

Tips for using the OSP in a Specialist High Skills Major Program

This resource outlines how to use the Ontario Skills Passport (OSP) in a Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) program to help learners understand and value their Essential Skills and work habits. Learners can use the OSP tools and resources to assess, build, document and track their skills and transfer them to further education, training, the workplace and everyday life. These skills can be demonstrated in the classroom, cooperative education and other experiential learning opportunities, Specialist High Skills Major and Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Programs, Community Involvement, volunteer opportunities (e.g. *SpeakUp* and *Students as Researchers* Projects) and extracurricular activities.

Essential Skills are:

- Used in nearly all occupations and in everyday life.
- The foundation for learning other skills, such as technical skills.
- Transferable to further education, training, the workplace and everyday life.

SHSM programs help students develop the Essential Skills and work habits that will prepare them for lifelong success, using the OSP as a planning and documentation tool.

- Students use the OSP to learn about Essential Skills and work habits, occupation-related tasks, and careers relevant to their SHSM.
- Teachers provide students with opportunities to use the OSP to assess, practice and build their Essential Skills and work habits and gather evidence of their demonstration of them during their SHSM experience – in the classroom, in cooperative education and other experiential learning opportunities.
- Students beginning an SHSM cooperative education program will create an OSP Work Plan related to their goals, interests, and particular SHSM sector. The student's work placement supervisor is encouraged to assess and record the Essential Skills and work habits demonstrated by the student, using OSP documentation tools.
- The OSP can also be used effectively in conjunction with experiential learning and career exploration activities. These activities give students opportunities to explore, observe, participate in, and reflect on a variety of sector-specific experiences and careers. They also enable students to increase their awareness of and develop the Essential Skills and work habits required in the sector.

Specialist High Skills Major Policy Implementation, Section A1, p.14-16 © Queen's Printer for Ontario, 2010

Introductory Resources for Teachers and Learners

Website	Location	Description
SkillsZone	SkillsZone Videos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the Discover Your Skills video to see how Essential Skills and work habits are used every day and why they are important. • Use the Make Social Media Work for You video to get an introduction to using social media effectively. • Use the Keeping Safe at Work video to illustrate how workers use their Essential Skills and work habits and exercise health and safety rights to keep safe at work.
SkillsZone	Essential Skills Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the Essential Skills Introduction to view descriptions of Essential Skills, skill levels and see a video clip for each Essential Skill
SkillsZone	Work Habits Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the Work Habits Introduction to view descriptions of work habits and see a video clip for each work habit.
OSP	Skills in the OSP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View descriptions of Essential Skills, skill levels and work habits. • See a video clip for each Essential Skill and work habit.
OSP	OSP News	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check out the OSP News on a regular basis to see what tools and resources have been added to the OSP and/or SkillsZone websites. You can now subscribe to receive the OSP News sent directly to your inbox. • Check out the OSP Testimonials and submit your own skills story!
OSP	Videos of Essential Skills and Work Habits in Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See videos that show how people use Essential Skills and work habits in the workplace and in everyday life. Essential Skills and Work Habits in Action and the Skills Overview video are particularly relevant for use in cooperative education. • Use student worksheets to identify and describe how the skills were used in the videos.
OSP	Search for Tasks in Work, Learning and Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Search for sample tasks that illustrate how people use Essential Skills and work habits in work, learning and life. • Use student worksheets to identify and describe how they are using their Essential Skills and work habits every day in the classroom, experiential learning, at home and the community. Learners can see how they have used their skills in different contexts and gather information to include in their résumés.
SkillsZone	Interactive Learning Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the Skills Pyramid to illustrate how Essential Skills are the foundation for learning other skills, such as technical skills.

Website	Location	Description
OSP	Resources and Links	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access resources such as the OSP Action Plan for Learners (including the Five Key Approaches to Skills Development), the Essential Skills Walkabout and reference sheets.
SkillsZone	Teachers – Introduction and Tips – OSP Training Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers can access training materials that focus on Essential Skills, skill-building activities and work habits. These materials can be adapted for different audiences.

Tip for Introducing Learners to Essential Skills and Work Habits

Write the names of the Essential Skills and work habits on cards. Put the cards in a backpack. Ask students to guess what Essential Skills are used in nearly all occupations and in daily life. Putting the cards in a backpack helps illustrate the concept of transferable skills you take with you wherever you go.

Assess, Practice and Build Essential Skills and Work Habits (Who am I?)

