

## Stakeholder Summary

### Hybrid apprenticeship courses can provide similar outcomes in reduced timeframe

By combining online courses for theory and in-class learning, hybrid apprenticeship programs may be able to achieve comparable outcomes to traditional in-class programs, but in approximately half the required time according to a new report from the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO).

The study, *Hybrid Delivery of College Instruction in the Skilled Trades: Supporting Apprenticeship Completion*, examined the Industrial Mechanic Millwright (IMM) apprentice program at two Ontario colleges and found that there were no significant differences in completion rates, grades, satisfaction and engagement levels, retention and completion between traditional teaching methods and a hybrid program.

#### Project Description

Conducted from 2011 to 2014, the study examined the IMM program at Durham College, which delivered a traditional in-class, three-year program, and Sault College, which offered a hybrid program where students could complete the program in back-to-back semesters in just 16 months. Both programs consist of an apprenticeship placement with an employer, as well as studies at the college. The study used student grade point averages, data collected from an anonymous online survey and focus group interviews with students, employers and other stakeholders including instructors, school administrators and a representative from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

#### Findings

While there was no significant difference between the demographics of the students in the traditional program compared to the hybrid, the study did show that apprenticeship students are quite different from typical postsecondary students. Every respondent to the survey was working full-time, at least half cared for dependents, none was involved in college extracurriculars and their average age was 30. These demographics are in line with findings from other apprenticeship research, including HEQCO's [Apprenticeship in Ontario An Exploratory Analysis](#). The hybrid program was developed to meet the needs of this unique type of student by shortening the timeline and providing scheduling flexibility.

While satisfaction with the college portion of the IMM apprenticeship program was strong, the interviews provided insights into the variety of reasons apprentices may not complete their program or journey person qualification. These include difficulty getting quality on-the-job experience, balancing course work with a full-time job and the overall value placed on completion. The interviews also revealed a lack of communication between all stakeholders in the process. For example, college stakeholders had no knowledge of completion rates, employers lacked knowledge of changing requirements for apprenticeship and apprentices were unaware of ministry incentives that existed for them.

Authors of *Hybrid Delivery of College Instruction in the Skilled Trades: Supporting Apprenticeship Completion* are June MacDonald-Jenkins and Clair Cornish.