincial ministries to access funding to expand flexible training formats by developing modular, part-time, and alternative training options that enable workers to upskill without leaving the job site for long periods.

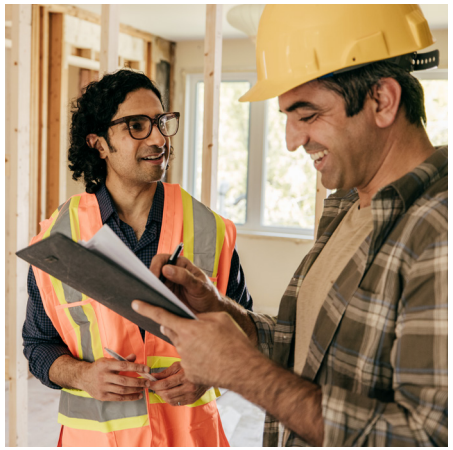
Educational leaders looking for ways to adapt their programs to better fit industry needs and to meet the rising demand for skilled employees can explore the following:

- Introduce modules on emerging practices and technologies in construction skilled trades. These modules can be co-designed with program advisory boards and industry partners and delivered flexibly (e.g., part-time, virtual) as a nimbler supplement to provincially mandated training.
- Revamp trades programs, adding modules on project management and leadership to showcase career pathways into supervisory and managerial roles, thereby increasing program appeal and student uptake.
- Scale up existing high school trades training programs and develop new initiatives to increase student exposure to skilled trades, beginning in elementary school.
- Support instructors' professional development by encouraging them to pursue short-term job-site placements to keep their knowledge current with industry practices.

Building Canada's infrastructure

The skilled trades sector faces a growing labour crisis. Our previous research found that in 2024, 10,000 skilled trades positions remained unfilled above typical vacancy levels.[1] This level of excess vacancies reflects persistent challenges in recruiting qualified workers and places the skilled trades among the hardest-hit sectors facing labour shortages.

These gaps not only strain national productivity but also put the timely delivery of major projects at risk, including the development of critical infrastructure, renewable-energy installations, and affordable housing.[2]



As demand for skilled tradespeople continues to rise,[3] developing a workforce capable of meeting this demand will be central to achieving Canada's long-term sustainability and infrastructure goals.[4]

To better understand the sector's workforce development challenges, we spoke with 30 construction industry insiders, including senior executives at construction companies, organized labour leaders, and training providers outside of higher education. We also spoke with 19 post-secondary education (PSE) leaders, including deans of trade schools in colleges and polytechnics. Their combined perspectives shed light on workforce development barriers and point to potential solutions for strengthening a sector that is critical to Canada's future.

1 The Conference Board of Canada, *From Shortages to Solutions: Tackling Canada's Critical Skill Gaps*.
2 The Conference Board of Canada.
3 The Conference Board of Canada, *Emissions Reduction and Demand for Skilled Trades*.
4 Prime Minister of Canada, "Mandate Letter."

A new era for the trades

When discussing the construction sector's talent pipeline, many industry stakeholders pointed to an "image problem" that is discouraging young people from pursuing skilled trades and construction careers. Research by the Mining Industry Human Resources Council found that 54 per cent of Canadians aged 15 to 30 "probably" or "definitely" would not consider a career in construction—one of the least preferred sectors.[5]

Trades have historically been seen as "fallback" or to provide less-prestigious options compared to academic or corporate pathways, according to almost half of industry and post-secondary interviewees. These perceptions—often reinforced by parents and guidance counsellors[6]—act to constrain the talent pipeline, leaving critical and well-paying positions unfilled.

"There is still a perception that skilled trades are of the lowest skill level. Until there are programs that can address that and elevate the status of the trades, there's never going to be enough students to fill classrooms."
Architecture lead, technology company

However, more than one-third of industry professionals and post-secondary leaders told us they are optimistic that this perception is starting to shift. Key drivers of this change include the promise of high earnings and stable employment in a time of economic uncertainty as well as the diversity of roles and opportunities within the field.

