

Tools for  
**Essential Skills  
Training** in Alberta



**Building Capacity**  
in Alberta's Construction Industry



# About this booklet

It's common knowledge that Alberta's construction industry has enjoyed strong growth over the last several years. What many people may not know is that during this period something else has been quietly growing in the province – a new and exciting essential skills training network to serve the entire construction industry. It's one of the important successes of the *Building Capacity* initiative launched four years ago in Alberta through cooperative teamwork by the Construction Owners Association of Alberta, labour organizations, selected training organizations and the federal and Alberta governments.

The training network is called CINESTA – the *Construction Industry Network for Essential Skills Training in Alberta*. And because of it, Alberta's construction workers and employers now have easy access to some of the very best expertise in designing and delivering tailor-made, innovative essential skills training programs targeted to the trades. It's a resource tool some employers, labour organizations and workers are already using. It's a resource that everyone in the construction industry should know about and use.

If you would like more information about CINESTA and how it works, this booklet is for you.

# CINESTA

## Essential Skills Training – its importance to workers and companies in the construction industry

There may have been a time when workplace training for reading, writing or math skills was not critical to construction workers in Alberta or to the bottom-line financial performance of companies. Those days are gone forever. Essential skills training is now a “must have” for construction workers and for construction companies desiring long-term growth and financial success. Why? Because essential skills training is a proven, cost-effective way to help make sure construction workers are doing their jobs safely and efficiently and are keeping up with changes in how their jobs should be done.

Well-trained workers equipped with the skills for continuous learning and effective communication are part of the total asset base of any construction company – and every bit as important as physical or financial assets. And in fact, the quality and adaptability of the construction industry’s labour force become more important with each passing year, as new technologies, equipment and materials are introduced on job sites, bringing with them new procedures and work requirements. Today, more than ever, construction workers at all levels and in all trades must be able to read and understand complex written instructions and materials, keep records, write reports and do math.



**“Sometimes employers think that just because you’re an immigrant you can’t do a particular job. They are surprised when they see we can.”**

*– Immigrant from Africa now working as a machining apprentice*

Labour organizations that support essential skills training are equipping their members with the skills required to successfully adapt to a continuously changing work world. Workers who take essential skills training are more self-assured and usually more willing to take on jobs with greater responsibility. Construction companies who support essential skills training are the most ideally positioned to attract and retain productive workers.

## What are Essential Skills?

There are six distinct, but related, skill sets associated with the term “essential skills”:



**READING SKILLS.** The requirement for construction workers to read and to understand and apply what they read has never been greater than it is today. The materials they must read are getting more complex and the consequences of making mistakes are getting greater, affecting, for example, profits, safety records and liability.



**WRITING SKILLS.** Writing skills refer to both accuracy and readability and involve not only writing words on paper, but drawing sketches, tagging, scaffolding and the electronic recording of readings and times. There can be no disputing the fact that construction workers today are spending more time than ever writing – customer reports and safety reports, descriptions of equipment installations, maintenance instructions, to give a few examples only.

*Research shows that reading and writing skills decrease when not used constantly. School courses successfully passed five years ago may not be any indication of a person’s existing ability to read or write. The good news is that workers who keep up their reading and writing skills take less time to enhance those skills.*



**MATH SKILLS.** As they say, in construction everyone works with numbers. And while the range and application of math skills vary significantly from one trade to the next and from one job to the next, “basic” math skills are the foundation that allows most construction workers to do their jobs. Understanding what the numbers mean and knowing when numbers are right or wrong can mean the difference between a profit or a loss, a happy, satisfied customer or a lawsuit, a clean safety record or accident liability.

**DOCUMENT USE SKILLS.** A needs assessment of essential skills in the construction industry has shown that virtually every job has some requirement for using documents, whether in the form of reports, computer printouts, tables, charts, sketches, reference guides, manuals, blueprints or in some other format. Documents are information sources that explain to workers what they are to do, how and when. That's why companies should try to ensure that the documents they use regularly are understandable and readable. That's why companies, unions and other labour organizations should make an investment to ensure their workers are using documents properly and efficiently.



**ORAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS.** A worker's ability to listen effectively, understand what is being said, and clearly communicate to others is regarded by many employers and training experts as the "most essential" of all essential skills. Journeymen and Foremen in Alberta have noted that increasingly they have to communicate simultaneously with workers across several trades. That requires clear and accurate communication skills. With the adoption of ISO 9000 and the trend toward "pushing" responsibility lower down in organizations, companies must have workers with good oral communication skills.



*"The training I received at CCIS was definitely a major part of the success I had in getting a good job."  
– Graduate of the Electrician Upgrading and Certification Program  
now working as an industrial maintenance electrician*

**ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL).** Workers whose first language is not English face special challenges on the road to attaining solid reading, writing, math, document use and oral communication skills. The aging population means that over the next few years a large percentage of Alberta's skilled workers will retire. Employers who have a strategy for attracting and retaining skilled workers whose first language is not English will have an edge in ensuring a ready supply of the workers they need. It only makes sense that the small investment required to provide ESL training is a sound business decision that in the years ahead will more than pay for itself.