Website	Location	Description
OSP	Assess and Build Your Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners can complete self-assessments of their Essential Skills and work habits and compare their results to occupation(s) relevant to the SHSM. Learners can use activity sets to practice and build their skills.
SkillsZone	SkillsZone Videos – OSP Social Media Resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the OSP Social Media Resource, Module 2 to provide learners with the opportunity to create a great bio to make a terrific impression and to create online content that genuinely reflects who they are while showcasing their transferable Essential Skills and work habits. Use the OSP Social Media Resource, Module 3 to critically review and build their online reputation or “personal brand” so that they stand out from other people who are interested in pursuing the same career and learning or training opportunities.
OSP	SkillsZone Videos – Keeping Safe at Work Facilitator’s Guide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the Keeping Safe at Work Video Facilitator’s Guide to see how workers use their Essential Skills and work habits and exercise health and safety rights to keep safe at work.

Career Exploration (*What are my opportunities?*)

Website	Location	Description
OSP	Assess and Build Your Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare self-assessment results to occupation(s) of interest (Part 2 of the self-assessment tool). • Choose activity sets to help learners practice and build their Essential Skills.
OSP	Search for Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Search for sample job tasks in over 400 OSP Occupational Profiles; get information on career planning, education and training, and employment and volunteer opportunities. • If a specific NOC code is not in the OSP database, teachers can search for tasks in related occupations or go to Human Resources and Skills Development Canada's National Occupational Classification (NOC) for more information.
SkillsZone	SkillsZone Videos – OSP Social Media Resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the OSP Social Media Resource, Module 2, to collect great social proof of their skills and accomplishments using OSP tools and resources such as the OSP Work Plans and OSP Community Involvement Worksheets.

Tips for Integrating the Language of Essential Skills and Work Habits into Classroom Routines

- Display a list of Essential Skills and work habits to reference at any time.
- Ask learners to identify the Essential Skills and work habits they are demonstrating in classroom activities and make relevant school-work-life connections.
- Use [A Guide to Linking the Essential Skills and the Ontario Curriculum 2015](#) to identify and analyze Essential Skills tasks in classroom activities and search for sample activities connected to a variety of courses

The OSP and the Curriculum

Website	Location	Description
SkillsZone	Learning Activities Linked to Essential Skills and Work Habits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access A Guide to Linking the Essential Skills and the Ontario Curriculum 2015 which outlines a two-step process for identifying and analyzing Essential Skills (ES) tasks embedded in classroom activities. • Teachers can use the <i>Guide</i> to create Contextualized Learning Activities (CLAs) that assess, practice and build Essential Skills and work habits and meet curriculum expectations at the same time. • Search for sample activities connected to occupations, SHSMs and courses.

Key findings from the *Curriculum Essential Skills Linkages* Action Research (2009-2011) showed that linking instruction to Essential Skills and work habits and giving students feedback on their skills demonstrations enhanced classroom relevance and student engagement and helped learners make decisions regarding courses, programs, post-secondary pathways and careers.

A SHSM teacher, who participated in this research, provided the following comments about her experiences using these activities and the value of providing feedback on skills demonstrations.

“I believe that the feedback on Essential Skills and work habits was informative and valuable to students. I really enjoyed using the activities in the classroom as they provided increased interest and focus in the content to be learned. Students commented that they were hands-on, real life, interactive and fun! They were able to put themselves "into" the professions and see the connection of what they were learning to the real world.”

Susan Benedetto, SHSM Health and Wellness Health Care Teacher, Waterloo Catholic District School Board (2011)

OSP Tracking and Planning Tools (*Who do I want to become? What is my plan for achieving my goals?*)

Website	Location	Description
OSP	Create an OSP Work Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an OSP Work Plan that focuses on Essential Skills, job tasks and work habits related to a cooperative education placement or other experiential learning opportunities (see attached sample OSP Work Plan). • Employers document learners’ skill demonstrations in the work plan.
OSP	Create an OSP Training Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an OSP Training Plan that focuses on Essential Skills, job tasks and work habits related to learning activities. • Teachers document learners’ skill demonstrations in the training plan.
OSP	Create an OSP Transition Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an OSP Transition Plan to identify opportunities to further develop and/or transfer their Essential Skills and work habits to everyday life and the next place they go – whether it’s further education, training or the workplace. • Use this information to create a résumé and a cover letter that are targeted to a job advertisement and prepare for job interviews.

Website	Location	Description
OSP	Track Your Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the OSP Tracker to track and plan skills development. • Use the <i>SpeakUp</i> Project Worksheet to track skills demonstrations in Community Involvement, volunteer opportunities (e.g. <i>SpeakUp</i> and <i>Students as Researchers</i> Projects) and extracurricular activities. • Keep all OSP documentation in the IPP.
OSP	Introduction & Tips for Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly update the Learner Checklist for using the Ontario Skills Passport (OSP) in Co-operative Education.
SkillsZone	SkillsZone Videos – OSP Social Media Resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the OSP Social Media Resource, Module 4, to find out how to create, build and use their social media network as an important tool for realizing their personal and academic goals.

