



Social Service Worker – Gerontology Program Standard

**The approved program standard for 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
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Table of contents

Social Service Worker – Gerontology Program Standard	1
Acknowledgements	2
Table of contents	3
Introduction	1
Development of system-wide program standards	1
Program standards	1
The expression of program standards as vocational learning outcomes	2
The presentation of the vocational learning outcomes	2
The development of a program standard	2
Updating the program standard	3
Vocational standard	4
Preamble	4
Social Service Worker – Gerontology (Ontario College Diploma)	6
The vocational learning outcomes	8
Glossary	19
Essential employability skills	20
Context	20
Skill categories	20
Application and implementation	21
General education requirement	23
Requirement	23
Purpose	23

Introduction

This document is the Program Standard for the 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).

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 Program Standards Unit 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 vocational learning outcomes

Vocational 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, vocational learning outcomes are interrelated and cannot be viewed in isolation from 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 vocational 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 vocational learning outcomes

The **vocational learning outcome** statements set 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 vocational learning outcome. However, it is the performance of the vocational learning outcome itself on which students are evaluated. The elements of performance are indicators of the means by which the student may proceed to satisfactory performance of the vocational learning outcome. The elements of performance do not stand alone but rather in reference to the vocational 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 the 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, please contact the [Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities](#).

Vocational standard

All graduates of Social Service Worker – Gerontology programs have achieved the [ten vocational learning outcomes \(VLOs\)](#), in addition to achieving the essential employability outcomes and meeting the general education (GE) 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 Social Service Worker- Gerontology Program provides students with practical, integrated learning experiences and a body of knowledge related to the promotion of human well-being and the affirmation of strengths and capacities of people in their environment. The increased longevity of our population as a whole, and the movement of the Baby Boomer generation into its senior years, is creating a significant demand for professionals with the knowledge and expertise in aging.

Graduates maintain professional relationships which adhere to legal and ethical standards and it is expected that they will have a commitment to work for social justice and to promote the development and sustainability of a culture of equality. They work with older individuals, families, groups, and communities, using a holistic strengths-based approach, in identifying and mobilizing resources to facilitate opportunities for collaboratively reaching their goals.

Social Service Worker – Gerontology program graduates demonstrate an understanding of and ability to adhere to a number of values and guiding principles in their occupational practice. Such values and principles reflect:

- A belief in the fundamental right to respect, dignity, and self-determination of all individuals
- A recognition of the worth, and potential of all individuals
- A belief in the right to self-determination of Indigenous peoples in Canada including their right to determine, receive, and have access to culturally appropriate social services
- A commitment to the linguistic duality of Ontario, including the right to access social services in the French language
- A desire to promote justice, equality, and access to culturally appropriate and relevant services to all, respecting race, ethnicity, national origin, culture, language, religion, gender identity, gender expression, age, physical and intellectual ability, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status
- An empowerment of people, groups and communities to identify and utilize their own strengths to address systemic barriers to meeting their needs

- A knowledge of different approaches and the ability to put them into practice in order to contribute to the positive development of individuals
- Accountability to service users, communities, and to society including Indigenous communities

Social Service Work is governed by the Social Work and Social Service Work Act (1998). After successful completion of the Social Service Worker 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.

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 can participate as a member of an interdisciplinary team and can expect to find employment in a variety of community service settings. They may participate as a member of an interdisciplinary team and can expect employment in a variety of community service settings. These include federal, provincial, and municipal governments, older adult services, retirement homes, long term care center, hospices, group homes, shelters, community centres, programs for those with special needs and disabilities, mental health services, rural and urban Indigenous service providers, band councils, and educational and long-term health care settings.

There are opportunities for graduates to pursue further educational qualifications and degree completion. Graduates should contact individual colleges for further information.

Note: The [Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer](#) (ONCAT) maintains the provincial postsecondary credit transfer portal, [ONTransfer](#).