## Dispelling the myths about Essential Skills Training – What you should know

**MYTH** "If workers can't read, write or do math, it's a reflection on the education system. It's not the union's or the employer's problem to fix."

**RESPONSE** Essential skills training should be looked upon as a pragmatic, cost-effective way for employers, unions and other labour organizations to deal with realities of the workforce. Basic learning skills acquired several years ago weaken if they are not used regularly. English is not the first language for an increasing percentage of Canada's workforce. Workplace-based essential skills training gives employers and workers increased assurance that workers have the required level of proficiency in the basic skills that affect their safety, productivity and longer-term employability.

**MYTH** "My unionized workers are all highly skilled Journeymen who are doing their jobs just fine. Why is essential skills training relevant to these workers or their unions or to my company?"

**RESPONSE** Essential skills training may not be needed at every work site or in every company, but research shows that workers develop "coping" strategies to "work around" or "mask" problems associated with poor basic skills in language and math. And the results are always the same – reduced productivity, more accidents and mistakes, and lower self-confidence for the workers who are trying to cope with their language or math deficiencies.

**MYTH** "Workplace-based essential skills training can be treated like any other training."

**RESPONSE** Not really. The need for training to upgrade technical skills, operate more sophisticated equipment or to acquire completely new skills is by and large taken for granted today. The need for training to improve language, math or communication skills is not always as readily apparent, accepted or supported. A special effort and commitment are required to address essential skills training. Workers with strong essential skills are better able to take advantage of, and benefit from, other training offered by their labour organizations or companies – for example advanced technical training.

## CINESTA

The need for essential skills training can be obvious sometimes, but not always. That's where CINESTA can help. CINESTA is a network of Alberta training organizations specializing in assisting construction workers and their employers in identifying and addressing essential skills training needs.

There are six organizations in the CINESTA network:

- Bow Valley College in Calgary;
- Calgary Catholic Immigration Services in Calgary;
- MCC Employment Development in Calgary;
- Metro Community College (Edmonton Public Continuing Education) in Edmonton;
- NorQuest College in Edmonton; and
- Keyano College in Fort McMurray.



*“The ESL Trades Program at NorQuest College in Edmonton was perfect for me. It was a necessary step toward getting certified. If I hadn't taken the program, I wouldn't have passed my first period of training at NAIT in theory even though I was top of the class in practical knowledge and skills.”*

*– Immigrant from Lebanon taking welding apprenticeship*

## How CINESTA is working for you

The CINESTA organizations have worked together over the past four years to develop and pilot tailor-made essential skills training programs for the construction industry. Their individual and collective expertise is unrivaled in North America, and through CINESTA they continue to coordinate and improve their efforts and the delivery of training services to employers and workers. CINESTA also provides employers and labour organizations with an invaluable tool for evaluating and monitoring training results industry-wide.

The training available through the CINESTA organizations is focused on construction – it is not generic essential skills training. Instructional materials incorporate every day, real work situations, rather than theoretical or general applications. This approach makes the instruction both immediately relevant and effective for workers in all trades and at all levels. The flexible scheduling that is offered means that training can be easily and conveniently adapted to the needs of different work sites and workers.

The training and consulting services offered by the CINESTA organizations can significantly improve the performance of construction companies and workers throughout Alberta. CINESTA – it's definitely a name to remember and a network you'll want to use soon.

This booklet contains information on the six CINESTA organizations, including details on their trades-focused essential skills training programs and consulting services. E-mail and Web site addresses and telephone numbers are provided.

For more information about CINESTA, please call Brian Bickley, Chairman of the Construction Owners Association of Alberta's Essential Skills Committee at (780) 790-8810.



# Profiles of training organizations

In construction today, English language, math and communication skills must be thought of as work tools needed to get the job done.

Take advantage of the world-class expertise developed right here in Alberta. If there is any possibility that your company or labour organization could benefit from essential skills training, eliminate the doubt by calling any of the six organizations profiled in the following pages. In addition to the construction-related programs and services described in this booklet, these organizations also offer a broad range of other training courses that could be helpful to you.

Don't delay, make the call today to:

- Bow Valley College;
- Calgary Catholic Immigration Services;
- MCC Employment Development;
- Metro Community College (Edmonton Public Continuing Education);
- NorQuest College; or
- Keyano College.

# CINESTA



## Bow Valley College

When you invest in training at Bow Valley College in Calgary, you're getting so much more than just first-rate technical expertise in adult training. You're also getting the peace of mind that comes from working with an organization that has more than 30 years of distinguished service to learners. Bow Valley College is the largest English language training organization in all of Southern Alberta. Whether the need is for one-on-one training, or small or large group training, Bow Valley's gifted instructors are committed to delivering training of the highest standards.

Besides its expertise in English language upgrading, English as a Second Language and Academic Upgrading, Bow Valley has been hard at work these past few years developing specialized expertise in training targeted to the construction trades. Its close working relationships with SAIT and Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training ensure that its programs have rigorous technical content reflecting the latest regulatory requirements. Their efforts have produced two unique programs that are sure to be of immediate interest to construction companies and unions across Alberta.