Create an OSP Work Plan - Tips for Cooperative Education Learners

Creating an Ontario Skills Passport (OSP) Work Plan will help you:

- Discuss your Essential Skills and work habits demonstrations with your supervisor.
- Get feedback on your skills demonstrations and plan for further skills development opportunities.
- Show future employers the tasks you have completed in your cooperative education placement.

Steps to Creating an OSP Work Plan

Create your OSP Work Plan prior to, or within the first two weeks of, starting your cooperative education placement.

1. Go to www.ontario.ca/skillspassport and click on Create an OSP Work Plan in the Learner's section.
2. Follow the steps to create an OSP Work Plan for your cooperative education placement. If you cannot find the exact occupation in the OSP database, you can work with your teacher to choose tasks from related occupations.

Tip: Choose a few skills for your work plan that you really want to develop during the placement.

3. Save your completed OSP Work Plan.
4. Print two copies of the OSP Work Plan. Do not close the document until it is saved and printed.
5. Give one copy to your teacher, and take the second copy to your cooperative education placement.
6. At the beginning of your work placement, present your OSP Work Plan to your supervisor. When you review the work plan with your supervisor, ask him/her to delete or add any other tasks that are relevant in the work plan.
7. During your placement, be open to receiving feedback. Here are some ideas for conversation starters with your placement supervisor:

I want to do a good job in this placement. Do you have a few minutes to talk about my progress?

Which Essential Skills and work habits have I done well with so far?

What should I focus on this week?

Can I check in with you next week to get more feedback?

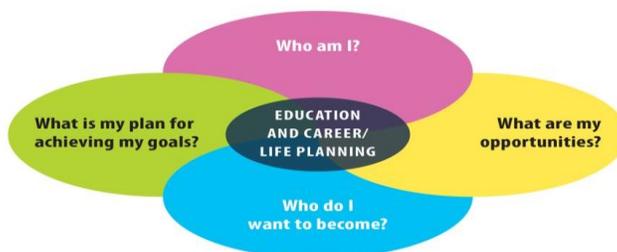
The checklist format of the OSP Work Plan makes it quick and easy for your supervisor to check off the tasks and work habits you have demonstrated at the workplace.

8. Once you have been in your work placement for awhile, you may want to identify other Essential Skills tasks, perhaps at higher skill levels, to perform at your placement. While you cannot “redo” your existing work plan, you can return to the OSP website and create a new page that can be added to the end of your original work plan. Consult with your cooperative education teacher and your supervisor to see if you will have the opportunity to perform these additional “reach ahead” tasks.
9. At the end of your placement, ask your supervisor to complete and sign the OSP Work Plan. Suggest that a photocopy of the signed copy be made and stored in your file at work. Your employer may wish to keep the work plan on hand until you have demonstrated more of the listed skills and work habits.
10. Place the completed, signed copy of the OSP Work Plan in your Individual Pathways Plan.

Tips for Tracking and Planning Skills Development

You are encouraged to:

- Keep your OSP Tracker and other OSP documents in your Individual Pathways Plan (IPP) to track and plan your skills development over time.
- Consider this skills information when making course, program, career and post-secondary pathway decisions as part of your Individualized Pathways Planning process.
- Use this information to conduct job searches, create a résumé and cover letters, and prepare for job interviews.
- Look for opportunities to continuously build your skills and transfer them to everyday life and the next place you go – whether it’s further education, training or the workplace.



Ontario Skills Passport Work Plan



Skills and Tasks

Skill levels are assigned to workplace tasks:

Level 1 tasks are the least complex and level 4/5 tasks are the most complex.

Name: sample

Occupation:

Landscape and Horticultural Technicians and Specialists (NOC Code: 2225)