A recent study confirmed that graduates from Red Seal trades in Ontario earn more than graduates from college or university programs.[7] With major federal housing and infrastructure announcements,[8] this is a key moment to build momentum and attract a new generation of workers to the sector.

"For so long, construction was considered a second-class occupation. If you weren't smart enough to go the academia route, you went to construction. No ifs, ands, or buts about it. We look at the opportunities today, a Red Seal tradesperson is making six figures today, no problem whatsoever. Then you get the opportunity to be an employer, a developer and things like that down the road. So, the sky's really the limit."
Executive director, provincial construction association

Rebranding skilled trades and construction

To attract new talent, the construction sector is increasingly focused on addressing its long-standing image problem—including perceptions of physically demanding work, long hours, and limited career growth. Industry stakeholders emphasized the importance of communicating the sector's societal impact and the breadth of the career opportunities it offers. For some, this includes highlighting construction's central role in meeting Canada's housing and sustainability goals; for others, it involves promoting pathways to management and leadership roles where trade expertise is highly valued.

5 Mining Industry Human Resources Council, *Perceptions and Interest in a Mining Sector Career.*
6 Government of Ontario, "Supporting an Accessible and Inclusive Skilled Trades and Apprenticeship System in Ontario."
7 Pizarro Milian and others, "Breaking the Stigma."
8 Prime Minister of Canada, "Mandate Letter."

Industry stakeholders also noted the growing mismatch between how skilled trades careers are traditionally viewed and the priorities of younger workers. Many new entrants highly value flexibility, work-life balance, job security, and meaningful work[9]—qualities often perceived as lacking in construction roles.

"[New workers] are coming in with a totally different work ethic. The individual leaving the industry considered a regular work week to be 60 hours or more, depending on the job and location. The new person coming in wants work-life balance and only wants to work 35 hours a week."
Executive director, provincial construction association

In response, many industry professionals emphasized that skilled trades careers extend well beyond manual labour on a construction site. Opportunities span the entire project life cycle—from planning and design to procurement, construction, commissioning, and long-term maintenance. Our forecast shows growing demand not only for hands-on tradespeople but also for managerial and supervisory roles overseeing each stage of the project.[10] This diversity of roles and advancement opportunities was widely seen as a key factor in attracting workers seeking varied, secure, and growth-oriented careers.

"It's a powerful industry. Very good job security and also very versatile. You can work throughout the life cycle of a construction project. You don't always have to be on the site. Maybe you can come back in and work more on the preconstruction side of things."
Director, construction company

Several post-secondary leaders stressed that realizing this potential will require stronger collaboration between industry and educational institutions. They highlighted the need for more-effective promotion of skilled trades careers, emphasizing the diverse and rewarding opportunities these paths offer.

"Industry has not been very successful in promoting trades as a valuable career path. That's why we need to get industry on board and work with us to do much better marketing for this type of career."
Dean, school of construction

Exposure and training in K-12

Introducing skilled trades education earlier along the career development timeline—beginning in K–12—was widely seen as an effective way to strengthen the future talent pipeline. Early exposure not only builds foundational skills but also helps reframe perceptions of the trades, reinforcing the construction sector's image as a pathway to rewarding, diverse, and high-demand careers.

Several stakeholders pointed to existing initiatives as positive examples. Programs such as Ontario's Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP)[11] and Alberta's Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP)[12] allow students to begin apprenticeship training while completing high school. However, more than half of the industry and post-secondary leaders we interviewed emphasized that these efforts need to start even earlier, reaching students before they enter secondary school. Organizations such as Honour the Work (see profile below) focus on increasing awareness of skilled trades among elementary students, particularly in grades 1 through 6.

9 Signal49 Research, *Fostering Autonomy: Employee Preferences for Workplace Flexibility.*
10 Signal49 Research, *Emissions Reduction and Demand for Skilled Trades.*
11 Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program, "What Is OYAP?"
12 Tradesecrets, "Registered Apprenticeship Program."

