

Second Career Operational Guidelines for Service Providers

These Second Career (SC) Operational Guidelines are effective **June 8, 2010**. In order to simplify the delivery of Employment Ontario (EO) skills training programs, the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) will administer both SC and Ontario Skills Development programs (OSD) in accordance to these Operational Guidelines. Individuals will be able to apply for short-term (under six months) or long-term (up to 24 months) training.

This document replaces the **November 2009** version of the Second Career Operational Guidance to Service Providers.

SECOND CAREER OBJECTIVE

The objective of Second Career is to support laid off, unemployed individuals who require skills training to assist them to find employment in occupations with demonstrated labour market prospects in Ontario. The ultimate goal of SC is to return individuals to employment by the most cost effective path.

EMPLOYMENT NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND RETURN TO WORK ACTION PLAN (RTWAP)

All individuals interested in skills training must meet with staff at an assessment centre and complete a thorough employment needs assessment and exploration of the full range of EO and other community employment programs and services. It is important to note that SC is one of many EO options; referral to SC should be carefully considered.

Through the employment assessment process, individuals will develop a mutually agreed upon Return to Work Action Plan (RTWAP) or Employment Service Plan (ESP) with staff at an assessment centre. If skills training is identified as the most appropriate way to address individuals' employment needs to help them find sustainable employment, it must be specified in the RTWAP or ESP.

For consideration under the SC program, individuals must also be assessed on the SC eligibility and suitability requirements below. Staff at an assessment centre must use the Second Career Eligibility and Suitability Assessment Template (see Appendix A) to assess individuals against SC suitability criteria. The completed template must be included with individuals' SC application. (It is recognized that there may be some overlap with information required for the employment needs and the SC suitability assessments.)

CONSIDERATION FOR APPROVAL FOR SC SUPPORTS

There are three distinct and incremental levels of assessment to determine participation in the SC program:

1. Eligibility – Determines if an individual meets the baseline requirement for further assessment and consideration
2. Suitability (Relative need/priority for training) – Determines if an eligible individual meets the recommendation threshold for financial assessment
3. Financial Need – Determines the amount of financial assistance an eligible and most suitable individual will receive through the SC program.

As noted above, assessment centres are responsible for assessing individuals against the SC eligibility and suitability requirements outlined below.

MTCU is responsible for reviewing the eligibility and suitability assessment submitted by an assessment centre as well as assessing the financial need of individuals.

All training requests under Second Career must comply with the guidelines outlined in the Second Career Skills Training section.

Note: Eligibility requirements must be met. Flexibility for suitability determination and financial need may be considered at the discretion of the Regional Director.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible, individuals must:

- have been laid-off on or after January 1, 2005; and
- be unemployed; and
- demonstrate occupational demand for the training request with evidence of good employment prospects locally or within Ontario.

For the purposes of SC, “laid-off” individuals also includes:

- those individuals whose employment contract has ended.
- those individuals who have received Employment Insurance maternity or parental benefits and are seeking to re-enter the labour force.
- those individuals who have left work due to medical reasons.

For the purposes of SC, “unemployed” includes individuals:

- working less than 20 hours per week.
- who may have taken an interim job to make ends meet after their initial lay-off.
- on salary continuation or who have received severance pay.

An “interim job” is a job that a laid-off individual has taken while seeking better employment. It must be a low wage (i.e. below \$423/wk based on a Statistics Canada Low Income Cut-off or LICO threshold) and low skill level job (i.e. NOC D of the Statistics Canada NOC Skills Matrix). These jobs may be full-time, part-time, seasonal, or contract work. An individual working in an interim job may request an Authorization to Quit (ATQ) from MTCU if she/he deems it necessary to be able to participate in full-time SC training. The ATQ process protects the individual’s entitlement to receive EI benefits now or in the future.

Evidence of good employment prospects includes one or more of the following:

- the occupation is on the list entitled Labour Market Indicators for Second Career (see Appendix B); or
- submission of currently advertised job opportunities; or
- submission of 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 as follows:

Communities with a population under 100,000	One (1) job opportunity or employer attestation
Communities with a population between 100,000 and 500,000	Two (2) job opportunities or employer attestations
Communities with a population over 500,000	Three (3) job opportunities or employer attestations

SUITABILITY

Individuals must meet the eligibility requirements to be assessed for SC suitability.

Assessments centres must use the Second Career Eligibility and Suitability Assessment Template to complete the process.

