What are Post-Graduate (Post-Grad) Programs?

• Ontario Colleges offer Post-Graduate Programs (also known as Post-Diploma Programs) for students who have already completed a University or College degree or diploma.
• These programs are of relatively short duration (usually 1-2 years of full-time study) and offer intensive training and practical experience in specific career areas.
• Post-Grad Programs can be diploma or certificate programs. Certificate programs are geared more toward individuals who want to continue to work full-time while simultaneously furthering their education in the evening or on weekends.

Why would I want to complete a Post-Graduate Program?

• Post-Grad Programs provide further training in a specific career area, which can help you be more competitive in the workplace.
• Some of this training may be practical (e.g., may have co-op or practical placements as part of the program requirements), which is a nice complement to the theoretical training acquired in university.
• Although many programs include this practical experience option, there is variation in what specific programs offer. Thus, it is a good idea to do your research to determine whether this practical component is included, or whether the other aspects of the program curriculum meet your needs.

Are there any benefits to Post-Grad Programs over Graduate School Programs?

• Post-Grad Programs are one of the types of further education (others are: graduate school; professional school; and a variation of these, called mixed programs).
• Post-Grad Programs tend to be more practical, rather than research-based (a characteristic of graduate school programs).
• A Post-Grad Program may be just as good as a graduate degree, depending on your career area of interest. It is a good idea to do some research before deciding on pursuing any further education—Post-Grad Programs included. This will help you determine which type of educational qualification employers prefer in your career or industry of interest. It will also help you determine which program would be best suited to you, given your interests, strengths and academic background.
• If you are unsure whether further education would be a good idea for you personally, feel free to meet with a Career Counsellor at the Career Centre to help you in making your decision.

What are the admission requirements?

• The main requirement for admission to a Post-Grad Program is completion of a university degree or college diploma.
• Sometimes, your degree/diploma must be in a related area to the Post-Grad Program you wish to pursue, or you may need to have completed related courses during your undergraduate studies (e.g., may need science courses or a science degree/diploma, in order to pursue some healthcare/health science programs).
• Beyond the general requirement for completion of a degree/diploma, check each program’s guidelines about any required courses or areas of study.

What are the admission requirements? (continued)

• With regards to other admission requirements, these differ by school and/or program. Additional requirements may include submission of your:
  • transcript(s),
  • resume,
  • cover letter,
statement of interest in the career area,
writing samples and/or portfolio.

Sometimes, schools may base their admissions decisions on additional factors such as:
• performance in an admissions interview;
• performance on admissions tests (e.g., English language or math);
• level of academic achievement;
• whether you possess special skills relevant to the program (e.g., computer skills);
• whether you have relevant experience.
• Once again, admission requirements can differ widely by school and/or program. Thus, it is a good idea to check the academic calendar or web-site of each school and program for this information.

Where can I find Post-Grad Programs? How do I apply?

• You can search for Post-Grad Programs in Ontario by visiting the Ontario Colleges website at www.ontariocolleges.ca.
• You also apply to programs through the Ontario Colleges website.

What is the deadline to apply?

• Applications are available in October. Although there is no deadline to apply to colleges in Ontario, all applications received on or before February 1st are given equal consideration. Applications received after this date are reviewed on a first come, first-served basis. Please visit the Ontario Colleges web site for further details.

Other ways to continue your education

• Besides Post-grad/diploma programs, you can check the Continuing Education departments at the various universities and colleges in Ontario, such as U of T, York, Ryerson, Sheridan, Humber, etc.
• The School of Continuing Studies web site of the University of Toronto is www.learn.utoronto.ca.
• Some universities offer graduate level certificates/diplomas. You can search for these in the Canadian Universities Database on the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada web site: www.aucc.ca.

Resources and services available to help you do your research

• www.ontariocolleges.ca – Search for and apply to Post-Grad programs in Ontario.
• www.petersons.com & www.gradschools.com - Search for Post-Grad programs at various universities in Canada and abroad.
• Course calendars – Print versions of course calendars of each school are available in our Career Library, or you can access the on-line versions on each school’s web site.
• Career Centre Library & Career Cruising – these print and online resources can help you research careers to determine what education is needed for your careers of choice. Please ask our staff if you would like assistance with these resources.

This tip sheet is intended as a counseling document and the information is subject to change. (Updated June 2011)