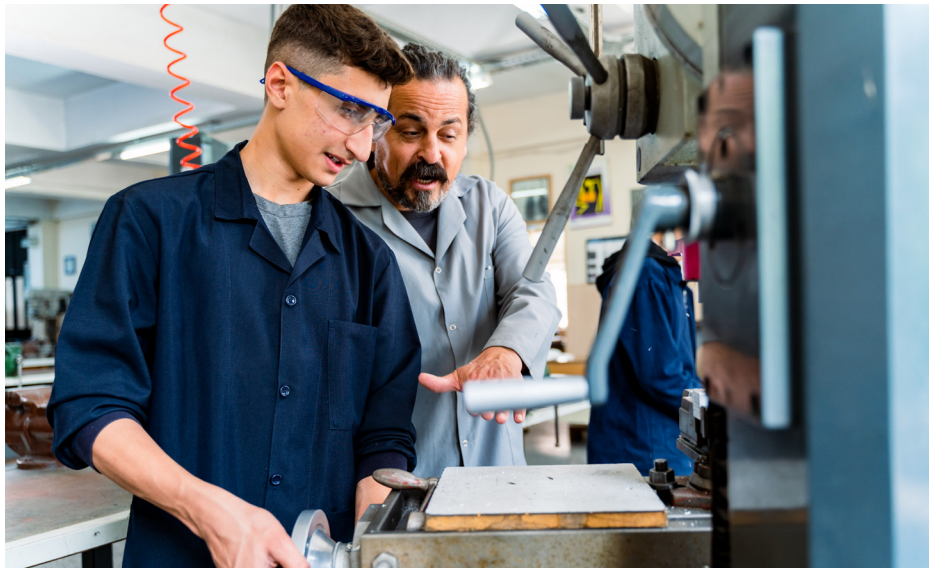
"I know there are some initiatives to move trades training into secondary schools, but they're nowhere near enough. We're getting guidance counsellors buying into the trades now, but we still see a lot of them pushing to [other] post-secondary education. We need a robust program at the secondary school level for trades introduction."
Executive director, construction council

Early exposure to skilled trades for elementary students

Honour the Work is a Canadian non-profit organization focused on introducing skilled trades and architecture, engineering, and construction careers to students in the K–12space. Through its STEAM Kits for grades 1 through 6, the organization provides hands-on, curriculum-aligned activities that integrate science, technology, engineering, arts, mathematics, and skills. These kits include lesson plans, student handouts, and building materials to help teachers deliver engaging projects that showcase real-world applications of trades.

Honour the Work also offers educator workshops and a national resource hub that connects schools with free programs, guest speakers, and financial supports. By promoting early exposure and reducing barriers, such as lack of awareness, the organization aims to reshape perceptions of trades as offering dynamic, technology-driven careers. Its approach emphasizes creativity, problem-solving, and collaboration, laying the foundation for flexible, job-aligned pathways that address Canada's skilled labour shortages.

While early exposure is an important part of addressing workforce shortages, it may not be sufficient, given the scale of the demand. A few industry and post-secondary interviewees highlighted immigration as another potential component of the solution. Forthcoming Signal49 research shows that immigrant skills remain underutilized in construction: immigrants are more likely than Canadianborn workers to hold involuntary parttime roles or shortterm contract positions, despite bringing valuable experience to the sector.[13] Interviewees emphasized that unlocking this talent will require addressing persistent barriers—including slow and inconsistent credential recognition processes and ongoing housing shortages—that limit immigrants' ability to fully participate in the construction workforce.



13 Signal49 Research, *From Newcomers to Game Changers*.

Post-secondary training gaps

As demand for skilled trades workers grows, stakeholders noted that post-secondary training has struggled to keep pace with evolving industry standards, practices, and technologies. They identified several structural factors contributing to this gap, which we explore below, along with potential approaches to address them.

