

Dept. of Workforce Development: Wisconsin Apprenticeship partners with UW-Stout on new program

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MADISON – The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) and the University of Wisconsin-Stout (UW-Stout) are partnering on a first-of-its-kind program in Wisconsin to combine instruction at a four-year college with a Registered Apprenticeship program. The new [Workforce Development Specialist Certificate program](#), also known as the Train the Trainer apprenticeship, started this fall to teach students about employment and training solutions that meet the needs of businesses and workers.

UW-Stout is the first four-year university collaborating with Wisconsin Apprenticeship since apprenticeship began in 1911 to offer classes that fulfill instruction requirements for a Registered Apprenticeship and could be credited toward an undergraduate or graduate degree program. The three-class online program teaches students ways to design, develop, implement, and evaluate training and development solutions.

“Wisconsin apprenticeship provides access to the training needed to pursue the high-quality, family-supporting jobs our residents need to be successful, and we are excited to partner with UW-Stout on this new opportunity,” DWD Secretary Amy Pechacek said. “This is an example of how Wisconsin Apprenticeship applies innovation to meet workforce needs after more than a century.”

UW-Stout Chancellor Katherine Frank said this apprenticeship aligns with the university’s tenets of applied learning, career-focused education, and collaboration with business and industry, all with an aim to support state workforce development.

“As Wisconsin’s Polytechnic University, UW-Stout leads the way in building new partnerships with business and industry and identifying flexible pathways for students to both contribute to and build capacity within Wisconsin’s workforce,” Chancellor Frank said. “The Workforce Development Specialist Apprenticeship program provides students with a direct pathway to bachelor’s and master’s degree program options and produces experts to help support professional development and advancement in the workforce.”

“Apprenticeship continues its leadership as a proven and time-tested solution to meet the needs of employers and people seeking good jobs,” said David Polk, Director of the Wisconsin Apprenticeship. “While traditional apprenticeship programs continue to grow, many other industries are finding value in apprenticeships.”

UW-Stout Assistant Professor Dr. Kelly Droege, Director of the Master of Science Training and Talent Development program, noted the differences between traditional apprenticeships, which combine related instruction and on-the-job training in a formal skilled trades program, and this one.

“This apprenticeship moves beyond the trades. It may be the leading edge of a wave of nontraditional, online programs in which participants earn as they learn. The Workforce Development Specialist apprenticeship will prepare individuals to train and develop the workforce for critical jobs that many businesses across the country are having trouble filling or retaining top talent,” Droege said.

About Wisconsin Apprenticeship

Wisconsin’s Registered Apprenticeship program is an earn-while-you-learn model that connects apprentices with high-skill, high-wage employment with sponsors across the state. In addition to learning the hands-on skills of the occupation from the sponsoring employer, apprentices gain knowledge specific to the occupation through an area technical college or private training center. A key component of apprenticeship is employment, and there is no apprenticeship without a respective job opening.

Learn more: [Workforce Development Specialist program](#) or [Wisconsin Apprenticeship](#)