Social Service Worker-Gerontology Program Standard

The approved program standard for all Social Service Worker-Gerontology programs of instruction leading to an Ontario College Diploma delivered by Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (MTCU funding code 50728)

Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
March 2007
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Inquiries regarding specific Social Service Worker-Gerontology programs offered by colleges of applied arts and technology in Ontario should be directed to the relevant college.

This version replaces the program standard released in June 1997. Inquiries regarding this program standard should be directed to the address noted above.

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- The Committee of the Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC) and of Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) for the use of its definition of Essential Employability Skills (EES).
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I. Introduction

This document is the Program Standard for all Social Service Worker-Gerontology programs of instruction leading to an Ontario College Diploma delivered by Ontario colleges of applied arts and technology (MTCU funding code 50728). This version replaces the program standard released in June 1997.

Development of System-Wide Program Standards

In 1993, the Government of Ontario initiated program standards development with the objectives of bringing a greater degree of consistency to college programming offered across the province, broadening the focus of college programs to ensure graduates have the skills to be flexible and to continue to learn and adapt, and providing public accountability for the quality and relevance of college programs.

The Colleges Branch of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities has responsibility for the development, review, and approval of system-wide standards for programs of instruction at Ontario colleges of applied arts and technology.

Program Standards

Program standards apply to all similar programs of instruction offered by colleges across the province. Each program standard for a postsecondary program includes the following elements:

- **Vocational standard** (the vocationally specific learning outcomes which apply to the program of instruction in question),
- **Essential employability skills** (the essential employability skills learning outcomes which apply to all programs of instruction), and
- **General education requirement** (the requirement for general education in postsecondary programs of instruction).

Collectively, these elements outline the essential skills and knowledge that a student must reliably demonstrate in order to graduate from the program.

Individual colleges of applied arts and technology offering the program of instruction determine the specific program structure, delivery methods, and other curriculum matters to be used in assisting students to achieve the outcomes articulated in the standard. Individual colleges also determine whether additional local learning outcomes will be required to reflect specific local needs and/or interests.
The Expression of Program Standards as Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes represent culminating demonstrations of learning and achievement. They are not simply a listing of discrete skills, nor broad statements of knowledge and comprehension. In addition, learning outcomes are interrelated and cannot be viewed in isolation of one another. As such, they should be viewed as a comprehensive whole. They describe performances that demonstrate that significant integrated learning by graduates of the program has been achieved and verified.

Expressing standards as learning outcomes ensures consistency in the outcomes for program graduates, while leaving to the discretion of individual colleges curriculum matters such as the specific program structure and delivery methods.

The Presentation of the Learning Outcomes

The learning outcome statement sets out the culminating demonstration of learning and achievement that the student must reliably demonstrate before graduation.

The elements of the performance for each outcome define and clarify the level and quality of performance necessary to meet the requirements of the learning outcome. However, it is the performance of the learning outcome itself on which students are evaluated. The elements are indicators of the means by which the student may proceed to satisfactory performance of the learning outcome. The elements do not stand alone but rather in reference to the learning outcome of which they form a part.

The Development of a Program Standard

In establishing the standards development initiative, the Government determined that all postsecondary programs of instruction should include vocational skills coupled with a broader set of essential skills. This combination is considered critical to ensuring that college graduates have the skills required to be successful both upon graduation from the college program and throughout their working and personal lives.

A program standard is developed through a broad consultation process involving a range of stakeholders with a direct interest in the program area, including employers, professional associations, universities, secondary schools, and program graduates working in the field, in addition to students, faculty, and administrators at the colleges themselves. It represents a consensus of participating stakeholders on the essential learning that all program graduates should have achieved.
Updating the Program Standard

The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities will undertake regular reviews of the vocational learning outcomes for this program to ensure that Social Service Worker-Gerontology Program Standard remains appropriate and relevant to the needs of students and employers across the Province of Ontario. To confirm that this document is the most up-to-date release, contact the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities at the address or telephone number noted on the inside cover page.
II. Vocational Standard

All graduates of Social Service Worker-Gerontology programs of instruction must have achieved the 8 vocational learning outcomes listed in the following pages, in addition to achieving the essential employability skills learning outcomes and meeting the general education requirement.