### Construction Craft Labourer Training Program

Construction Craft Labourer is a newly designated occupation in Alberta. Workers who are currently doing this work and wish to be certified are now required to pass a certification exam. Bow Valley College has shown tremendous foresight in anticipating that many of these experienced workers may have difficulty taking the exam because of their limited reading or writing abilities. With Bow Valley College's Construction Craft Labourer Training Program, construction workers now have access to tailor-made training that can prepare them to challenge the certification exam. It's a win-win for workers, companies, unions and the certification process.

The program has been designed for maximum delivery flexibility. It can be taught in a traditional classroom setting, self-taught or delivered through

one-on-one tutoring. The program has a modular format, with 15 separate modules. The first 13 modules closely parallel the actual 100-question, multiple choice certification exam. The last two modules help participants to overcome the inevitable apprehension that comes from having to take the exam. The 15 modules cover the following topics:

- The role of the construction worker
- The construction process
- Safe practices
- Operating and maintaining small equipment – parts 1 & 2
- Assisting in concrete activities
- Rigging and hoisting operations – parts 1, 2 & 3
- Excavation, backfilling and compaction – parts 1 & 2
- Scaffold systems – parts 1 & 2
- Study skills and test taking
- Glossary of Terms

<b>TARGETED PARTICIPANTS</b>	Workers wanting to pass the Construction Craft Labourer certification exam through Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training.
<b>TRAINING FORMAT</b>	Modular training delivered through either classroom teaching, self-teaching or tutoring.
<b>DATES</b>	Arrangements can be made to suit participants.
<b>LENGTH OF TRAINING</b>	100 hours – can be adjusted to reflect the individual skill levels of participants.
<b>LOCATION</b>	Training can be delivered at participants' work sites, at Bow Valley College or at other locations deemed more convenient.
<b>CLASS SIZE</b>	The number of participants in classroom-delivered training can vary from as few as five to as many as 20.
<b>PRE-TRAINING SKILLS ASSESSMENT</b>	Yes. Bow Valley College assessments are carried out.
<b>COST</b>	Varies according to the location of the training and number of individuals taking the training.



## Apprenticeship Reading Program

The Apprenticeship Reading Program is the winning ticket for skilled or entry-level construction workers who need better reading skills to pass the apprenticeship entrance exam and continue their studies at SAIT or NAIT, or who want take other trade-related technical training. The program's focus is Grades 6 to 9 reading levels.

The program uses a flexible modular format that is primarily designed for independent study supplemented with seminars and some classroom instruction. The instructional materials for each of the eight training modules incorporate concepts, examples and exercises that are specific to construction work. The eight modules cover the following topics:

- Pre-viewing and predicting
- Vocabulary development
- Using a dictionary
- Reading for information
- Reading techniques
- Skimming and scanning
- Charts and graphs
- Study skills and strategies for taking tests



*"I believe that the Apprenticeship Reading Program will help everyone who has difficulty with the English language." – Student currently enrolled in the program*

<b>TARGETED PARTICIPANTS</b>	Workers who must pass the apprenticeship entrance exam; workers taking trades training at NAIT or SAIT who require additional training in reading; supervisory and non-supervisory workers whose first language is not English.
<b>TRAINING FORMAT</b>	Modular training designed for independent study, supplemented with seminars and classroom instruction.
<b>DATES</b>	Program offered year round. Classroom instruction is two evenings a week.
<b>LENGTH OF TRAINING</b>	Five months.
<b>LOCATION</b>	Seminars and classroom instruction are delivered at Bow Valley College, Main Campus.
<b>CLASS SIZE</b>	Five to 20 participants per class.
<b>PRE-TRAINING SKILLS ASSESSMENT</b>	Yes. Bow Valley College assessments are carried out.
<b>COST</b>	Call the Registrar's Office at (403) 297-4040 for the current fee structure. Alberta government assistance may be available to eligible participants.

### For further information on these or other programs or services offered at Bow Valley College, please contact:

Jan Ramsay, Coordinator Extension Programs  
Academic Foundations  
Phone: (403) 297-4872  
Fax: (403) 297-4949  
E-mail: [jramsay@bowvalley.ab.ca](mailto:jramsay@bowvalley.ab.ca)

Visit the Web site – [www.bowvalley.ab.ca](http://www.bowvalley.ab.ca)

*At Bow Valley College, training is a sure investment in a more secure future.*



## Calgary Catholic Immigration Services

Calgary Catholic Immigration Services (CCIS) is a key player in essential skills training for immigrants working or wanting to work in Alberta's construction industry. CCIS takes pride in knowing that the success rate of its trades programs is more than 80 percent and that more than one-third of its graduates have started their own contracting business within the first year of their graduation. It's these kinds of successes that make workers, employers, unions and other labour organizations avid supporters of CCIS and its comprehensive approach to training.



*"I am very satisfied and thankful to CCIS and the government for giving me the chance to take this training course." – Graduate of the Electrician Upgrading and Certification Program now working in electrical maintenance*

What makes CCIS programs so effective is the seamless integration of essential skills instruction with technical theory, shop training and work placement. CCIS practices what it preaches. Its Electrician Upgrading and Certification Program emphasizes teamwork and collaboration, as proven by the strategic partnerships it has with SAIT and employers to deliver it. The well-rounded training creates self-confidence in the participants and makes them eager and ready for jobs as electricians.

