

MEMORANDUM TO: Employment Service Providers

FROM: Jacqueline Cureton
Director, Program Delivery Support Branch

DATE: April 6, 2017

MEMO#: SC 2017-01

RE: **Second Career: Eligibility of Training**

OBJECTIVE:

The purpose of this bulletin is to provide your organization with information about eligibility of training under the Second Career (SC) program.

BACKGROUND:

In 2008, the ministry implemented the SC program to help laid-off, unemployed workers make the transition to new careers in growing areas of the economy.

- The objective of the program continues to be providing laid-off, unemployed individuals with skills training to help them find employment in occupations with demonstrated labour market prospects in Ontario.
- The intention of the program is to return individuals to employment by the most cost effective path.

Single skill courses or a continuing education program can be taken to build on a career, education or training that an individual may already have. Any recommendation regarding SC support must be based on a thorough assessment and must move the client forward on their path to employment by the most cost effective route.

Single Skill Training

A single skill course may be eligible if it otherwise meets the definition of skills training in Section 2.5 of the SC Guidelines. Section 2.5.1.5 of the guidelines states: "A single skill course may be considered for those individuals who have appropriate experience or have completed elements of skills training which have been assessed by a training

institute to provide individuals with advance standing. Successful completion of the single skill course must lead directly to employment and provide individuals with a certificate or diploma for the program upon completion.”

In general, an academic course is a unit of teaching that typically lasts one academic term, is led by one or more instructors (teachers or professors), and has a fixed roster of students. A single skill course is a course, group of courses, or module that assists clients in learning a single skill that will help them to return to employment. A single skill course can be distinguished from a program of study which focuses on a body of knowledge rather than a single skill. It is expected that the single skill course plus an individual’s existing knowledge/credential will lead them to employment. For example, a laid-off experienced technician wanting to improve employability can learn about a new piece of equipment or green technology that is in demand in their industry.

The phrase “must lead directly to employment” does not require that the applicant produce a job offer from an employer. Rather, it emphasizes the importance of good labour market prospects for the occupation in which training is being requested. It also emphasizes that the Employment Service assessment must identify skills training as the applicant’s barrier to employment. This is especially important if training is in an occupation from which the individual was laid off.

As a reminder, the requirements for evidence of good labour market prospects are outlined in the Eligibility section on the Information Sheet of the SC Application for Financial Assistance as well as in the SC program guidelines as follows:

- The occupation is on the list entitled Labour Market Indicators for SC (refer to EOPG website); or
- Submission of currently advertised job opportunities; or
- Submission or attestations from employers that they are hiring for the occupation; or
- Evidence of future job opportunities (e.g. future plant or office expansion, new employer).

The minimum number of advertised job opportunities or employer attestations required is:

- Communities with a population under 100,000: One (1)
- Communities with a population between 100,000 and 500,000: Two (2)
- Communities with a population over 500,000: Three (3)

Job advertisements should align with a client’s experience upon completion of training. For example, a job advertisement requiring 3 to 5 years of work experience would not be valid evidence for a client graduating with little or no work experience in that occupation.

Continuing Education Programs

Continuing education and part-time programs are defined by each educational institution. As with single skill courses noted above, recommendations for these types of programs must be based on a thorough assessment and lead to employment as per the objective of SC. According to Section 2.5.1.3 of the SC Guidelines, part-time skills training is allowable under the following conditions:

- A ministry contribution for the cost of tuition and other instructional costs will be determined according to individual assessments based on annual gross household income. In some cases, clients will contribute to these costs.
- Basic living allowance and other supports will not be provided during part-time training. Based on an individual financial needs assessment, exceptions can be made for persons with disabilities who cannot attend full-time skills training as a result of their disabilities.

Section 2.5.1.4 of the SC Guidelines states that correspondence/online/distance skills training can be considered for the SC program and should be carefully assessed on a case by case basis. This applies to continuing education programs as well. These types of skills training alternatives must take place in a structured and interactive environment where benchmarks and timelines for completion exist. Skills training start and end dates must be clearly identified. Approval of these types of programs must not exceed the duration of similar programs which would be offered in a classroom type setting. The following considerations should be taken into account before a recommendation is made:

- Availability and accessibility of other training institutions and training methods;
- Industry recognition of certification and training provider;
- Ability/motivation of individuals to work independently;
- Suitability of this skills training method to individual learning styles; and
- Whether training institutions will offer ongoing assistance to individuals and monitor progress.

NEXT STEPS:

When assessing the eligibility and suitability of an applicant who is pursuing training in a career that isn't new to them or the eligibility of a correspondence/online/distance or continuing education program, please ensure that the skills training:

- Addresses their barrier to employment; and
- There is evidence of good labour market prospects; and
- Meets all requirements outlined in the SC Guidelines; and
- Returns the individual to employment by the most cost effective path; and
- Is financially and otherwise feasible for the individual.

Thank you for your continued efforts in helping the ministry deliver the SC program. If your organization has any questions regarding this update, please contact your Employment and Training Consultant (ETC).

Jacqueline Cureton
Director