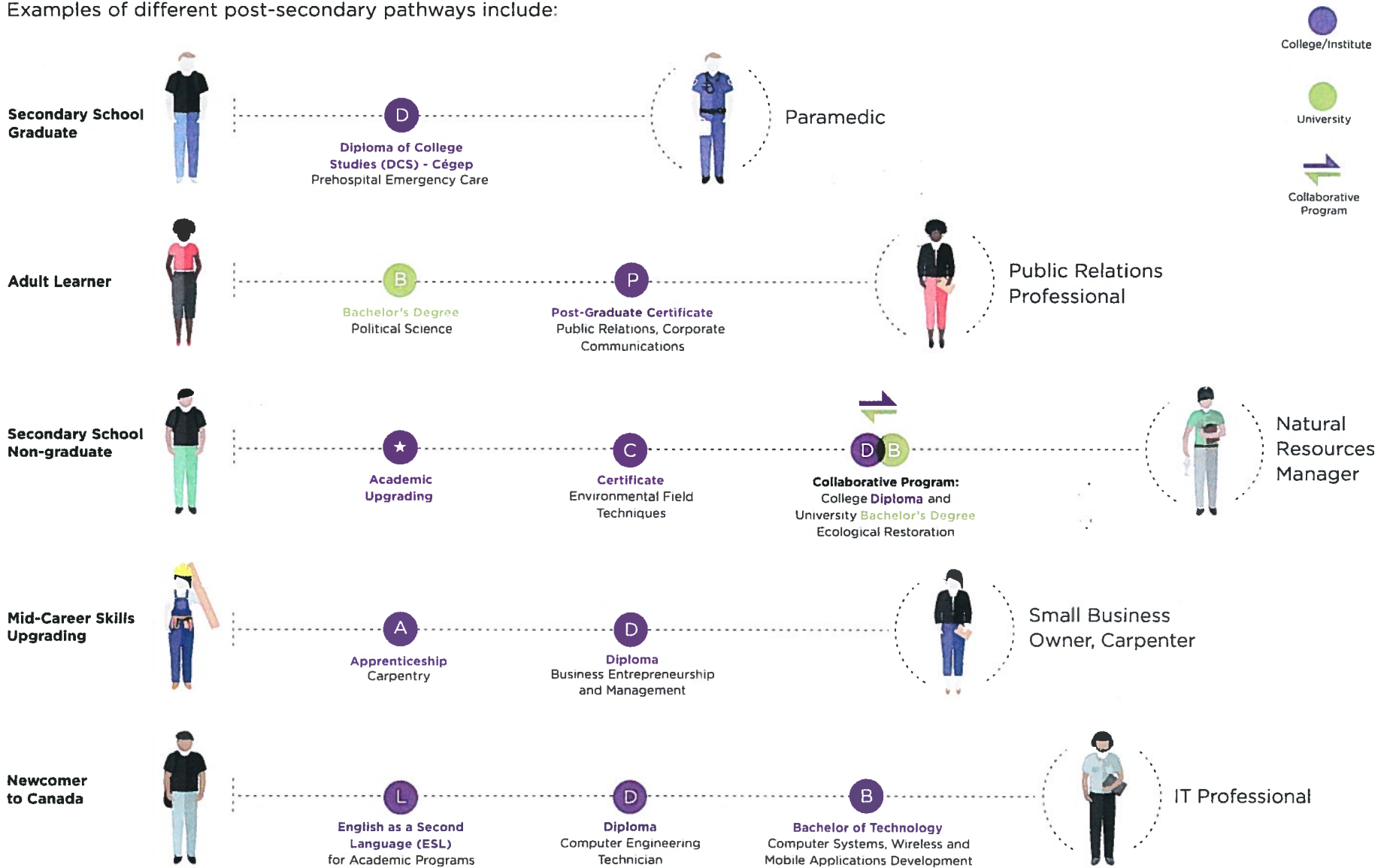


# Post-Secondary Pathways in Canada

## the Role of Colleges and Institutes

Canadians have access to many different pathways to achieve their education and career goals thanks to a variety of widely recognized credentials (degrees, diplomas, and certificates) and flexible points of entry. In addition, thousands of **articulation agreements** between colleges, institutes, and universities **facilitate transferability** between post-secondary institutions.

Examples of different post-secondary pathways include:





# Post-Secondary Credentials in Canada

College/Institute Program

Collaborative Program



**Academic upgrading** programs allow students to upgrade their academic skills in order to meet post-secondary program admission requirements or obtain a Grade 12 equivalency (ACE Certificate). This can range from a single course (one semester of study) to an entire General Education Development or Diploma (GED) or High-School equivalency diploma (one or more years of study). Offerings are either part- or full-time.



**Language training** programs include both general English/French as a second language (ESL/FSL) classes for newcomers to Canada as well as language courses for academic purposes and industry-specific courses for professionals with existing international credentials. Offerings are either part- or full-time.



**Apprenticeship training** is a combination of on-the-job training and classroom training where workers learn the skills required to perform specialized jobs. Colleges/institutes widely offer the in-class component of provincially-regulated apprenticeship programs as well as pre-apprenticeship training. Most apprenticeship programs are four years in length.



**Certificate** programs enable students to master a specialized subject or topic and also offer professional training in a specific field. They are generally geared towards adult students and students looking for short-term training leading to immediate employment. They can be completed in one year or less of full-time study. Part-time options are available.



**Diplomas** are specialized credentials that offer a greater depth of study than certificates. They generally require two years of full-time study, including the Québec mandatory diploma for entry in Québec universities, or three years in the case of an advanced diploma. They often combine work-integrated learning opportunities with classroom study. Part-time options are available.



**Bachelor's degrees** are undergraduate academic degrees awarded following a program of study that usually takes between three to four years. In colleges and institutes, they often combine work-integrated learning opportunities with classroom study. Part-time options are available.



**Post-graduate certificate or diploma** programs are specialty credentials designed to enhance professional skills after completing a post-secondary diploma or bachelor's degree. They are designed to respond to the needs of employers for specialized skills in high-demand occupations and are delivered within a short time-frame, typically one academic year, with no thesis requirement.



**Master's degrees** are graduate level academic qualifications for learners who possess a bachelor's degree and want to specialize in a certain academic area. They usually require some combination of teaching, conducting research, attending courses and writing a thesis, over one to two years of full-time study, or longer if taken part time.



**Doctoral degrees** are advanced academic qualifications for learners who already possess a master's and/or bachelor's degree. This level of specialization requires additional coursework, the passing of comprehensive exams, and the completion of an independent dissertation in the field of study. It typically requires at least four to five years of full-time study.



**Collaborative Programs:** Some colleges/institutes offer joint programs with university partners where the students receive a university credential by completing their studies (in part or entirely) on the college/institute campus. Some colleges/institutes offer collaborative programs with a university partner where students receive two credentials simultaneously: a university degree and a college/institute diploma or certificate. Similarly, there are many program pathways that exist between college/institutes partners.