### Electrician Upgrading and Certification Program

This program is designed to assist immigrant electricians obtain certification in Alberta. The program has four training components: Intake, Training, Work Experience, and Follow-up. The Intake component involves pre-screening to ensure that participants have the necessary qualifications and the determination to be electricians in Alberta. The Training component lasts 14 weeks. The first phase of instruction occurs at the CCIS Training Centre where participants receive training in Technical Communications, English, math, safety, computer skills and Employability Skills for electricians. The second phase of training takes place at SAIT where participants receive instruction in Alberta's Electrical Code and applied electrical theory. The program covers the material they



will later be tested on to qualify for their Journeyman Certificate. Following the completion of the instructional components of the program, participants are given an eight-week work experience placement with an electrical contractor.

<b>TARGETED PARTICIPANTS</b>	Unemployed immigrants with a minimum of six years' hands-on experience in their country of origin who have completed Grade 10 or its equivalency and have some proficiency in English.
<b>TRAINING FORMAT</b>	Full-time classroom training, supplemented with technical and shop instruction at SAIT and work placement.
<b>DATES</b>	Early April each year.
<b>LENGTH OF TRAINING</b>	22 weeks.
<b>LOCATION</b>	CCIS and SAIT.
<b>CLASS SIZE</b>	15.
<b>PRE-TRAINING SKILLS SCREENING/ ASSESSMENT</b>	Yes. The Intake assessment process takes eight weeks. The program is advertised and an Information Session is held for the purpose of ensuring that applicants have a thorough understanding of how the program works. At this stage, applicants are required to submit the necessary documentation confirming they meet the entrance requirements.
<b>COST</b>	No cost to participants (funded by Alberta Human Resources and Employment).

**For further information on this or other programs and services available from Calgary Catholic Immigration Services, please contact:**

Manager, Business Employment and Training  
 Phone: (403) 290-5769  
 Fax: (403) 262-2035  
 E-mail: ccisbet@cadvision.com

Visit the Web site – [www.cadvision.com/ccis](http://www.cadvision.com/ccis)

*Call Calgary Catholic Immigration Services for essential skills training that works.*



## MCC Employment Development

Back in 1991 when Calgary-based Mennonite Central Committee Alberta opened its Employment Development Office it made a commitment to help bring down the barriers that prevent the unemployed and under-employed from fully participating in the workplace and contributing to the growth of Alberta's economy. They've never looked back. Now known as MCC Employment Development, their story is one of steady, ongoing, quiet success. But don't be fooled by the lack of fanfare because you won't find an organization more committed to the success of their clients.

Now your organization can reap the benefits of MCC Employment Development's years of experience training immigrants and aboriginal men and women for technical and "soft" skills demanded by construction employers today. The two programs described below tell only part of the story of what MCC Employment Development can offer workers and employers.

### Trades Entry Program

Participants in the Trades Entry Program receive 10 weeks of classroom instruction in English, math and science, all with a focus on preparation for the workplace. Instruction is also given in Life Skills, which covers such topics as working in teams, developing positive attitudes, responsibility, building relationships and conflict resolution. The second training component occurs at SAIT, where participants undertake six weeks of technical training related to their trade of choice. The training at SAIT includes safety training and an emphasis on hand skills and practical knowledge. The third and final component is the five-week work experience placement. This enables the participants to apply and practice what they have learned. Employers benefit by having keen workers with enhanced employability skills and recent technical training, whom they can assess first-hand for longer-term employment.

Training is offered throughout the year, with each stream targeted to a specific trade. In 2001 training will be offered in sheet metal, welding, plumbing, machining and carpentry. MCC Employment Development carries out extensive labour market research and seeks input from the construction industry before trades are targeted to ensure that its training programs are meeting the needs of employers and the industry.

"I like welding a lot but never had the chance to get into the trade. MCC gave me my opportunity and opened the door to my future." – Immigrant from Vietnam



<b>TARGETED PARTICIPANTS</b>	Immigrant and aboriginal men and women demonstrating a commitment and determination to having careers in trades that are essential to the construction industry.
<b>TRAINING FORMAT</b>	Full-time, classroom and shop instruction, with built-in work experience component.
<b>DATES</b>	Offered on a continuous basis throughout the year.
<b>LENGTH OF TRAINING</b>	21 weeks.
<b>LOCATION</b>	Calgary.
<b>COST</b>	No cost to participants (funded by Alberta Human Resources and Employment).

### Job Retention Workshops

This is a new program that is proving to be very popular with construction companies and workers. This is not surprising because employers and workers are becoming increasingly aware of the "employability" skills needed to keep a job in today's economy. That's the objective of Job Retention Workshops – to assist employees to adjust to their new jobs, and to enhance their understanding of what is expected of them and what they can expect from their employers. The workshops are just one further step that MCC Employment Development takes to make sure that the training they provide helps their clients to be skilled and productive workers.

<b>TARGETED PARTICIPANTS</b>	Immigrant and aboriginal men and women who have completed the Trades Entry Program.
<b>TRAINING FORMAT</b>	Workshops.
<b>DATES</b>	Offered on a continuous basis throughout the year.
<b>LENGTH OF TRAINING</b>	10 hours.
<b>COST</b>	Varies according to the location of the training and number of individuals taking the training.