Synopsis of the vocational learning outcomes

Social Service Worker – Gerontology (Ontario College Diploma)

The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to:

1. develop respectful and collaborative professional and interpersonal relationships that adhere to professional, legal, and ethical standards aligned to social service work.
2. record information accurately and communicate effectively in written, digital, verbal and non-verbal ways, in adherence to privacy and freedom of information legislation, in accordance with professional and workplace standards.
3. integrate a practice framework within a service delivery continuum, addressing the needs of older individuals, their families and communities at micro, mezzo, macro and global levels, and work with them in achieving their goals.
4. plan and implement accessible and responsive programs, services and activation activities that assist in maintaining or restoring function for older adults in all domains, recognizing the diverse needs of older individuals, their families and communities, and meeting these needs.
5. examine current social policy, relevant legislation, and political, social, historical, and/or economic systems and their impacts for older individuals and communities when delivering services to the user/client.
6. develop strategies and approaches that support older adult individual clients, their families, groups and communities in building the capacity for self-advocacy, while affirming their dignity and self-worth.
7. work from an anti-oppressive, strengths-based practice, recognizing the capacity for resilience and growth of older individuals, their families, groups and communities when responding to the diverse needs of these marginalized or vulnerable populations to act as allies and advocates.
8. develop strategies and approaches to implement and maintain holistic self-care as a member of a human service profession.
9. work with older individuals, their families, groups and communities to ensure that service provider strategies promote social and economic justice, and challenge patterns of oppression, discrimination and harassment, and sexual violence with clients, coworkers and communities.
10. develop the capacity to work with the Indigenous older individual, their families, groups and communities while respecting their inherent rights to self-determine, and to identify and address systemic barriers that produce ill-effects, developing appropriate responses using approaches such as trauma informed care practice.

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: develop respectful and collaborative professional and interpersonal relationships that adhere to professional, legal, and ethical standards aligned to social service work.

Elements of the performance

- a. Recognize the legislative framework governing social service work and the social service worker role, and take into account the implications for professional responsibility and accountability
- b. Establish working relationships that adhere to professional standards, codes of ethics, relevant legislation, and agency guidelines
- c. Establish and maintain clear and appropriate boundaries between personal and professional relationships, in accordance with professional, legal, and ethical standards of practice for the well-being of self, co-workers, other professionals and with individuals and communities as service users
- d. Promote individual and community strengths and the right to self-determination when engaging in processes of collaboration, consultation, and advocacy
- e. Develop and maintain positive working relationships with colleagues, supervisors, and community partners
- f. Work collaboratively as a member of a team, program partnership, and/or inter-disciplinary group including Indigenous Elders, *Knowledge Holders** and *Helpers** as appropriate
- g. Recognize the complexity of case management and the need to involve the skills of inter-disciplinary team members where appropriate and helpers* as appropriate
- h. Consult and collaborate with relevant partners to ensure an integrated understanding of the individual's situation and to improve quality of services and access to resources
- i. Maintain accountability to colleagues, peers, and supervisors while working both collaboratively and independently as required
- j. Use effective problem-solving and conflict-resolution strategies within service delivery systems
- k. Recognize boundaries and scope of practice in the role of the Social Service Worker
- l. Maintain privacy of individuals and confidentiality of information, in accordance with professional, legal, and ethical standards of practice and organizational requirements
- m. Recognize the impact of governance on professional relationships
- n. Establish personal goals for ongoing professional learning, development and growth
- o. Use the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers Code of Ethics and Professional Practice Standards to guide practice

[*See Glossary](#)

2. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: record information accurately and communicate effectively in written, digital, verbal and non-verbal ways, in adherence to privacy and freedom of information legislation, in accordance with professional and workplace standards.

Elements of the performance

- a. Use skills, such as, but not limited to, active listening; respect; cultural competency; cultural safety; validating; reframing; confrontation; clarifying; empathizing, to build and strengthen professional relationships in face-to-face, telephone, and electronic communication situations including written documentation
- b. Take notes in the language of communication of the client, when possible
- c. Conduct interpersonal communications with authenticity and respect to develop and maintain working relationships
- d. Use various forms of data collection and research skills to develop proposals to secure sustainable programs and services
- e. Use email and social media in a professional and ethical manner and in compliance with workplace and professional standards
- f. Ensure documentation and record keeping is accurate, retained securely and complies with legislation, workplace regulations and professional standards

[*See Glossary](#)

3. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: integrate a practice framework within a service delivery continuum, addressing the needs of older individuals, their families and communities at micro, mezzo, macro and global levels, and work with them in achieving their goals.

