

Agenda

June 3, 2025

7:30 am – 8:30 am **Registration & Breakfast**

Level 2 Lobby

8:30 am – 9:00 am **Welcome**

Multipurpose Room, Level 2

Master of Ceremonies: **Chloé Roussel**, VP, Public Affairs, Palette Skills
Welcome and Land Acknowledgement: **Stephen Wright**, Acting Dean, University of Toronto Faculty of Arts & Science
Conference Introduction: **Ann Buller**, Interim CEO, Palette Skills

Opening Act

9:00 am – 9:30 am **Morning Keynote**

Multipurpose Room, Level 2

Speaker: **Goldy Hyder**

Start the day with insights from one of Canada's leading voices on economic transformation. Goldy Hyder will explore how shifting economic conditions, evolving policy landscapes, and rapid technological change are reshaping industries and jobs. He'll discuss the critical role of collaboration between government, industry and training providers in building a more adaptive and inclusive workforce.

9:30 am – 9:40 am **The Palette Blueprint: Journey from Potential to Placement**

Multipurpose Room, Level 2

Speaker: **Pallavi Panigrahi**, Product Manager, Learning Sandbox, Palette Skills

This section explores the holistic journey of transitioning untapped, potential-focused talent into high-growth sectors through a collaborative and employer-led approach. The framework will ground the conversations and sessions that follow today.

Act 1: Designing for Emerging Roles

9:40 am – 10:25 am **Panel: Employer-Led Design for Evolving Industries**

Multipurpose Room, Level 2

Moderator: **Christine Stenton**, Senior Manager, Palette Skills Programs

Panelists:

Ashok Kasilingam, Executive Director, M2M Tech

Ed Dawson, Executive Director, Automobility and Innovation, Invest WindsorEssex

Sue Sadler, Senior VP of Services and Program Innovation, ACCES Employment

Justin Burchart, Project Manager for IBM's SkillsBuild program

As AI, technological innovation, and economic shifts continue to transform industries, how can we ensure upskilling efforts keep pace? This panel will explore how employer-led program design can address emerging skill needs and prepare workers for new and evolving roles. Panelists will discuss the real-world challenges of developing training for the jobs of tomorrow – and how deeper collaboration between employers, industry groups, training providers, and policymakers can unlock more impactful, future-focused solutions.

10:25 am – 10:30 am **Break-out Session Introduction**

Level 2 Multipurpose Room

Facilitator: **Christine Stenton**, Senior Manager, Palette Skills Programs

Before we break, Christine will introduce The Industry Validation Process –an interactive session where you'll roll up your sleeves to analyze real labour market data, and identify sector-specific approaches for consulting with industry and shaping a more responsive upskilling strategy.

10:30 am – 11:00 am **Break + Move to Breakout Rooms**

11:00 am – 12:30 pm **Breakout Session: The Industry Validation Process**

Digital Technology: Level 2

Biomanufacturing: Level 7

Advanced Manufacturing: Level 7

Clean Technology: Level 10

Agricultural Technology: Level 10

Cybersecurity: Level 7

In this hands-on session, participants will work in breakout groups and dig into sector-specific scenarios and labour market data, analyze potential hiring trends and skill demands, and identify where further industry consultation is required to help shape upskilling opportunities.

The session will end with a pitch back of key takeaways on the process of conducting industry validation for program design, redesign and iterative development of upskilling programs.

12:30 pm – 1:30 pm **Lunch**

Act 2: From Potential to Workforce Ready

1:30 pm – 1:40 pm **Spotlight Presentation: Empowering Workforce Transformation – Inside the Upskill Canada Hub**

Multipurpose Room, Level 2

Speaker: **Shannon Duguid**, Product Manager, Upskill Canada Hub, Palette Skills

Learn how the Upskill Canada Hub supports workforce transformation by equipping Delivery Partners with the tools they need to help participants move from skills training to employment. This session will highlight key features of the Hub and how it enhances support for Delivery Partners and the individuals they serve.

1:40 pm – 2:10 pm **Fire-Side Chat: Unlocking Talent Through Potential-Focused Recruitment**

Multipurpose Room, Level 2

Moderator: **Lauren Murray**, Senior Manager, Participant Experience, Palette Skills

Panelists:

Zavosh Zaboliyan, Sr. Program Manager, Acceleration, Foresight

Sidney Reid, Chief Operating Officer, Canadian Alliance for Skills & Training in Life Sciences (CASTL)

This panel will explore potential-focused recruitment as a strategy to address hiring challenges during the economic transition. Panelists will discuss the complexities of attracting and retaining the right participants in a landscape where workforce demand and supply vary across sectors, and share innovative approaches to meeting these challenges

2:10 pm – 2:30 pm **Break**



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Act 3: Delivering in a Changing Economy

2:30 pm – 3:15 pm **Panel: Building Agile Pathways to Employment**

Multipurpose Room, Level 2

Moderator: **Ross Hodess**, Manager of External Programs, Palette Skills

Panelists:

Dr. Jeffrey O'Leary, VP, Finance & Learning New Programs,
Canadian Marketing Association

Morag Morison, Program Manager, Digital Agriculture, Palette Skills

Topaz Glazer, Senior Manager, Skills Development, Rogers Cybersecure
Catalyst, TMU

Leslie Fink, Manager, Sector Development Office, Economic Development and
Culture, City of Toronto

In a rapidly changing economy, how can we ensure upskilling programs stay responsive and deliver real results? This panel will explore strategies to strengthen and adapt training initiatives to better support job seekers during periods of transition. Panelists will highlight the critical role of partnership,



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Finale: Humanizing the Metrics

3:30 pm – 3:45 pm **Presentation on RCT Study**

Multipurpose Room, Level 2

Moderator: **Holly Cave**, Delivery Partner Manager, Palette Skills

Presenters:

Robert Tortian, Director, Bridging Services, ACCES Employment

Darian Kovacs, Partner & Principal, Jelly Academy

Sarah Stockdale, Founder & CEO, Growclass

In 2021, thanks to funding from the Future Skills Center, NPower Canada partnered with Blueprint to conduct a randomized controlled trial (RCT) to assess the effectiveness of its programs. RCTs are a rigorous research method and powerful evaluation tool to compare the outcomes of a treatment group, who participate in the program, and a comparison group, who do not participate in the program. In this session, Nisha Lewis will provide an overview of NPower Canada's RCT, share key challenges, lessons learned, and reflections on navigating evidence-building in a mission-driven context.

3:45 pm – 4:30 pm **Panel: Participant Voices – Navigating the Journey to Meaningful Work**

Multipurpose Room, Level 2

Behind every workforce initiative are real people with diverse stories, challenges, and aspirations. This panel shines a light on the lived experiences of participants as they navigate the transition into meaningful careers. Through honest reflections and real-world perspectives, we'll explore how different groups experience workforce programs—and where systems must evolve to offer more inclusive, equitable support. Join us to hear powerful stories that bring the human side of workforce development to the forefront.

4:30 pm **Closing Remarks**