“The Trades Entry Program gave me the confidence I needed to believe that I could become a welder and could go to SAIT. Now I’m working really hard to become a Journeyman.” – Aboriginal student

**For further information on these or other programs and services available from MCC Employment Development, please contact:**

Gabriela Townsend  
 Coordinator, Skills Enhancement Training Program  
 Phone: (403) 272-9323  
 Fax: (403) 235-4646  
 E-mail: [gabit@mcca-ed.org](mailto:gabit@mcca-ed.org)

Visit the Web site – [www.mcca-ed.org](http://www.mcca-ed.org)

*At MCC Employment Development, our business is training workers to be all that they can be for themselves and their employers.*





## Metro Community College

Metro Community College – it’s the new name for a well-established and respected training organization formerly known as Continuing Education, Edmonton Public Schools. The new name reflects its expanding role in designing and delivering high-quality training to assist adult learners, especially immigrants, successfully integrate into the workplace in their chosen occupations. At Metro Community College the emphasis is on flexible, customized training to meet individual learning needs. “Gateways to Apprenticeship” is but one of the flagship programs that demonstrate the effectiveness of the personal touch clients receive when they contract with Metro Community College for their training needs. Its expert trainers are always available to provide consulting services to meet specific needs – large and small.



“Gateways to Apprenticeship was directly related to my pre-apprenticeship needs. I got the science, math and work-related English I needed to pass the pre-apprenticeship exam. The teachers were patient and caring and they all wanted me to succeed. The work experience placement was related to my career goal. I got my first-year apprenticeship with the same company where I did my work placement.”

– Graduate of Gateways to Apprenticeship Program

## Gateways to Apprenticeship

Gateways to Apprenticeship is a full-time training program that has proven to be effective in upgrading the English language, math and science skills of workers who already have experience in a trade or who want to become apprentices. Many, but not all, of the workers who take this training program, have had extensive experience in one or more trades in other countries. The program is not restricted to immigrants and typically classes include a diversity of individuals.\*

The program covers a wide range of topics, and includes:

- English language upgrading
- Effective communication skills
- Trades terminology and language
- Pre-trades science, with lab exercises
- Job search and employment readiness
- Preparation for trade entrance exam
- Pre-trades math
- Concepts and formulas
- Problem-solving
- Computer skills
- Safety training

The topics covered in the classroom are supplemented with a five- to six-week work experience placement to give participants an opportunity to apply what they have just learned. This component of the program has worked very well for both participants and employers, who get the opportunity to assess their placements for longer-term employment.

This program should be of interest to employers because it could help some of their employees move into higher skilled jobs within their companies and also provides an opportunity to participate in the work placement component.

\* The English Language Institute at Metro Community College also offers a parallel Gateways to Employment Program for individuals 18 years of age or older who want to work in construction but are not apprenticeship-destined. The Gateways to Employment Program includes a work experience component as well.

<b>TARGETED PARTICIPANTS</b>	Individuals 18 years of age or older wanting a career in construction and who require pre-trades upgrading in English, math, or science, or who could benefit from having some work experience related to their trade of choice.
<b>TRAINING FORMAT</b>	Full-time program consisting of classroom instruction, supplemented with work experience job placement.
<b>DATES</b>	Program is offered three times a year, in early January, in late April or early May, and in September. Applications are accepted year-round.
<b>LENGTH OF TRAINING</b>	An individualized training plan is developed for each participant. The length of training can range from 15- to 30-weeks, depending on the assessment that is carried out of the participant's previous training and education and the results of placement testing.
<b>LOCATION</b>	English Language Institute, Metro Community College in downtown Edmonton.
<b>CLASS SIZE</b>	Average class size varies between 18 and 20 students.
<b>PRE-TRAINING SKILLS ASSESSMENT</b>	Yes. Participants' previous training and education are looked at and placement testing is carried out to maximize success. Participants are assigned a Counselor with Metro College's English Language Institute for the purpose of planning individualized training programs. Participants who require more extensive upgrading may be encouraged to take Metro's Basic Upgrading Program before enrolling in Gateways to Apprenticeship.
<b>COST</b>	Financial assistance may be available for eligible participants.

“When I read about Gateways to Apprenticeship in a Vietnamese newspaper I was happy because I had tried the pre-apprenticeship entrance exam and had been unsuccessful. Although I knew the math, I had trouble understanding the questions. After taking the course for only six weeks, I was able to increase my score by 34 points and pass the exam.”

