



Job-Ready in 21 weeks with the Telecommunications Installation Technician program

By SAIT Polytechnic

The telecom industry is snapping up installation technicians as fast as SAIT Polytechnic can produce them.

After just 15 weeks of classroom instruction and a six-week industry practicum, graduates of SAIT's Telecommunications Installation Technician program are job-ready for entry-level work installing, maintaining and repairing the infrastructure that underpins modern communications systems.

The pay, though, is much more than typical entry-level. It's not uncommon for technicians to pull down \$50,000-plus in their first year on the job, says Darwin Risdon, the program's Academic Chair.

The scope of the industry – from the World Wide Web, to everything cellular, to cable services – means demand for skilled workers has never been greater, Risdon says.

And it's an exciting place to be.

“So much science and technology has come out of the industry,” says Risdon. “We do things in telecom now that defy the laws of physics as we understood them in the 1960s.”

Risdon predicts the growth will continue at a fast pace the next five to six years. “A big area right now is broadband wireless like 4G cellular and Wi-Fi hot spots,” he says.

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Who’s doing the hiring? Risdon says employers are mainly sub-contractor firms hired by industry giants like TELUS and Shaw to do installations.

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“ATI told us they want 385 technicians in the next year,” Risdon says.

Depending on the position, a technician could be hoisting heavy equipment, climbing up a pole (or down a manhole under the street) and working in all kinds of weather conditions.

Because a lot of installations take place in homes and businesses, customer service skills are essential. Other qualities that spell success for an installation technician are an aptitude for technical work and attention to detail.

“The program deals with some fairly challenging areas, like Internet protocol and electronics.

Technicians must be able to follow detailed diagrams and blueprints,” Risdon notes.

The program is ideal for someone fresh out of high school, new to Canada, or looking to re-train in a new field.

At a program information session not long ago, Risdon spoke with a recent high school graduate now working at a warehouse. “He can’t wait to get into this program and the telecom industry – something that pays well without a lot of training investment time-wise,” Risdon says.

Graduates are eligible to challenge the provincial exam for Periods 1 and 2 of the Communication Technician apprenticeship program. They can also receive advance credit in SAIT’s Information Technology diploma program – Network Systems and Telecom Systems majors.

Marcel Epanya, 46, is in the final weeks of his practicum with ATI. Originally from Cameroon, he jumped at the chance to take the training.

“It’s a very good program for immigrants,” says Epanya. “You get trained for a good job in a short time.”

Epanya has passed the Period 2 apprenticeship exam, which puts him halfway to earning his journeyman certification. “I want that qualification,” he says.

To enter the program, applicants require Alberta Grade 12 math or a pass mark on the Alberta Apprenticeship Trade Entrance Exam and must be able to lift loads up to 30 kg. The program qualifies for student loan and Skills Investment Program funding.

To learn more about the Telecommunications Installation Technician program; contact

403.284.8962, email, ict.telecom@sait.ca or visit <http://sait.ca/pages/cometosait/apprenticeships/ApprenticeshipPrograms/atint.shtml>. Next classes start in September.

As Canada’s leading polytechnic, SAIT is world-renowned for its training expertise and is the leading provider of skilled employees to the energy sector and other industries. SAIT Polytechnic delivers relevant, skill-oriented education to 70,000 registrants annually. SAIT offers two full baccalaureate degrees, four applied degrees, 66 diploma and certificate programs, 32 apprenticeship trades and 1,600 continuing education and corporate training courses. SAIT works closely with industry to ensure graduate success. The class of 2010 has a 93 per cent employment rate. **IPSOI**

A PROMISING CAREER IN A HIGH-DEMAND INDUSTRY

The Telecom Installation Technician program at SAIT Polytechnic is the perfect option to learn the fundamentals of the telecom industry. This 21-week pre-apprentice program is the ideal opportunity to provide you with the job skills and experience needed to gain employment and prepare you for an entry-level career in the Telecom industry.

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