Elements of the performance

- a. Facilitate and advocate for appropriate access and referral to a continuum of formal and informal services and resources to support the older individual and community goals
- b. Work collaboratively with older individuals, families, groups, and communities to set achievable goals, utilizing a holistic, culturally safe, strengths-based approach
- c. Embrace the uniqueness of human experience in its dynamic and ever-changing complexities
- d. Recognize and affirm natural support systems and networks within communities as a vehicle to facilitate positive change
- e. Recognize the relationships between trauma, addictions and mental health issues through engaging in a trauma-informed approach
- f. Assist older individuals in accessing community resources such as counselling, group work, community service providers; and community work as culturally appropriate to their needs and goals
- g. Assess the health, well-being and needs of the primary caregivers of the older adult and provide appropriate resources in response to their needs
- h. Identify structures of health care and models of service delivery in Ontario in Canada to assist with service navigation, complaints processes, and the protection of the rights of the older adult
- i. Participate in the development of a comprehensive profile for the older adult, through involvement of them, their family and caregivers, and other team and support network members
- j. Promote functional improvement, self-care skills and access to 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

[*See Glossary](#)

4. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: plan and implement accessible and responsive programs, services and activation activities that assist in maintaining or restoring function for older adults in all domains, recognizing the diverse needs of older individuals, their families and communities, and meeting these needs.

Elements of the performance

- a. Plan person-centered, strengths-based individual and community services and programs in response to identified needs and goals of the older adult
- b. Participate in the development and implementation of these programs and services that are responsive to the needs and interests of the older adult, and enhance the quality of their lives
- c. Participate as an inter-professional/interagency team member in restorative care and activity/recreation programs for older adults in both community and residential settings, that are appropriate for varying degrees of function and independence (e.g. Active elder person's centre, retirement home, long term care, etc.)
- d. Determine the bio-psycho-social changes that occur with aging and their impact on the needs of older adults
- e. Identify conceptual models and principles of therapeutic recreation/activation
- f. Identify neuro cognitive disorders and age-related physical health conditions and their related needs and challenges, and of relevant strategies and programs
- g. Apply a variety of evidence-based programs and strategies, commonly used to meet the needs of older adults with neuro cognitive disorders (e.g. Montessori, eden, gentle care, behavioural gerontology, etc.)
- h. Use a range of techniques to facilitate communication and interaction with older adults living with neurocognitive disorders and age-related physical health conditions
- i. Collect, analyze and synthesize feedback from individuals, care givers, and care providers through observation, assessment, research, and consultation
- j. Assess programs in relation to achievement of measurable outcomes, and user/client satisfaction
- k. Develop a basic program budget with identification of funds and/or funding sources
- l. Prepare volunteers to assist with programs
- m. Develop effective helping relationships, identifying integration of aspects such as ethnicity, culture, age, ability, developmental stage, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, social and economic class, family structure, and community structure
- n. Determine biological, sociological, economic, political, historical, environmental, spiritual, cultural, and psychosocial variables that affect human development and behaviour, using an anti-oppression framework
- o. Contribute to collaborative plans of action within the changing demographic, social, political, and economic composition of the community, through participation of advocacy, and consultation tools and strategies
- p. Recognize the history, culture, traditions, norms, values, histories of oppression, and intersectionality of individuals and communities, challenging normative values, to

promote the development of culturally aware, timely, responsive programs and services

q. work with clients to identify their own resilience to use in self-determination

[*See Glossary](#)

5. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: examine current social policy, relevant legislation, and political, social, historical, and/or economic systems and their impacts for older individuals and communities when delivering services to the user/client.

Elements of the performance

- a. Use a structural analysis process that identifies underlying social structures to describe issues affecting individuals, families, groups, and communities
- b. Describe the impact of relevant legislation, mandated policies, and regulations on service delivery to older adults
- c. Review social welfare system policy initiatives from government funding bodies and service delivery organizations, and identify the effects of major policy shifts on service delivery the older adult user/client experience
- d. Identify presenting challenges of individual older adults, groups, families, and communities in the context of larger structural and systemic issues
- e. Describe social problems such as violence, poverty, homelessness, mental health, and addictions within a larger social, political, historical, cultural and economic context

[*See Glossary](#)

6. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: develop strategies and approaches that support older adult individual clients, their families, groups and communities in building the capacity for self-advocacy, while affirming their dignity and self-worth.

