

# RESKILLING AND UPSKILLING ONTARIO'S WORKFORCE



As the types of skills employers need continue to shift, access to short-duration, reskilling and upskilling opportunities will ensure Ontario's workers remain adaptable – well-equipped to transition into new roles and meet the changing needs of Ontario's job market.

Ontario's universities are partnering with industry to adapt courses and provide workers with these types of short-duration opportunities, such as micro-credentials and continuing education programming, in high-growth sectors.

Below are just some of the ways universities are helping build a strong foundation for talent through reskilling and upskilling, while also encouraging life-long learning to meet the needs of a changing workforce.



## ● Upskilling and reskilling workers for in-demand jobs in STEM

● More and more businesses are looking for highly skilled talent in information technology. To support the needs of employers, **Algoma University** launched the one-year Graduate Certificate in Information Technology. Through the program, students gain essential skills in key areas, such as programming, software development, analysis and web design.

● Workers in fast-evolving sectors, such as the automotive and advanced manufacturing sector, will need an increasing number of opportunities to rapidly upgrade their skills and remain competitive. To help workers upskill, **McMaster University** launched the McMaster Manufacturing Research Institute Industrial Training Program. The program aims to empower workers impacted by the current automotive and advanced manufacturing labour markets, providing them with the skills they need to continue to support Ontario's growing sector.

● With more services moving online, user experience (UX) experts will be needed to design accessible web pages for users of all backgrounds. The UX Design Foundations Micro-credential at **OCAD University** provides students with hands-on experience creating and designing effective user experiences across devices. The program can also be used as a stackable micro-credential for those who want to gain advanced training in the field.

● Entry-level accounting roles are becoming scarcer as accounting firms increasingly adopt new technologies. In response, **Toronto Metropolitan University** has integrated data analytics into its Accounting – Finance Certificate in order for accounting students, recent graduates and mid-career workers to develop the in-demand skills needed to stay competitive and be attractive to employers.

● As instances of cybercrime continue to increase, Ontario will need a highly skilled cybersecurity workforce to fight them. To help meet this demand, **York University** launched the Certificate in Cyber Security Fundamentals. Through a series of online courses and real-world case studies, the program aims to help participants enter the sector job-ready in 10 months.

## ● Reskilling and upskilling Ontario's health-care workforce

● The long-term care community in Ontario is facing a shortage of personal support workers (PSWs). To improve resiliency and retention within the health-care sector and reduce burnout, the **University of Guelph** is developing a suite of micro-credentials to upskill Ontario's PSW workforce. These credentials help learners develop the advanced interpersonal skills required to meet the complex care needs of clients, as well as the in-demand skills in critical thinking, teamwork and communication.

● To help health-care workers better support patients living with dementia, **Lakehead University** created the Certificate in Interdisciplinary Dementia Studies intended for professionals working in the field. Through the program, health-care workers learn the fundamentals of dementia through courses in aging, health and well-being that support a holistic understanding of dementia.

● To help current Registered Practical Nurses (RPNs) in Ontario upskill to a Bachelor of Science in Nursing while they continue to work, **Nipissing University** offers a part-time distance education program. RPNs gain hands-on experience as they work to become Registered Nurses within their local health-care agency and support the regional health-care workforce.

● Ensuring patients do not have adverse reactions to oral anticoagulant drugs, such as those used to reduce the risk of blood clots, is critical to patient safety. That's why the **University of Waterloo** created the Primary Care Certificate Program in the Management of Oral Anticoagulation Therapy for pharmacists, registered nurses and nurse practitioners. The program aims to provide health-care workers the opportunity to upskill their knowledge and safely manage oral anticoagulation therapy under a medical directive.

More nurses will be needed to support patient care and fuel the health-care workforce as Ontario rebuilds from the pandemic. To meet this need, **Western University** is offering the Compressed Time Frame Bachelor of Science in Nursing. Within two years, the program provides students with previous university experience the opportunity to upskill towards careers as Registered Nurses.



### Partnering with industry to fill regional skills shortages

- The Niagara Peninsula accounts for more than 93 per cent of Ontario's grape-growing volume, according to Grape Growers of Ontario. **Brock University** is supporting the regional grape and wine industry by creating the Certificate in Grape and Wine Technology in partnership with industry experts. The one-year program aims to upskill and reskill workers through intensive courses and a full-time paid internship within the industry.
- As more companies look to find solutions to unique business challenges, skilled business analysts can help implement new processes and technology, ensure projects are brought to market in a timely manner and satisfy both customer and business needs. In partnership with the International Institute of Business Analysis, **Carleton University** offers a Masters Certificate in Business Analysis to provide current workers with the technical skills needed to analyze and manage user requirements.

Highly skilled talent in artificial intelligence (AI) and information technology are among the top five skills needed by employers over the next three years. In response, **University of Ottawa** launched the AI/Cloud Computer Program in partnership with the Centre of Excellence in Next Generation Networks (CENGN). Through short-duration courses in areas, such as software management and advanced coding, the program provides students and workers with the skills needed to excel in this fast-growing industry.

To help Indigenous community members in rural and remote locations access culturally-relevant continuing education courses, **Queen's University** is launching the Certificate in Indigenous Leadership, Innovation, and Management in partnership with Redbird Circle Inc. Through a suite of stackable micro-credentials, the program will provide upskilling opportunities in leadership, management, intrapreneurship and entrepreneurship to support career advancement and help boost the local economy.

Across the Waterloo Region, employers have expressed a demand for employees with strong communication and sales skills. In response, **Wilfrid Laurier University** partnered with local accelerator Communitech to launch the Framework for Future-Proofing Communities pilot project for mid-career workers. Through short sprint modules and immersive courses, employees are able to expand their skillset to meet the demands of the regional job market.



As the health-care sector continues to adopt new technologies, more professionals will be needed to interpret the data collected. To support regional patient care and the growing need for skilled data analysis experts in health care, the **University of Windsor** launched the Certificate in Health Informatics in partnership with TransForm Shared Services Organization. The program aims to create a talent pipeline to fill anticipated labour shortages within the Windsor Essex health-care system.

### Increasing access to continuing education

- Ensuring learners in remote and northern communities can access continuing education is critical to supporting the regional workforce. **Laurentian University** offers long-standing online and distance education programming geared towards mature, first-generation, Indigenous and Francophone learners. By addressing their unique needs, learners can remain in their communities, while furthering their education.
- To help displaced workers re-enter the workforce, **Ontario Tech University** is partnering with TD Bank to offer 1,000 free micro-credentials across 24 subjects in high-demand skills areas, such as data analytics, cybersecurity and software development. The program aims to help displaced workers successfully find employment while minimizing financial barriers to continuing education.
- To help women access upskilling and reskilling opportunities in STEM and finance fields, the **University of Toronto's** School of Continuing Studies has created the Bursary for Women in Finance and Technology. The bursary aims to help remove financial barriers for eligible applicants so more women will be able to gain the critical skills needed to fill in-demand jobs across both sectors, such as data analytics and computer science.

\* Please note that some of the photographs featured in this document were taken prior to the Ontario Government's Social Distancing protocols coming into effect.