



ALBERTA
ADVANCED EDUCATION

*Office of the Minister
MLA, Calgary - Bow*

September 20, 2022

AR 63910

Mr. Terry Milot
Chairman
Alberta Trade Contractors Coalition
204, 2725 12 Street NE
Calgary AB T2E 7J2

Hi Terry:

Thank you for meeting with me on August 22 to discuss the Alberta Trade Contractors Council's concerns about apprenticeship and the *Skilled Trades and Apprenticeship Education Act* (STAEA). I am writing today to follow up on the continued suspension of period exams.

In our meeting, you expressed concern that the ongoing suspension of period exams was weakening the standards of apprenticeship, and you were concerned that this topic was not discussed in detail at meetings your council attended related to the implementation of STAEA. I would like to clarify that the decision to suspend period exams for another year was not a result of STAEA implementation. It is a necessary measure to protect the objectivity of the department's planned review of how government assesses apprentices during their apprenticeship.

Regarding apprenticeship standards, post-secondary institutions designing classroom instruction and assessment are guided by the same course outlines (now called curriculum guides) that inform the weightings and content of period exams. Period exams may provide a measure of quality assurance for classroom instruction results, but they do not assess any unique content not already being assessed by instructors. Apprentices are also being assessed by their employers/sponsors/mentors in the on-the-job portion of their training, which accounts for approximately 80 per cent of the training provided in an apprentice education program. I have full confidence in the commitment and ability of instructors and employers to provide comprehensive training and to conduct rigorous assessment of their apprentices.

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Regarding the apprentice assessment review, the preliminary information gathering for this project is now underway. My department staff are collecting and analyzing data such as apprentice completion and progression statistics from before and during the pandemic to see how these rates may have changed. They are also contacting other Canadian apprenticeship authorities to find out how they approach government assessment and quality assurance in their jurisdictions. After the department has finished gathering information, it expects to hold several engagement sessions with key stakeholders, including your council, to review the preliminary findings and discuss possibilities moving forward.

I anticipate that at the end of this review, I will receive a report with recommendations that can be implemented as early as September 2023. I expect to receive that report, which will be well-informed by data and perspectives from stakeholders, by the end of February 2023.

I trust this information is helpful, and I thank you and the Alberta Trade Contractors Council for your patience and willingness to engage with government to help consider important matters like apprentice assessment.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Demetrios Nicolaidis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Demetrios Nicolaidis
Minister of Advanced Education