Lengthy curricular review processes

Curriculum approval timelines were frequently cited as being misaligned with the pace of innovation in the construction sector. Several post-secondary leaders expressed frustration with provincial regulatory agencies (e.g., Skilled Trades BC; *Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur*), noting that lengthy internal and external review processes limit institutions' ability to update training in line with current industry standards. While employers continue to adopt new technologies, materials, and construction methods, post-secondary programs can remain bound to curricula that take years to revise, resulting in graduates entering the workforce with outdated or incomplete skill sets.

"The trades are set by Skilled Trades BC, and they are slow. I didn't realize how slow they were. They start their review, then they do the review, and then the review permeates outward. So the curriculum is always 10 years behind. One solution I know British Columbia Institute of Technology does is layering a self-directed curriculum on top of the one mandated by the province. You get a diploma that has forward-looking stuff. I think that's a really good model. We're exploring how we can do that ourselves."
Strategy lead, polytechnic

In response to these constraints, some institutions have introduced supplementary or parallel modules that sit alongside provincially mandated curricula. Rather than replacing core requirements, these offerings are designed to strengthen existing programs by addressing emerging skills and technologies not yet reflected in formal standards, such as the Residential Air to Air Heat Pump Specialist Microcredentials.[14]

Upskilling for high-efficiency residential heating and cooling

The Residential Air to Air Heat Pump Specialist Microcredentials developed through a partnership between the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) and external partners, equips learners with practical skills for designing and installing heat pump systems in residential buildings. The program responds to evolving climate conditions and regulatory changes by integrating emerging best practices and field-informed insights. Through five stacked courses, participants gain confidence in evaluating, designing, and executing quality heat pump installations. While most courses are open to a broad range of learners, the final course is tailored to skilled tradespeople with specific certifications, ensuring advanced training in installation and commissioning. These microcredentials support the industry's transition to high-efficiency systems and helps meet growing demand for sustainable residential heating and cooling solutions.

14 British Columbia Institute of Technology, "Residential Air to Air Heat Pump Specialist, Microcredentials, Part-Time – BCIT."

Instructor professional development

Beyond curriculum design, stakeholders also pointed to challenges in keeping instructors current with rapidly evolving industry practices, standards, and technologies. Several post-secondary leaders noted that instructors are often removed from the day-to-day realities of construction sites, making it difficult to stay closely aligned with changing employer needs and worksite conditions.

> **"In education, our job is to train the expert of tomorrow with today's curriculum, realistically trained by the experts from yesterday."**
> **Dean of construction**, polytechnic

Addressing this challenge will require sustained investment in instructors' professional development. Institutions can support faculty by facilitating short-term placements or secondments on active job sites in partnership with industry. These experiences enable instructors to gain current, practical insights, thereby strengthening their ability to equip students with the skills and competencies most in demand.

Balancing operational demands and training

Structural barriers on the employer side, such as persistent labour shortages and tight project timelines, are also barriers to training and upskilling. The pressure to deliver projects on time and on budget makes it difficult for workers to take time off for in-school apprenticeship training or upskilling. Employers face a persistent tension: meeting immediate operational demands versus investing in long-term skills development that would ultimately strengthen their workforce.

"I can't afford to take people out of my day-to-day tasks and have them go to training, nor can they afford to go. They're losing a certain percentage of their income and they're relying on that income. So, it's a detrimental effect all the way around. And you have the customer, the buyer of construction, putting more pressure on timelines and schedules to get that job done."
Executive director, provincial construction association

Half of the industry stakeholders we spoke with emphasized the need for more-flexible and accessible training models. Pilot initiatives such as ESDC's Flexibility and Innovation in Apprenticeship Technical Training (FIATT) project has been described as a step in the right direction (see profile below).[15] Programs like these aim to minimize job-site disruptions while supporting apprentices in completing their technical training.