– Graduate of Gateways to Apprenticeship Program



**For further information on this or other programs and services available from Metro Community College, please contact:**

Jeannette Austin-Odina  
 Student Counselor  
 English Language Institute  
 Phone: (780) 496-1201 or 917-5066  
 Fax: (780) 496-1213  
 E-mail: jaustin@epsb.edmonton.ab.ca

Visit the Web site – [www.metrocommunitycollege.ca](http://www.metrocommunitycollege.ca)

*Metro Community College – it's where your company, labour organization or workers get quality training delivered by experts who care about your success.*



## NorQuest College

The motto at Edmonton’s NorQuest College is “With NorQuest You Can!” and no where is this more true than when applied to its extensive Career and Occupational Training, Academic Upgrading and English as a Second Language programs. NorQuest has been a true leader in the development of innovative essential skills training targeted to the construction trades, working closely with workers, unions and employers to identify emerging needs and effective solutions. Its regularly scheduled programs, consulting services and staff of professional trainers are highly regarded throughout Alberta and beyond its borders. If you demand excellence and training that really works, you’re knocking on the right door when you come to NorQuest College.

### ESL Trades Program

For the past 10 years, graduates from the ESL Trades Program have had a secret advantage as they worked their way through their apprenticeship and looked for jobs – a very high success rate. Last year, for example, 90 percent of the graduates of the program found jobs in their fields. There are three good reasons. The solid training they received enhanced their technical knowledge of their chosen trade (the shop and theory components of the program are taught at NAIT, through a strategic partnership arrangement); it strengthened their basic skills in English, math and science (taught in a classroom setting at NorQuest); and it gave them practical work experience in Alberta through job placement.

The ESL Trades Program has six training components:

- 1 Basic technical English
- 2 Pre-trade math
- 3 Pre-trade science
- 4 Job readiness and employability skills
- 5 Shop and theory (may be generic or trade-specific training)
- 6 Work experience



Graduates from the ESL Trades Program receive a NorQuest College Certificate, a NAIT Continuing Education Certificate, a St. John’s First Aid Certificate, a Construction Safety Certificate, a WHMIS Certificate, and a letter from Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training showing their results on the trade entrance exam.

“ESL Trades gave me the base I needed in English and math to understand the electrical terms and methods I needed to know. The program helped me on the job and in my studies at NAIT.”

– Immigrant from Switzerland taking electrician apprenticeship



<b>TARGETED PARTICIPANTS</b>	Immigrants with some training and work experience in a trade.
<b>TRAINING FORMAT</b>	Full-time, classroom and shop instruction, supplemented with a work experience component.
<b>DATES</b>	Begins in early September and runs to third week in March.
<b>LENGTH OF TRAINING</b>	27 weeks.
<b>LOCATION</b>	NorQuest College in Edmonton, Downtown Campus (Main Building) and NAIT.
<b>ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS</b>	All participants receive a personal interview prior to registration. Participants must have some prior work experience in a trade and have basic math skills and an intermediate understanding of English.
<b>COST</b>	\$1790 (includes tuition and additional supplies). Alberta government assistance may be available to eligible participants.

### Pre-Trades Math and Science Program

This program provides highly focused training to enhance participants' knowledge of the math and science they need to pass the trade entrance exam level 1 or 3. The program is also popular among students who require upgrading in math and science to be successful in more advanced technical training.



*“Our members received one-on-one training they would not have been able to access without the flexibility and patience of the NorQuest literacy consultant. We also really appreciated her help in redesigning our training manuals.” – Boilermaker Training Centre Coordinator*

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**TARGETED PARTICIPANTS**

Workers who have applied for an apprenticeship but need a stronger understanding of math and science, and workers who have scored between 45 percent and 65 percent on the apprenticeship entrance exam and wish to retake the exam.

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**TRAINING FORMAT**

Part-time classroom instruction, three hours per night two nights a week.

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**DATES**

June 18 to August 29, 2001; September 10 to November 21, 2001; January 14 to March 18, 2002; April 8 to June 19, 2002.

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**LENGTH OF TRAINING**

60 hours over 10 weeks.

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**LOCATION**

NorQuest College in Edmonton, Downtown Campus (Main Building).

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**COST**

\$240 for tuition, plus costs for instructional material (approximately \$60). Alberta government assistance may be available to eligible participants.

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### Customized Essential Skills Training Service

Don't worry if the solution to your training needs can't be found in a course or program already developed. No matter how excellent off-the-shelf courses or programs might be, they can't always satisfy everyone's requirements. The training needs of today's workers, labour organizations and employers are simply too diverse. If that's the situation your organization is facing, let the training experts at NorQuest College be your personal expert consultants. They can guide you through the maze of existing training approaches. Even more importantly, they can help you pinpoint what your needs are and design a program that is uniquely suited to your organization.

If customized training is the answer, NorQuest College could be your best bet – just as it has been for a number of unions and employers over the past few years. For example, NorQuest College has been hired by a number of Union Training Centres to provide “just-in-time” training solutions, with always the same outcome – innovative and effective results.

The cost for customized training varies according to the special circumstances and needs of the client. Cost estimates are provided following discussions with the client and a needs assessment.

**For further information on these or other programs and services offered at NorQuest College, please contact:**

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Coordinator, Language Training Programs  
Phone: (780) 415-4512  
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Visit the Web site – [www.norquest.ab.ca](http://www.norquest.ab.ca)

*Call NorQuest College today and let the professionals guide you to training solutions that work.*



## Keyano College

If you're looking for a training organization that has mastered the art and practice of partnering with industry look no further than Keyano College in Fort McMurray. Here you'll find a perfect match between first-rate technical expertise in essential skills training and unsurpassed know-how in applying that expertise to meet the individual needs of companies and labour organizations. Just ask Syncrude Canada. Syncrude partnered with Keyano College to develop and refine workplace-based reading comprehension and math skills programs targeted to the construction trades. And the results are nothing short of astounding – the national award-winning ERIC program (Effective Reading in Context) and the new WIN program (Working in Numeracy).

