



News Release

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SOME PRIVATE CAREER COLLEGES REMAINING OPEN ILLEGALLY: AUDITOR GENERAL

(TORONTO) Some unregistered privately owned career colleges that had been closed by the province continued to operate illegally, Auditor General Jim McCarter says in his *2011 Annual Report*.

Although the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities has taken a number of steps to improve its oversight of private career colleges and strengthen protection for students, more needs to be done, the Report says. For example, the Ministry currently has no procedure for routinely checking to see that colleges that have been ordered closed actually remain closed, and our audit detected instances where some of these colleges appeared to still be offering courses.

“All students and taxpayers must have assurance that those colleges enrolling students are offering registered, recognized, and approved programs,” McCarter said today after the Report was released. “Better oversight by the Ministry will also be a boon to those career colleges that abide by the rules.”

There are about 470 registered private career colleges in Ontario serving 60,000 students. The Ministry does not fund the colleges directly, but it provides significant funding to the sector through its employment training and student assistance programs.

Following are some of the Auditor General’s findings:

- In 2006, the Ministry stopped collecting information on graduation rates and employment upon graduation for private career colleges, something it still does for public colleges. Most of the private career college graduates who responded to a survey by the Office of the Auditor General said such information would have helped them with their choice of college and courses.
- The Ministry is supposed to consider the financial viability of colleges when it processes the colleges’ annual registration applications. However, the Ministry did not have adequate processes in place to do this. One college that posted significant financial losses had its registration renewed with no evidence that the Ministry reviewed its financial viability. The college subsequently closed, costing the provincial Training Completion Assurance Fund, to which registered colleges contribute to protect students in just such an event, more than \$800,000.

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