

Local news

EDUCATION

Numerous opportunities available for those keen on trades

If you get a chance to visit the Okanagan College trades shops at Career Fair on the KLO campus this Sunday, you will see high school students learning and working along side college students.

These students are enrolled in a dual credit program, which is a partnership program between Central Okanagan School District, other school districts and Okanagan College.

It is called the dual credit program because students not only receive Okanagan College credit towards a trade; they can also use those same credits towards their high school diploma. Students can earn up to 32 high school credits at Okanagan College through this program.

Back in the mid 1970s, when I was in high school, if you were keen on a trade, you either had to wait until you graduated from high school or quit school in Grade 10 and start your trade then—there was no option to do both.

Today high school students as early as Grade 10 can enrol in many of Okanagan College's entry-level trades training programs.



School's In

When I was in high school, if you were keen on a trade you either had to wait until you graduated from high school or quit school then.

There is no need for them to quit school to enter a trades program. This approach is helping

kids stay in school, receive some training, and graduate with a high school diploma.

High school students interested in attending Okanagan College through the dual credit program have many program options to choose from.

These include Electrical Pre-Apprenticeship, Aircraft Maintenance Engineer, Automotive Service Technician (automotive mechanics), Automotive Collision Repair/Painting and Refinishing, Heavy Duty and Commercial Transport Mechanics, Recreation Vehicle Service Technician, Carpentry/Joinery, Residential Construction, Culinary Arts, Plumbing Pre-Apprenticeship and Welding Level C.

New for this year is a dual credit program in Home Support/Resident Care Attendant. This 23-week program prepares students to provide care in hospitals, residential care homes and community care facilities to name a few.

Dual credit programs give many high school students an opportunity to learn hands-on skills and move beyond the high school curriculum. Students transition into

an adult learning environment where expectations are high and where they will be required to meet on-the-job deadlines and industry standards. At Okanagan College, trades students must be on campus and ready to go as early as 7:30 a.m.—this is similar to what they can expect on the job site.

Many students who take on this challenge often mature along the way. They not only gain new skills and a trade, but are also well on their way to learning important life skills such as establishing a positive work ethic.

This program has been around for a few years now, yet I know very few parents who are aware of it.

If you have a son or daughter who has a strong interest in the trades, enjoys working with their hands and would benefit from some technical training, this program is for them.

College tuition for most of these programs is usually paid for by the school district. This is a real bonus, considering the tuition for most of these programs is over \$3,000. Parents and students are responsible for their own

material and textbook fees.

If you want to find out more about this program visit the Okanagan College booth at Orchard Park Mall on Nov. 8, 9, 10 or 11 or Career Fair this Sunday. Okanagan College staff including trades instructors will be on hand to provide students with more

information on how they can access the dual credit program.

Jane Muskens is in charge of student recruitment at Okanagan College. She is currently pursuing her Masters of Science in Enrollment Management. E-mail her at jmuskens@okanagan.bc.ca

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