Flexibility and innovation in apprenticeship technical training

The Flexibility and Innovation in Apprenticeship Technical Training (FIATT) pilot project explored new approaches to help apprentices complete their technical training and earn their journeyperson certification. The three-year initiative partnered with organizations to test alternative delivery models, including online modules, simulator training, mobile and virtual classrooms, and flexible in-class formats.

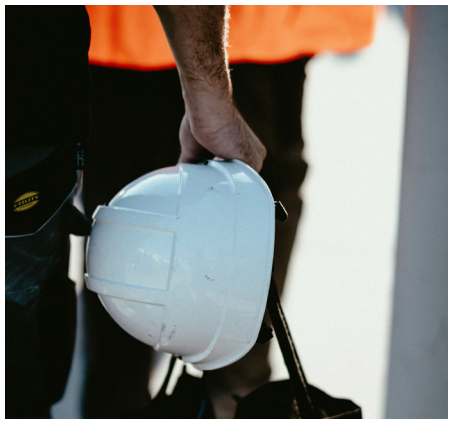
An evaluation by the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum in 2018 found that FIATT apprentices experienced several benefits compared to those in traditional block-release programs.[16] The former spent less time away from home, incurred lower relocation costs, and missed fewer work hours, resulting in reduced lost earnings. They were also more likely to describe their training as flexible and to report having had better access to tools.

16 Canadian Apprenticeship Forum, *Flexibility and Innovation in Apprenticeship Technical Training.*

15 Employment and Social Development Canada, "Flexibility and Innovation in Apprenticeship Technical Training."

Day-release training models[17] – adopted in the United Kingdom and parts of the European Union[18] – were also seen to offer greater flexibility compared to Canada's block-release approach. Block release typically requires workers to take 8 to 12 weeks off work, whereas day release involves short-term absences (e.g., one day per week over several months), reducing worksite disruptions. Though some Canadian PSIs, such as Sheridan,[19] have adopted this model, its use in the workplace is limited by EI rules that exclude short-term absences. EI eligibility rules are therefore a structural barrier to more-flexible models.

"In Europe, an apprentice might leave the worksite one day a week instead of 12 weeks at a time. It's much less disruptive, and employers are more supportive. But in Canada, we stick to block release because apprentices only become eligible for employment insurance when they're off for 12 weeks. If they did day release, they wouldn't qualify. Our system favours EI rules over what's actually better for training."
CEO, provincial training organization



17 Apprenticeships, "Off-the-Job (OTJ) Training."
18 CEDEFOP, "All There Is to Know about European Apprenticeships Close to Hand | CEDEFOP."
19 Sheridan College, "Apprenticeship Training Programs."

Beyond technical know-how

When discussing skills gaps, many industry and post-secondary stakeholders stressed that construction requires more than technical expertise. Two areas stood out: social and emotional skills (SES) and academic skills, both deemed critical in today's trades.

Social and emotional skills

"Soft" skills like leadership, teamwork, and cultural awareness are becoming increasingly important on today's job sites, where productivity and safety depend on well-coordinated crews, clear communication, and strong on-site guidance. Yet stakeholders frequently reported that leadership and other SES training opportunities tailored to the skilled trades remain limited.

"We're also hearing [about] a desire to train people for leadership roles, especially site workers, to get exposure because a lot of blue-collar workers aren't exposed to things like delegation, coaching, mentoring, and people who are really good at their job move up the chain without ever getting training in those areas."
Director, educational services organization

Promising initiatives are emerging. The Canadian Apprenticeship Foundation offers leadership and mentorship programs for under-represented groups,[20] while SkillPlan— a leading workforce development organization— provides companies with structured mentorship programs that support knowledge and skill transfer between journeypersons and apprentices (see profile below).[21] However, stakeholders emphasized the need for broader implementation and greater access—particularly for site-level workers—to prepare them for supervisory roles.