Reading Text	
Tasks Performed	Check
read short comments on forms and handwritten notes from co-workers, customers and supervisors.(1)	<input type="checkbox"/>
read directions on pesticide and fertilizer labels and in Material Safety Data Sheets for details of handling, mixing, application and first aid procedures.(2)	<input type="checkbox"/>
review specifications written by contractors, architects and designers. For example, read tree planting specifications written by contractors to ensure that provisions have been made for tree protection in landscape architecture projects and landscape maintenance contracts.(2)	<input type="checkbox"/>
read instruction manuals for landscaping equipment and supplies and computer programs. For example, refer to software user manuals to review specific functions or steps needed to create plant images, custom plant care packages and quotations using landscape design software.(3)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Problem Solving	
Tasks Performed	Check
encounter bad weather which prevents landscaping operations from proceeding. Advise supervisors or clients and make schedule changes for the crews.(1)	<input type="checkbox"/>
crews encounter unexpected difficulties such as the discovery of big boulders and tree stumps that are hard to remove. If project deadlines cannot be met, meet with supervisors or clients to outline the difficulties and provide estimates of the additional time and resources required.(2)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Measurement and Calculation	
Tasks Performed	Check
determine the quantities of materials and supplies needed for jobs. For example, determine the number of pesticide capsules needed for a job by totalling the diameters of all trees to be treated and dividing the total by the number of centimetres treated per capsule. Determine the quantity of paving stones in square feet required to meet design requirements. Golf course superintendents may determine the amount of sand needed for bunkers by calculating their areas.(2)	<input type="checkbox"/>
calculate weights and liquid volumes needed to prepare fertilizer, fungicide, herbicide and insecticide mixtures. Perform these calculations using ratios, rates and percentages.(2)	<input type="checkbox"/>
take measurements from landscape drawings to determine location to plant or place shrubs, trees and flowers.(2)	<input type="checkbox"/>
take various precise measurements. For example, take precise site measurements using laser distance and height instruments. Take a series of measurements of diameters of plant stems and tree trunks at precise intervals as specified in manuals of standards using callipers.(3)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finding Information	
Tasks Performed	Check
find information about past landscaping or horticultural activities by searching databases.(2)	<input type="checkbox"/>
find legislation applying to current landscaping projects in building codes, zoning regulations and by-laws.(3)	<input type="checkbox"/>
search a wide range of sources including textbooks, trade publications, scientific journals and suppliers' websites to find information about trees, shrubs, plants, flowers, soils, inorganic materials, fertilizers, fungicides, herbicides, pesticides, treatment techniques and equipment.(3)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Document Use	
Tasks Performed	Check
read lists of names and addresses of horticultural product suppliers.(1)	<input type="checkbox"/>
scan labels on fertilizer, herbicide, insecticide and fungicide containers to find information on ingredients, concentrations, hazard warnings and expiry dates.(1)	<input type="checkbox"/>
check coloured pictures of varied types of diseases to assess the health and conditions of trees, shrubs, plants and lawns.(2)	<input type="checkbox"/>
locate and retrieve data from various tables, schedules and other table-like text. For example, locate information about the composition and health hazard of chemical products on Material Safety Data Sheets and other technical data sheets.(3)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other Tasks	
Tasks Performed	Check

Working Safely	
Description	Check
Working in a manner that prevents injury to self and others	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reporting unsafe conditions	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participating in health and safety training, as required	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using and wearing all required protective equipment and devices	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teamwork	
Description	Check
Working willingly with others	<input type="checkbox"/>
Showing respect for the ideas and opinions of others	<input type="checkbox"/>
Taking responsibility for his or her share of the work	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contributing to the team effort by sharing information, resources, and expertise	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reliability	
Description	Check
Being punctual	<input type="checkbox"/>
Following directions	<input type="checkbox"/>
Giving attention to detail	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using time effectively and producing work on time	<input type="checkbox"/>
Acting in accordance with health and safety practices	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organization	
Description	Check
Organizing work priorities when faced with a number of tasks	<input type="checkbox"/>
Devising and following a coherent plan to complete a task	<input type="checkbox"/>
Revising the plan when necessary to complete a task or to make improvements	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working Independently	
Description	Check
Accomplishing tasks independently	<input type="checkbox"/>
Independently selecting, evaluating, and using appropriate materials, tools, resources, and activities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using prior knowledge and experience to solve problems and make decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>

Initiative	
Description	Check
Beginning and completing tasks with little prompting	<input type="checkbox"/>
Approaching new tasks with confidence and a positive attitude	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seeking assistance when necessary	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self-advocacy	
Description	Check
Asking questions and seeking clarification, where appropriate	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identifying and making use of appropriate resources and support when needed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being proactive regarding individual rights and responsibilities, where appropriate	<input type="checkbox"/>
Customer Service	
Description	Check
Listening effectively to determine and meet clients' needs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interacting positively with both co-workers and clients/customers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Endeavouring to meet and exceed expectations	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creating a positive impression of the company or organization	<input type="checkbox"/>
Entrepreneurship	
Description	Check
Recognizing and acting on opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Showing perseverance	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being innovative and creative	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being versatile and resourceful	<input type="checkbox"/>

Employer Information

Company Name	Supervisor's Name	Phone Number	Email	Duration of Placement

Employer Comments

Employer Signature

Date

<http://www.ontario.ca/skillspassport>