

COMPLETION RATE STUDY FINDS APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM GROWING WORKFORCE

The Saskatchewan apprenticeship system is delivering more journeypersons to the Saskatchewan labour force in part due to sustaining or improving completion rates.

The Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission (SATCC) has undertaken research into Real Completion Rates (RCR) and found there is a positive story to tell in Saskatchewan.

"I'm very pleased to report that the apprenticeship system continues to do its job in growing the number of journeypersons in Saskatchewan," said Garry Kot, chair of the SATCC Board of Directors. "Through the hard work and partnerships between the SATCC, industry, government, educators, and apprentices, the number of new journeypersons in Saskatchewan each year continues to grow."

The average total RCR for all trades analyzed over a nine-year period is 59%. In 2012-13, this number was 65 %, showing the increase in the number of apprentices completing their programs each year.

This calculation is determined as follows:

$$\text{Real Completion Rate (RCR)} = \frac{\text{\# of apprentices who achieve JP status (within 2 years after expected end of program)}}{\text{\# of apprentices who complete Level 1}}$$

The RCR nine year average for compulsory trades as a group was 64%; for non-compulsory trades, the average was 56%.

In 2012-13, the total RCR for compulsory trades as a group was 74%; for non-compulsory trades, it was 61%.

"The statistics are certainly positive and much more accurately reflect the results we expected," said Jeff Ritter, CEO of the SATCC. "We will use this data in strategic and operational planning, and will continue our work towards increasing the completion rate in Saskatchewan."

The need for skilled tradespeople in Saskatchewan has been evident for many years now. The Canadian Sector Council anticipates a peak in construction employment in 2015, at 60 percent above historical levels. According to the Saskatchewan's Non-Residential Construction Sector Economic Indicators Report for the second quarter of 2013, if present trends for this year continue, year over year employment will have increased by 13 percent, meaning 5,000 new jobs.

“Employment opportunities in the skilled trades are abundant in Saskatchewan,” said Mark Cooper, president of the Saskatchewan Construction Association. “There is a shortage of workers to fill the labour need in the construction sector. It is important that more people move through Saskatchewan’s apprenticeship system and become certified.”

In addition, completion rates are staying constant or are rising slightly during this period of rapid growth and large demand, and most apprentices who complete do so within the expected time of four years. Since 2007, there has been a 52% increase in the number of journeypersons certified in Saskatchewan, from 1,097 to 1,664.

All construction organizations are pleased to see this number growing. Also important to note is that the number of registered apprentices continues to increase as well. The system is becoming more efficient while growing in numbers.

“This is certainly a good news story for skilled trades in Saskatchewan,” said Karen Low, Executive Director of Merit Contractors Saskatchewan. “The SATCC has focused significant efforts on increasing completion rates in the designated trades, which is necessary to fill the skills gap in this province. We are pleased to also now have concrete data to work with as we look to the future.”

Completion rates in apprenticeship have often been misunderstood and misinterpreted throughout Canada. With scant research available, some researchers resort to a simplistic “proxy” method, in which they divide completions by new registrations, and do not take into account the length and duration of various apprenticeship programs or differentiation between trades.

The research conducted by the SATCC will be updated each year when statistics become available.

For more detailed information, please see: