

## Teaching skilled trades in a digital domain

The COVID-19 pandemic has compelled colleges and universities to embrace teaching delivery methods compatible with digital technology and online modalities so that students can learn from the safety of their homes. Well-designed online learning can be robust, interactive and engaging education within an environment that supports a collaborative learning community.

But how does a college go about teaching the skilled trades, such as aviation technician or auto body repair, solely online? As good as digital simulators are – such as software that can reproduce the task of MIG welding joints precisely – nothing can replace the experience of doing the real thing.

Faculty at Toronto's Centennial College met the challenge of shifting their curriculum online as soon as the pandemic lockdown was declared. Indeed, many of Centennial's full-time programs are exclusively online offerings today in career areas such as accounting and finance, event planning and paralegal.

Centennial's programs with significant hands-on activity offer "hybrid" instruction delivery, which permits lab or studio time on campus in strict accordance with public health protocols. While campuses are essentially closed to visitors, lab participants receive a personal invitation to attend their lab and learn in a tightly controlled environment to ensure personal safety.

Before entering any campus, registered students must complete an online Campus Re-Entry Guidelines and Protocols training course. The web-based module provides basic safety awareness training when on campus, including such protocols as wearing the appropriate PPE, maintaining social distancing and health hygiene practices. After course completion, students provide a proof-of-completion certificate to enter the campus. Students also do a simple COVID-19 pre-screening health assessment each day they attend a lab.

Centennial has made significant investments in the development of quality online courses and provided faculty with the extensive resources and training they need to teach at a distance. Whether by online or hybrid delivery, Centennial's programs in the skilled trades deliver the rich academic content and high quality teaching students need to ensure their future career success.



For more information, please visit [www.centennialcollege.ca](http://www.centennialcollege.ca)

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