Preamble

The Social Service Worker Gerontology program is offered at Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology. Upon successful completion of the program, students receive an Ontario College Diploma.

The increased longevity and diversity of our population as a whole, and the movement of the baby boomer generation into its senior years, is creating significant demand for professionals with knowledge and expertise in aging.

The focus of the Social Service Worker Gerontology program is to enhance the quality of life for older adults using a holistic strengths based approach. The vision and work of graduates goes beyond needs of older adults to include needs of caregivers and the education of the general public. They work in partnership with older adults and their support networks, where these exist, to collaboratively reach their goals.

Graduates of the Social Service Worker Gerontology program are multi skilled and trained to respond to current issues and future trends in the care and support of older adults. They work with individuals, families, groups, and communities in identifying and mobilizing resources to facilitate opportunities for positive change. Graduates maintain professional relationships which adhere to legal and ethical standards.

Social Service Work is governed by the Social Work and Social Service Act (1998). After successful completion of the Social Service Worker-Gerontology program, graduates are eligible for registration with the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers (OCSWSSW), the regulatory body for the profession under the Act.

Employment opportunities for students who successfully complete the Social Service Worker Gerontology program can be found in a variety of settings. These include participating as a member of an interdisciplinary team, providing care and developing programs for older adults in acute, long term health care and continuing or community care settings. Graduates may also promote healthy aging and leisure activity opportunities in community settings.
Synopsis of the Vocational Learning Outcomes
Social Service Worker-Gerontology Programs

The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to

1. identify needs, strengths and resources of older adults to assist them in setting goals that promote their optimal functioning, well being, and quality of life.

2. plan, implement and evaluate services and programs in response to identified needs and goals of older adults.

3. function effectively as a member of a multi-disciplinary and interagency team, in the development and provision of relevant services and programs for older adults.

4. record information accurately and communicate effectively in oral, written and electronic formats, in adherence to privacy, and freedom of information legislation.

5. establish and maintain helping relationships which adhere to professional, legal and ethical standards aligned to social service work.

6. recognize diverse needs and experiences of individuals, groups, families, and communities, to promote accessible and responsive programs and services.

7. develop strategies and plans that lead to the promotion of self care, improved job performance, and enhanced work relationships.

8. work in communities to advocate for change strategies that promote social and economic justice and challenge patterns of oppression and discrimination.

Note: The learning outcomes have been numbered as a point of reference; numbering does not imply prioritization, sequencing, nor weighting of significance.
The Vocational Learning Outcomes

1. *The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to*

   identify needs, strengths and resources of older adults to assist them in setting goals that promote their optimal functioning, wellbeing, and quality of life.

**Elements of the Performance**

- determine how the process of aging, and relevant conditions of life impact on the needs of older adults
- participate in an assessment process to determine physical, intellectual, and emotional capabilities, and environmental and social settings of an older adult
- review assessment findings related to individual health, wellbeing, behaviour and functioning to determine the impact of the process of aging
- review processes of normal and abnormal cognitive aging, including the review of dementias of different origins
- participate in the development of a comprehensive profile and validated program plan, through involvement with the older adult and their family and caregivers, and other team and support network members
- promote self-care skills and life-enrichment activities of the older adult, in accordance with relevant assessment data and desired outcomes, taking into account the goals and wishes of the individual
2. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to plan, implement and evaluate services and programs in response to identified needs and goals of older adults.

Elements of the Performance

- collect, analyze and synthesize feedback from individuals, care givers, and care providers through observation, assessment, research, and consultation
- participate in the implementation of community and organizational needs assessments, using a range of relevant methods and strategies
- advocate for the rights of the older adult to self-determination and informed consent
- identify relevant legislation and structure of healthcare, and social service systems in Ontario and Canada that influence the provision of programs and services to older adults
- assist in a referral process to enable older adults to participate in programs and services, and to access networks and community resources which meet their individual needs and goals
- participate in the development and coordination of programs and services that are responsive to the needs and interests of older adults, and enhance the quality of their lives
3. *The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to*

function effectively as a member of a multi-disciplinary and interagency team, in the development and provision of relevant services and programs for older adults.