Today your organization can reap the same proven benefits and success experienced not only by Syncrude employees but the many other organizations who have taken customized training built on the ERIC and WIN programs.

### Collaborative Training

The key to Keyano's success is its collaborative approach. With extensive experience in essential skills training, Keyano's highly regarded professional trainers know that lasting positive training results depend on buy-in across the board – from senior management and supervisory staff, to union representatives and workers. That's why the process for custom designing ERIC and WIN training programs begins with the creation of an Advisory Team comprising representatives from these groups. The Advisory Team serves the all-important purpose of providing overall guidance and securing program support during the design and delivery stages of the training. The end result is customized training uniquely suited to construction.



### ERIC Program

The name says it all – Effective Reading In Context (ERIC). With ERIC, the emphasis is placed on equipping construction workers with the reading strategies needed for increased efficiency with written material. Participants are taught three upper reading processes – how to generalize, synthesize and analyze the materials they encounter at work each day along with a unit on study for life-long learning success. Instructional materials are tailor-made using actual examples from the participants' workplace.

*"I can now cover more written material with ease and present information to my crew in a way they will understand." – ERIC program participant, Operating Engineer, Fort McMurray*



ERIC achieves success by instilling in participants the confidence that comes from knowing what good reading strategies are, how to apply them and how they make workplace reading easier.

ERIC participants:

- Gain greater accuracy in understanding what they are required to read at work (i.e. code books, safety regulations, trade publications, contracts and correspondence);
- Develop confidence to work through difficult or complex written material;
- Gain strategies for better reading retention;
- Learn skills to enhance their ability to locate information efficiently; and
- Gain the ability to synthesize information and effectively pass it on to others.

<b>TARGETED PARTICIPANTS</b>	Non-supervisory and supervisory workers at all levels, in all construction trades.
<b>TRAINING FORMAT</b>	Customized workshops.
<b>DATES</b>	Workshops can be delivered at any time of the year. All workshops have flexible scheduling to accommodate the work schedules of participants.
<b>LENGTH OF TRAINING</b>	Workshops of 8, 28 or 40 hours' duration are offered. Workshops are taught in three- or four-hour time blocks.
<b>LOCATION</b>	Participants' work site.
<b>CLASS SIZE</b>	Each workshop has a maximum of eight participants. However, workshops with fewer than eight participants can be organized. Arrangements can also be made for intensive one-on-one instructional sessions.
<b>PRE-WORKSHOP SKILLS ASSESSMENT</b>	Yes. Workers who are interested in taking this training receive a personal and confidential, two-hour skills consultation/assessment prior to registration to identify their current reading level and the specific reading needs of their jobs.
<b>FOLLOW-UP CONSULTATION</b>	Post-workshop, follow-up consultations are available.
<b>COST</b>	Customized training costs vary, depending on the magnitude of the training provided and the number of participants enrolled. A cost estimate is provided to clients after an assessment of the training needs is completed.



### WIN Program

When it comes to math training for the construction trades, it simply doesn't get much better than WIN (Working in Numeracy) program. The skills taught are relevant to any level of applied math in the construction industry – from rudimentary or basic skills levels to intermediate and advanced levels of proficiency. Training is organized into five modules, beginning with math foundation skills, progressing to instruction in measurement, geometry, data analysis and graphing, and algebraic patterns and functions. Instructional materials are based on the actual workplace needs of the participants. Analyzing math applications and problem solving are common threads throughout the program.

*"I was brought up to speed on math concepts I haven't used in a long time. I also picked up some new ideas on how to approach problems."*

*– WIN program participant, Power Engineer, TransAlta*



WIN participants:

- Acquire the skills they need to achieve accuracy when performing calculations and estimates and are better able to make decisions based on those numbers (i.e. trade-specific calculations and examples, measurement and geometry, business math concepts and statistics);
- Learn and practice math-based problem-solving skills;
- Achieve greater understanding of, and confidence in applying, math formulas;
- Acquire a solid understanding of mathematical data found in documents, charts and from other sources;
- Enhance their ability to transfer the math skills they learn to other situations; and
- Learn strategies for success in mastering more difficult levels of math.