SkillPlan's Mentorship Matters Program

Mentorship Matters™ is a structured program that strengthens communication, teaching, and problem-solving skills between apprentices and journeypersons. With flexible delivery methods and customized programming, the initiative aims to improve workplace wellness, safety, productivity, and retention. Independent evaluations show a strong return on investment—a two-dollar return for every dollar spent, along with measurable gains in efficiency and personal protective equipment (PPE) compliance.

Academic skills and lifelong learning

As construction technologies advance, workers need a strong academic foundation to keep pace with new methods, tools, and standards. Interviewees emphasized that academic skills—particularly in mathematics and science—are essential for applying innovations, interpreting technical plans and codes, and meeting evolving safety and performance requirements.

Rather than relying on a fixed set of skills, workers need a foundation that supports continuous learning and the flexibility to adapt as technologies, regulations, and practices change.

The shift toward a decarbonizing economy highlights this need. Workers need to apply academic knowledge to learn and work with energy-efficient systems, low-carbon materials, and renewable-energy technologies. Over half of our study's post-secondary interviewees stressed that the ability to continuously build on this foundation will be critical, as green building standards and sustainable construction practices increasingly shape project requirements. Organizations such as the Canada Green Building Council and Passive House Canada support professional development in this area through training and certifications in leading green building practices.[22] However, stakeholders emphasized that broader initiatives—such as integrating applied sustainability concepts into post-secondary curricula and creating flexible pathways for lifelong upskilling—will be essential to preparing the workforce at scale.

> **"Greening of the economy impacts most Red Seal trades in either upskilling for green technology or from increased demand. Low-carbon construction and retrofits increasingly require specialized expertise in energy-efficient building techniques, technologies, equipment, and sustainable materials. Workers will need to identify and understand new equipment and their profiles for utilization of energy and CO2 emissions. Supervisors will have to oversee green building projects and use of eco-friendly materials and technologies. Welders will be needed for the construction of clean energy projects such as wind turbines and solar farms, and green infrastructure."**
> **Director**, construction company

20 Canadian Apprenticeship Foundation, "Professional Development Programs."
21 SkillPlan, "Build Your Skills."
22 Canada Green Building Council, "Learn."

Actionable insights

Industry representatives seeking to create inclusive and rewarding workplaces for new and current construction tradespeople can explore the following:

- To attract and retain young talent, modernize recruitment strategies by highlighting the construction sector's societal impact and the dynamic nature of its career paths.
- Seek opportunities to participate in job fairs and career development days at schools, particularly K-12 schools, to expose more students earlier to career pathways in the trades.
- Support instructors' professional development by offering short-term job-site placements to keep their knowledge current with industry practices.
- Increase on-the-job training by promoting flexible formats such as virtual and mobile classrooms. Pilot day-release models in collaboration with Employment and Social Development Canada to adapt employment insurance eligibility rules and prevent income disruptions to workers.
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Educational leaders looking for ways to adapt their programs to better fit industry needs and to meet the rising demand for skilled workers can explore the following:

- Introduce modules on emerging practices and technologies in the skilled trades and in construction. These modules can be co-designed with program advisory boards and industry partners and delivered flexibly (e.g., part-time, virtual) as a more nimble supplement to provincially mandated training.
- Revamp trades programs by adding modules on project management and leadership to showcase career pathways to supervisory and managerial roles, as this will increase program appeal and student uptake.
- Scale up existing high school trades training programs and develop new initiatives to increase elementary school students' exposure to skilled trades.
- Support instructors' professional development by encouraging them to pursue short-term job-site placements to keep their knowledge current with industry practices.

Appendix A

Methodology

About the research

To better understand labour challenges in the construction industry, we interviewed industry representatives and post secondary education leaders who are directly involved in training and hiring skilled trades workers. These conversations allowed us to examine the specific barriers employers and educators face in preparing current and future workers with the skills the sector requires. Interviewing industry representatives also helped us identify practical, sector informed solutions to strengthen workforce development and build a more resilient labour force for the construction sector.