**Elements of the Performance**

- identify roles, responsibilities, and scope of practice of multi-disciplinary team members
- participate effectively as a team member through group interaction, leadership, and team building activities
- assist team members in the development of proposals for new services and programs for older adults
- collaborate with individuals, families, and agencies to assist older adults with access to and utilization of appropriate resources, programs, and services
- work effectively with volunteers and team members in the delivery of programs and services
- participate as a team member in case-management practices using a holistic strengths-based approach
- participate as a team member in the development of policies and procedures that ensure the provision of effective programs and services for older adults
4. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to record information accurately and communicate effectively in oral, written and electronic formats, in adherence to privacy, and freedom of information legislation.

Elements of the Performance

• maintain effective paper and computer-based records that are current, timely, factual, concise, organized, and secure
• prepare and deliver effective written and oral presentations and reports, documenting information accurately
• participate in the review of information contained in records, with the individual or their representatives, based on permission granted, and following privacy legislation
• utilize effective communication techniques and technologies to facilitate interaction with diverse populations
• protect the confidentiality of all records and other information in adherence to privacy and freedom of information legislation
5. *The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to*

establish and maintain helping relationships which adhere to professional, legal and ethical standards aligned to social service work.

**Elements of the Performance**

- recognize the legislative framework governing social service work and take into account the implications for professional responsibility and accountability
- establish working relationships that adhere to professional standards, codes of ethics, relevant legislation, and agency guidelines
- promote individual's strengths and right to self-determination when engaging in processes of collaboration, consultation, and advocacy
- establish and maintain clear and appropriate boundaries between personal and professional relationships, in accordance with professional, legal, and ethical standards of practice
- adhere to relevant legislation, and agency policies and procedures, related to the implementation of services and programs for older adults
- maintain privacy of individuals and confidentiality of information, in accordance with professional, legal, and ethical standards of practice, and organizational requirements
6. **The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to**

recognize diverse needs and experiences of individuals, groups, families, and communities, to promote accessible and responsive programs and services.

**Elements of the Performance**

- determine the impact that differences in culture, race, country of origin, language, religion, abilities, cognitive status, sexual orientation, and gender may have upon the values, needs, preferences, and lifestyle of older adults
- increase knowledge of the diverse ethno-cultural influences on Canadian society, individuals, groups, and communities through ongoing learning
- respond effectively to issues relevant to the aging population when working in diverse and multicultural society
- review current demographic data and future trends, to assist in the development of guidelines, and response strategies, to meet diverse needs of older individuals in a global society
- examine one's own personal biases and the impact of these biases on the helping role
7. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to develop strategies and plans that lead to the promotion of self care, improved job performance, and enhanced work relationships.

Elements of the Performance

- seek and utilize ongoing formal and informal supervision as required
- solicit constructive feedback relating to one's own performance from peers, supervisors, and other professionals as appropriate
- employ effective self-care techniques, and secure appropriate support and resources as required, in order to maximize job performance
- utilize a number of resources and strategies to promote growth in professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes, including processes for engaging in reflective practice and critical inquiry
- develop awareness of self in terms of values, beliefs, and experiences and determine how this impacts upon the development of professional relationships with individuals, colleagues, and supervisors
8. *The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to*

work in communities to advocate for change strategies that promote social and economic justice and challenge patterns of oppression and discrimination.

**Elements of the Performance**

- review community work models that identify community needs, risks, and assets, and promote positive social change
- contribute to action plans, funding proposals, and community capacity-building and assessment strategies to influence and promote positive social change
- contribute to effective advocacy and change strategies that challenge systems and promote the rights of older adults
- identify and link with relevant community resources to facilitate referrals and assist older adults in meeting their goals
- identify advocacy and change efforts that promote social justice and positively impact upon the lives of older adults in their communities
III. Essential Employability Skills

All graduates of Social Service Worker-Gerontology programs of instruction must have reliably demonstrated the essential employability skills learning outcomes listed on the following pages, in addition to achieving the vocational learning outcomes and meeting the general education requirement.

Context

Essential Employability Skills (EES) are skills that, regardless of a student’s program or discipline, are critical for success in the workplace, in day-to-day living, and for lifelong learning.