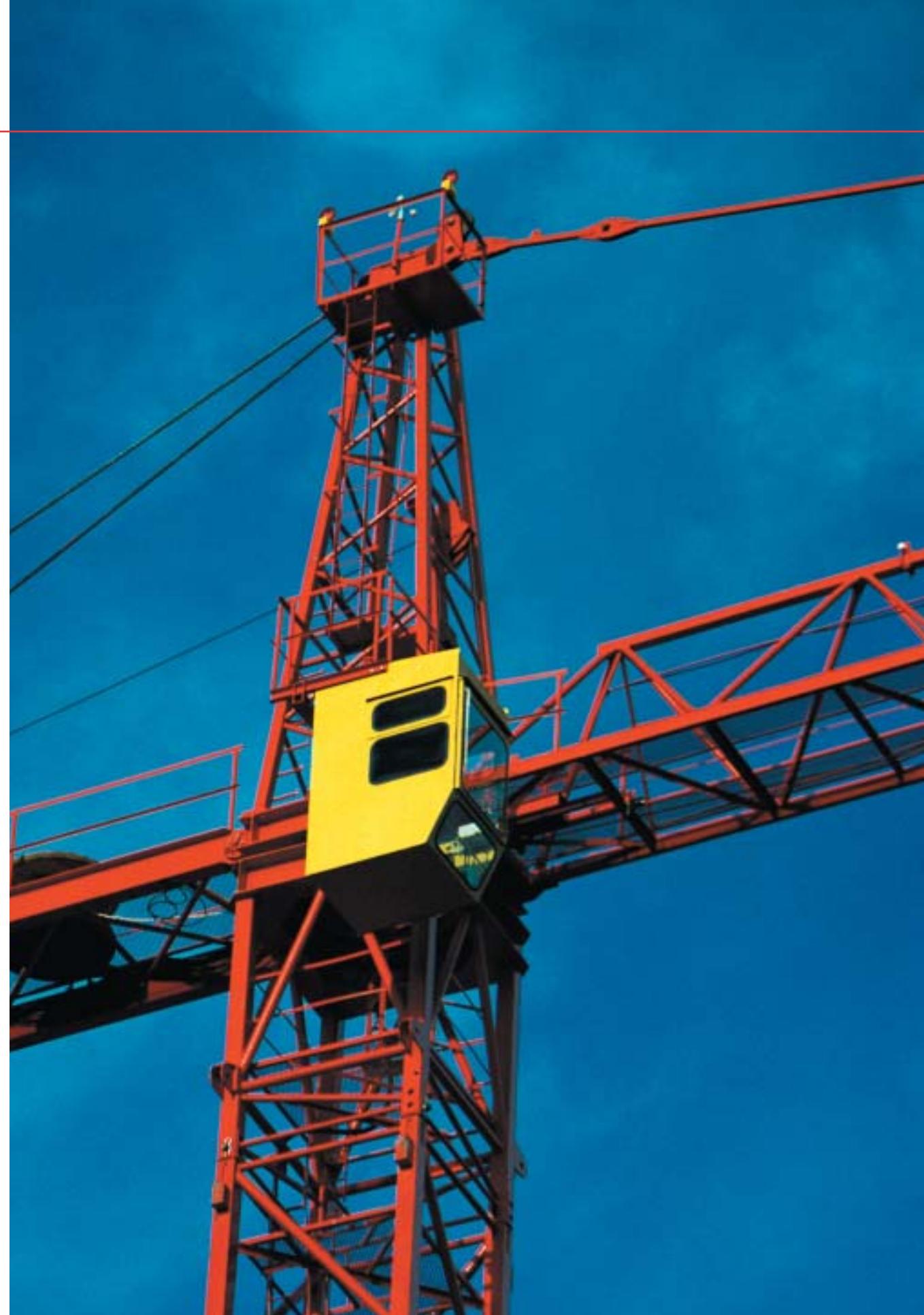
<b>TARGETED PARTICIPANTS</b>	Non-supervisory and supervisory workers at all levels, in all construction trades.
<b>TRAINING FORMAT</b>	Customized workshops.
<b>DATES</b>	Workshops can be delivered at any time of the year. All workshops have flexible scheduling to accommodate the work schedules of participants.
<b>LENGTH OF TRAINING</b>	Each workshop module provides 40 hours of instruction.
<b>LOCATION</b>	Participants' work site.
<b>CLASS SIZE</b>	Each workshop has a maximum of eight participants. However, workshops with fewer than eight participants can be organized. Arrangements can also be made for intensive one-on-one instructional sessions.
<b>PRE-WORKSHOP SKILLS ASSESSMENT</b>	Yes. Workers who are interested in taking this training receive a personal and confidential, two-hour skills consultation/assessment prior to registration to identify their current level of proficiency in math and the specific math skills they require for their jobs.
<b>FOLLOW-UP CONSULTATION</b>	Post-workshop, follow-up consultations are available.
<b>COST</b>	Customized training costs vary, depending on the magnitude of the training provided and the number of participants enrolled. A cost estimate is provided to clients after an assessment of the training needs is completed.

**For further information on these or other programs and services available from Keyano College, please contact:**

Community and Upgrading Education  
 1-800-340-4592  
 E-mail: eric@keyano.ca

Visit the Web site – [www.keyanoc.ab.ca/workforce/reading.htm](http://www.keyanoc.ab.ca/workforce/reading.htm)

*Whether your needs are reading or math focused, ERIC and WIN training can be your sure path to maximizing the full potential of your workforce. Call Keyano College to start the journey now.*



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The COAA Essential Skills Committee is a tripartite group of business, labour and government representatives committed to essential skills training in the construction industry.



For additional copies of this booklet, please call the Construction Owners Association of Alberta in Edmonton at (780) 420-1145 or email [coaa@telusplanet.net](mailto:coaa@telusplanet.net).