Model:

The assessment and decision model determines who is most suitable for SC. It:

- Prioritizes applicants based on transparent, consistent and measurable criteria.
- Combines and balances the needs of the individuals laid-off with the demands of the economy for labour in emerging and growth sectors and/or a more highly skilled workforce.

Individuals are assessed against seven criteria, each of which has two or three measurably different indicators of suitability. The criteria are based on the needs of the individual and demands of economy for labour. The criteria reflect characteristics, experiences and barriers that demonstrate whether SC training is appropriate for individuals.

Those individuals who meet the baseline score will be considered suitable for SC. Individuals who score below the baseline must be redirected to other Employment Ontario (EO) and community programs and services. Exceptions may be considered at the discretion of the Regional Director.

Suitability Criteria:

1. Active Job Search

Duration of job search and the dedication of time and effort to preparing (e.g. the creation of resume and cover letters, interview practice, compilation of references, etc.), researching (e.g. review of job postings, utilization of job-finding clubs, attendance at job fairs, etc.) and pursuing work (e.g. cold calling, applying to known and hiring employer, volunteering, etc.) for employment in fields related to an individual's work experience, skills, education and training.

Documented evidence of job search is required. A client's participation at an Action Centre is considered evidence of active job search.

- More than 26 weeks
- 13 to 26 weeks
- Less than 13 weeks

Time spent in an "interim or survival job" may be included in job search time, if documentation of job search is provided.

2. Duration of Unemployment

The number of weeks an individual has been out of work based on lay-off date.

- Over 26 weeks
- Between 13 – 26 weeks
- Under 13 weeks

Time spent in an "interim or survival job" is included in the duration of unemployment.

3. Educational Attainment

The highest education level the individual has completed.

- High school completion or less; or post-secondary completion not recognized in Ontario
 - Please note that high school completion or less is recorded if an individual's highest level of education completed is an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) or equivalent, e.g. the General Educational Development (GED), or the equivalent in other jurisdictions, or any amount of secondary schooling up to that point.
 - Postsecondary completion not recognized in Ontario - The individual has documentation that indicates that the relevant professional associations and/or professional bodies do not recognize his/her credential.

- High school completion with some post-secondary; or some apprenticeship training
- Post-secondary completion; or apprenticeship completion (Certificate of Apprenticeship or Certificate of Qualification)

4. Work History

Duration an individual has worked in same occupation.

- More than 7 years
- 3 to 7 years
- Less than 3 years.

5. Labour Market Prospects

Credential/license may or may not be required for chosen employment. Individuals demonstrate greater suitability if they must have a credential in order to obtain work.

6. Type of Training

Skills training that leads to a credential and meets additional SC skills training considerations.

- Occupationally-specific training in NOC B or C (of the Statistics Canada NOC Skills Matrix 2006) and best training delivery/cost option.
- Upgrading/language training to qualify for occupationally-specific training in NOC B or C.

Individuals must research at least three training institutions (including at least one College of Applied Arts and Technology), if feasible, and consider the cost effectiveness of training. An exception based on feasibility might include the lack of training institutions within commuting distance.

Cost effectiveness involves several considerations such as the cost of tuition, duration of training (e.g. a longer training duration would require more basic living allowance), location of training and most direct route (e.g. direct participation in occupational training versus upgrading to lead to occupational training).

7. Experience - Occupational Skills

Extent of skills and experience individuals possess that are relevant to the current labour market and available opportunities; need for retraining.

- Work experience in NOC D occupations and there are few opportunities for sustainable, long-term employment; and/or a disability prevents the applicant from using existing occupational skills
- Work experience is in NOC B and/or NOC C occupations and there are few opportunities for sustainable, long-term employment; and/or a disability prevents the applicant from using existing occupational skills

Suitability Decision:

The assessment criteria enable flexible, multi-faceted and defensible evaluation of an applicant's need for Second Career. Building on the assessment, the decision model establishes a consistent baseline standard for SC suitability.

The baseline or threshold is 16. (It is based on analysis of typical individual scenarios and profiles.) Individuals who score 16 or higher on the combined suitability criteria are considered suitable for SC.

Individuals who do not meet the SC threshold may be considered under exceptional circumstance, at the discretion of the Regional Director. Applicants allowed under this exception must still meet SC eligibility requirements and be assessed for financial need.

All exceptions must be approved by TCU.