The teaching and attainment of these EES for students in, and graduates from, Ontario’s colleges of applied arts and technology are anchored in a set of three fundamental assumptions:

• These skills are important for every adult to function successfully in society today.
• Our colleges are well equipped and well positioned to prepare graduates with these skills.
• These skills are equally valuable for all graduates, regardless of the level of their credential, whether they pursue a career path, or they pursue further education.

Skill Categories

To capture these skills, the following six categories define the essential areas where graduates must demonstrate skills and knowledge.

• Communication
• Numeracy
• Critical Thinking & Problem Solving
• Information Management
• Interpersonal
• Personal
Application / Implementation

In each of the six skill categories, there are a number of defining skills, or sub skills, identified to further articulate the requisite skills identified in the main skill categories. The following chart illustrates the relationship between the skill categories, the defining skills within the categories, and learning outcomes to be achieved by graduates from all postsecondary programs of instruction that lead to an Ontario College credential.

EES may be embedded in General Education or vocational courses, or developed through discrete courses. However these skills are developed, all graduates with Ontario College credentials must be able to reliably demonstrate the essential skills required in each of the six categories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SKILL CATEGORY</th>
<th>DEFINING SKILLS: Skill areas to be demonstrated by graduates:</th>
<th>LEARNING OUTCOMES: The levels of achievement required by graduates. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to:</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| COMMUNICATION                         | • Reading  
 • Writing  
 • Speaking  
 • Listening  
 • Presenting  
 • Visual literacy                              | 1. communicate clearly, concisely and correctly in the written, spoken, and visual form that fulfills the purpose and meets the needs of the audience.  
 2. respond to written, spoken, or visual messages in a manner that ensures effective communication. |
| NUMERACY                              | • Understanding and applying mathematical concepts and reasoning  
 • Analyzing and using numerical data  
 • Conceptualizing                              | 3. execute mathematical operations accurately. |
| CRITICAL THINKING & PROBLEM SOLVING    | • Analysing  
 • Synthesising  
 • Evaluating  
 • Decision making  
 • Creative and innovative thinking            | 4. apply a systematic approach to solve problems.  
 5. use a variety of thinking skills to anticipate and solve problems. |
| INFORMATION MANAGEMENT                 | • Gathering and managing information  
 • Selecting and using appropriate tools and technology for a task or a project  
 • Computer literacy  
 • Internet skills                              | 6. locate, select, organize, and document information using appropriate technology and information systems.  
 7. analyze, evaluate, and apply relevant information from a variety of sources. |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>SKILL CATEGORY</th>
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<th>LEARNING OUTCOMES: The levels of achievement required by graduates. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| INTERPERSONAL  | • Team work  
• Relationship management  
• Conflict resolution  
• Leadership  
• Networking | 8. show respect for the diverse opinions, values, belief systems, and contributions of others.  
9. interact with others in groups or teams in ways that contribute to effective working relationships and the achievement of goals. |
| PERSONAL       | • Managing self  
• Managing change and being flexible and adaptable  
• Engaging in reflective practices  
• Demonstrating personal responsibility | 10. manage the use of time and other resources to complete projects.  
11. take responsibility for one’s own actions, decisions, and consequences. |
IV. General Education Requirement

All graduates of Social Service Worker-Gerontology programs must have met the general education requirement described on the following pages, in addition to achieving the vocational and essential employability skills learning outcomes.

Requirement

The General Education Requirement for programs of instruction is stipulated in the Credentials Framework (Appendix A in the Minister=s Binding Policy Directive Framework for Programs of Instruction).

In programs of instruction leading to either an Ontario College Diploma or an Ontario College Advanced Diploma, it is required that graduates have been engaged in learning that exposes them to at least one discipline outside their main field of study, and increases their awareness of the society and culture in which they live and work. This will typically be accomplished by students taking 3 to 5 courses (or the equivalent) designed discretely and separately from vocational learning opportunities.

This general education learning would normally be delivered using a combination of required and elective processes.

Purpose

The purpose of General Education in the Ontario college system is to contribute to the development of citizens who are conscious of the diversity, complexity, and richness of the human experience; who are able to establish meaning through this consciousness; and, who, as a result, are able to contribute thoughtfully, creatively, and positively to the society in which they live and work.

