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Skills Training

College of Trades panels had to come first, minister insists

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Apprenticeship ratios and compulsory certification panels will roll out before the College of Trades is up-and-running because they are issues that need immediate attention, says Ontario's minister responsible.

"What we want the college to do, as soon as possible in the early days, is to consider criteria and approaches to these issues," explains John Milloy, Ontario's minister of training, colleges and universities.

"The commitment that we've made to the sector as a whole is to get a set of criteria and principles established so we can then start to look at the specifics."

See: [Minister backs Whitaker as best choice for College of Trades](#)

The recent College of Trades report by Kevin Whitaker delivered a series of recommendations on how to establish the arms-length self-governing institution designed to promote skilled trades and modernize apprenticeship in Ontario. His report recommends a three-phase, 27 month process to get the institution up and running.

"I think he has set out a realistic timeframe but it is a fast timeframe because these are some issues that need attention," says Milloy. "The Whitaker report approach says, 'Let's roll up our sleeves and make this a priority' and start to develop these principles and then, with the adjudicative side, we can actually move sooner rather than later."

The first phase of the college's creation is slated to last 12 months and will see the appointment of adjudicators to the three-person ratio and compulsory status panels.

The ratio-review panel is to begin its work during this phase as well.

In the second phase, the compulsory status review panel is to begin dealing with applications submitted to it. In the third stage, the college will be officially established.

A wide range of construction industry representatives stated they are concerned with the speed that the panels will roll out, citing the years of tension and unsuccessful attempts to resolve apprenticeship-ratio and compulsory-certification issues.

Milloy finds it interesting that early concerns expressed about the college legislation say it will create an institution which is too bureaucratic and also rolls out the apprenticeship and compulsory panels too quickly.

He says the stereotype with bureaucracy is that it moves slowly, but the province wants to see training issues dealt with "as quickly as is practical."

Whitaker determined the three stages based on suggestions through stakeholder consultations, "lessons learned" by other start-up self governing agencies and the challenges of "detangling" functions and programs transferred to the college.

"What we asked Kevin for was timelines that were realistic but also ones that were as rapid as possible. There are a number of issues that need some attention," says Milloy.



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