SECOND CAREER SKILLS TRAINING:

Allowable training includes skills training for specific occupations and academic upgrading, literacy/numeracy and English or French as a Second Language training for labour market destined individuals (if it leads to occupational skills training or a specific employment opportunity and is not an end in and of itself).

Skills training is allowable for NOC Skill Level B and C (of the Statistics Canada NOC Skills Matrix) occupations and equivalent with good employment prospects in Ontario.

Both short-term (i.e. under 6 months) and long-term skills (i.e. up to 24 months) training are allowable. The maximum duration cannot exceed 2 years (24 months), excluding a maximum of one year (12 months) for academic upgrading or language training. For persons with disabilities, both the academic upgrading and skills training duration may be extended to meet the special needs of this target group, and if required the current maximum agreement of \$28,000 can be exceeded.

All training must lead to a certificate or diploma as defined in the Ontario Qualifications Framework.

Additional Second Career Skills Training considerations:

- Private Career Colleges [PCCs] must be compliant with the *Private Career Colleges Act, 2005*, in order to be considered as a training institution for the purposes of Second Career. This means that a PCC must be registered and the course or program must be approved by MTCU unless the PCC is exempted from one or both of these requirements under the Act. The course or program must be vocational in nature even if it is exempted from requiring MTCU approval under the Act. Individuals enrolled in a course or program that is exempted must be made aware that they are not entitled to student protection measures under the Act.
- A single skill course may be considered for those individuals who have appropriate experience or have completed elements of training, assessed by a training institute to provide the individual with advance standing. Successful completion of the single skill course must lead directly to employment and provide the individual, upon completion, with a certificate or diploma.
- “Combination” courses for skills training are allowable at the discretion of MTCU taking into account local labour markets and employer needs.
- Part-time academic upgrading and skills training is allowable:
 - A MTCU contribution of a maximum of 100% of tuition and other instructional costs will be provided. Individuals will be assessed based on their annual gross household income to determine their level contribution based on the Contribution Chart.
 - Basic Living Allowance (BLA) and other supports will **not** be provided (with exception of disability costs).
 - Individuals are responsible for contacting Service Canada to ensure they are fulfilling EI Part 1 obligations.
 - Working less than an average of 20 hours per week or in an interim job would still enable individuals to be considered for SC. These situations must be reviewed on a case by case basis.
- University training will not be considered.
- Individuals who, regardless of funding source (e.g. self funded, funded by MTCU), have completed a skills training program in the last two years (i.e. 24 months) are not eligible for further funding for skills training. In exceptional cases (e.g. medical reasons), an individual who cannot pursue employment in the occupation for which they were trained may be considered prior to the end of the two year period. These cases must be approved by MTCU.

FINANCIAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Individuals who meet the eligibility criteria and obtain the baseline suitability assessment score are then assessed to determine financial need. MTCU is responsible for completing the financial assessment.

The financial assessment model considers:

- Household income.
- Living expenses. Maximum amounts have been placed on a number of expense categories (e.g. rent, telephone, hydro, heat, and dependant care).
- Course and incremental costs:
 - Tuition fees for College of Applied Arts and Technology (CAAT) programs are set in accordance with MTCU fee guidelines.
 - Tuition fees for PCC programs will be supported based on actual costs up to a maximum of \$14/hour and a total maximum amount of \$10,000. Exceptions to the \$14/hr maximum include:
 - Heavy Equipment Operator related programs - \$55/hr
 - Truck Driver related programs - \$40/hr
 - Welding related programs - \$25/hr(For these exceptions, tuition fees will be supported to a total maximum of \$10,000)
- Costs associated with disability needs.

The \$28,000 maximum for individual support does not include costs for disability accommodation, dependant care, living away from home, and all costs related to academic upgrading.

Mandatory client contributions towards course and incremental costs are required from all clients that are in excess of an amount over the LICO (Statistics Canada 2008) base for the household size.

CLIENT FINANCIAL HARDSHIP

TCU has the capacity to address a client's financial situation which may prevent him/her from participating in the program. TCU will take into consideration the client's financial hardship by exercising flexibility in all areas including eligible expenses, cost categories and the amount of client contribution. Exception allowances that address a client's financial hardship situation may be considered at the discretion of the Regional Director

SECOND CAREER FORM AND CONTRIBUTION AGREEMENT

MTCU will use the SC Application form and the SC Contribution Agreement for all individuals.