General Education strengthens student’s essential employability skills, such as critical analysis, problem solving, and communication, in the context of an exploration of topics with broad-based personal and / or societal importance.
Themes

The themes listed below will be used to provide direction to colleges in the development and identification of courses that are designed to fulfil the General Education Requirement for programs of instructions.

Each theme provides a statement of Rationale and offers suggestions related to more specific topic areas that could be explored within each area. These suggestions are neither prescriptive nor exhaustive. They are included to provide guidance regarding the nature and scope of content that would be judged as meeting the intent and overall goals of General Education.

1. Arts in Society:

Rationale:
The capacity of a person to recognize and evaluate artistic and creative achievements is useful in many aspects of his/her life. Since artistic expression is a fundamentally human activity, which both reflects and anticipates developments in the larger culture, its study will enhance the student’s cultural and self-awareness.

Content:
Courses in this area should provide students with an understanding of the importance of visual and creative arts in human affairs, of the artist’s and writer’s perceptions of the world and the means by which those perceptions are translated into the language of literature and artistic expression. They will also provide an appreciation of the aesthetic values used in examining works of art and possibly, a direct experience in expressing perceptions in an artistic medium.

2. Civic Life:

Rationale:
In order for individuals to live responsibly and to reach their potential as individuals and as citizens of society, they need to understand the patterns of human relationships that underlie the orderly interactions of a society’s various structural units. Informed people will have knowledge of the meaning of civic life in relation to diverse communities at the local, national, and global level, and an awareness of international issues and the effects of these on Canada, and Canada’s place in the international community.

Content:
Courses in this area should provide students with an understanding of the meaning of freedoms, rights, and participation in community and public life, in addition to a working knowledge of the structure and function of various levels of government (municipal, provincial, national) in Canada and/or in an international context. They may also provide an historical understanding of major political issues affecting relations between the various levels of government in Canada and their constituents.
3. **Social and Cultural Understanding:**

*Rationale:*
Knowledge of the patterns and precedents of the past provide the means for a person to gain an awareness of his or her place in contemporary culture and society. In addition to this awareness, students will acquire a sense of the main currents of their culture and that of other cultures over an extended period of time in order to link personal history to the broader study of culture.

*Content:*
Courses in this area are those that deal broadly with major social and cultural themes. These courses may also stress the nature and validity of historical evidence and the variety of historical interpretation of events. Courses will provide the students with a view and understanding of the impact of cultural, social, ethnic, or linguistic characteristics.

4. **Personal Understanding:**

*Rationale:*
Educated people are equipped for life-long understanding and development of themselves as integrated physiological and psychological entities. They are aware of the ideal need to be fully functioning persons: mentally, physically, emotionally, socially, spiritually, and vocationally.

*Content:*
Courses in this area will focus on understanding the individual: his or her evolution; situation; relationship with others; place in the environment and universe; achievements and problems; and his or her meaning and purpose. They will also allow students the opportunity to study institutionalized human social behaviour in a systematic way. Courses fulfilling this requirement may be oriented to the study of the individual within a variety of contexts.

5. **Science and Technology:**

*Rationale:*
Matter and energy are universal concepts in science, forming a basis for understanding the interactions that occur in living and non-living systems in our universe. Study in this area provides an understanding of the behaviour of matter that provides a foundation for further scientific study and the creation of broader understanding about natural phenomena.
Similarly, the various applications and developments in the area of technology have an increasing impact on all aspects of human endeavour and have numerous social, economic, and philosophical implications. For example, the operation of computers to process data at high speed has invoked an interaction between machines and the human mind that is unique in human history. This development and other technological developments have a powerful impact on how we deal with many of the complex questions in our society.

**Content:**
Courses in this area should stress scientific inquiry and deal with basic or fundamental questions of science rather than applied ones. They may be formulated from traditional basic courses in such areas of study as biology, chemistry, physics, astronomy, geology, or agriculture. As well, courses related to understanding the role and functions of computers (e.g., data management and information processing), and assorted computer-related technologies, should be offered in a non-applied manner to provide students with an opportunity to explore the impact of these concepts and practices on their lives.