Interview recruitment

The research team conducted semi-structured interviews with 30 construction industry stakeholders and 19 post-secondary education leaders between April and July 2025. Interviewees included senior executives at construction companies, organized labour leaders, deans of trade schools in colleges and polytechnics, and training providers outside of higher education.

Recruitment emails were sent to 159 stakeholders in industry and 66 in higher education, resulting in response rates of 19 and 29 per cent, respectively. Participants were identified through targeted outreach to individuals in decision-making roles related to training, workforce development, or recruitment within construction companies, post-secondary institutions, and sector-related organizations (e.g., unions, non-profit training institutions).

Geographic targets were set to obtain representation of stakeholders across the country. Interview targets by region and actual numbers are provided in the table below.

Table 1

Geographic targets and actuals by stakeholder group

(n = 59 (actual); count)

Region	Post-secondary (target)	Industry (target)	Post-secondary (actual)	Industry (actual)
Eastern Canada (ON, QC, Atlantic)	12	18	13	21
Other provinces/ territories	7	13	6	9

Source: Signal49 Research.

Semi-structured interview questions

The interviews explored topics such as

- Current and future skills demand
- Skills gaps
- Barriers to teaching and recruitment
- Curriculum alignment
- Cross-sectoral partnerships
- Policies supporting training and workforce development

Sample interview questions for industry stakeholders included

- Which specific skills or roles are most in demand in your sector today?
- Have you experienced challenges in recruiting skilled workers to fill in-demand roles?
- How do you anticipate the demand for skilled workers in your sector will change in the next five years?
- Do you collaborate with educational institutions or training providers to ensure that their programs align with your company's skills needs?
- Are there any government policies or programs that help your company find the skilled workers you need?
- Is additional government programming or support needed to help skilled trades workers develop the skills required for a low-carbon future?

Sample interview questions for post-secondary stakeholders included

- How do the programs offered at [institution] align with the current needs of the sector?
- What are the primary challenges in delivering skilled trades education and training today?
- What can post-secondary institutions and training providers do better to ensure we have enough skilled trades workers to meet future construction industry needs?
- Does [institution] have strategies to ensure the curriculum keeps up with technological innovation in the construction industry?
- Are there any government programs or policies that support skilled trades training in post-secondary education?
- Are there industry initiatives or partnerships that are helpful for creating a reliable pipeline of skilled workers to meet evolving industry needs?

Qualitative analysis

Interviews averaged 40 minutes for industry stakeholders and 45 minutes for post-secondary stakeholders. They were held via MS Teams, then recorded, transcribed, and anonymized, yielding a total of 518 pages and 119,790 words for industry stakeholders and 459 pages and 106,565 words for post-secondary stakeholders.

Transcripts were coded and thematically analyzed using NVivo qualitative software. Themes were refined and linked together based on the literature review, the research questions, and the exploratory examination within the interviews. Inter-rater reliability checks were conducted between three different coders to validate the findings, with a Kappa coefficient of 0.83.

Given the non-probability nature of the sample, findings are not generalizable to the broader population of the construction industry and post-secondary stakeholders.

Literature review

The literature review was guided by the following questions:

- What is the current demand for skilled tradespeople in Canada?
- How is this demand projected to change?
- What are the hiring challenges that the construction sector is experiencing?
- What initiatives, if any, have industry and post-secondary leaders taken to address these challenges?

Sources included industry reports, government documents, academic journals, news articles, and websites from training organizations and post-secondary institutions. A total of 48 sources were reviewed.

Aggregate terms used in this report

Throughout the report, we used the following terms to quantify the percentage of interview/focus group participants echoing similar sentiments:

- **Some/a few:** less than 30 per cent of participants
- **Many:** 30 to 40 per cent of participants
- **Almost half:** 41 to 49 per cent of participants
- **Half:** 50 per cent of participants
- **Most/majority/over half:** over 50 per cent of participants

Appendix B

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