Elements of the performance

- a. Use major helping systems such as familial and informal support, community service providers, mental health, social assistance, community information, and justice systems to support individuals, groups, families and communities in the achievement of their goals
- b. Challenge patterns of oppression and discrimination
- c. Identify and utilize informal helping networks and other resources in the creation of action plans
- d. Identify and link with relevant community resources and service providers to facilitate referrals and to meet individual goals
- e. Use effective and appropriate communication and technology to advocate with individuals, families, groups, and communities to problem solve, access current and culturally relevant resources, and address needs
- f. Determine the impact that differences in culture, race, country of origin, language, religion, abilities, cognitive status, sexual orientation, gender and identity may have upon the values, needs, preferences and lifestyle of older adults as individuals, members of a group and community
- g. Respond to issues relevant to issues of aging, and helping and support strategies when working in a diverse and intercultural society
- h. Promote self-advocacy for individuals, families, groups and communities and assist in advocacy efforts in the role of Social Service Worker
- i. Assist individuals and communities to identify their own needs and to self-advocate for resources to meet these needs

[*See Glossary](#)

7. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: work from an anti-oppressive, strengths-based practice, recognizing the capacity for resilience and growth of older individuals, their families, groups and communities when responding to the diverse needs of these marginalized or vulnerable populations to act as allies and advocates.

Elements of the performance

- a. Determine the impact that differences in culture, race, country of origin, language, religion, abilities, cognitive status, sexual orientation, gender and identity may have upon the values, needs, preferences and lifestyle of older adults as individuals, members of a group and community
- b. Respond to issues relevant to issues of aging, and helping and support strategies when working in a diverse and intercultural society
- c. Examine one's own personal biases and the impact of these biases on the helping role
- d. Integrate theoretical models of anti-oppression, trauma-informed, and strengths-based practice and apply as a Social Service Worker
- e. Develop proposals and strategies to establish services that reflect the needs of diverse individuals and communities
- f. Use group facilitation strategies to empower individuals and communities for their own growth and development
- g. Encourage individuals and groups to participate in their own growth and development and support through ally-ship
- h. Integrate models of facilitation and group work as it pertains to social service worker practice, maintaining self-awareness and reflective practice
- i. Research, plan, conduct and evaluate mechanisms to address individual and community needs, engaging their own strengths to support the process
- j. Monitor and facilitate group process and implement appropriate interventions and group-building strategies
- k. Recognize the importance of developing the ability to work from the basis of conceptual and professional skills, using research skills and evidence-based practices within the context of the workplace

[*See Glossary](#)

8. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: develop strategies and approaches to implement and maintain holistic self-care as a member of a human service profession.

Elements of the performance

- a. Seek and utilize ongoing formal and informal supervision as required
- b. Seek and utilize support and feedback, related to one's own performance, strengths, challenges, and limitations, from colleagues, peers, supervisors, and other professionals as appropriate
- c. Employ effective self-care techniques and secure appropriate supports and resources as required
- d. 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
- e. identify and use tools and processes for engaging in reflective practice and critical inquiry
- f. Develop self-awareness of their own level of competence and readiness for certain work assignments as an aspect of professional learning and growth

[*See Glossary](#)

9. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: work with older individuals, their families, groups and communities to ensure that service provider strategies promote social and economic justice, and challenge patterns of oppression, discrimination and harassment, and sexual violence with clients, coworkers and communities.

Elements of the performance

- a. Work with communities to determine the community needs for older adults, strengths and risks for creating positive social change
- b. Develop strategies and approaches to work with communities to enable community capacity building
- c. Contribute to action plans, and funding proposals, that create positive social change
- d. Advocate approaches that address systemic issues and societal change affecting older adults, and promote inclusion, equity, justice, and participatory democracy and community involvement
- e. Engage in community education efforts that promote social justice and address barriers to the full participation of older adults
- f. Examine current sexual violence legislation to identify and apply intervention strategies available to clients, coworkers and communities

[*See Glossary](#)

10. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: develop the capacity to work with the Indigenous older individual, their families, groups and communities while respecting their inherent rights to self-determine, and to identify and address systemic barriers that produce ill-effects, developing appropriate responses using approaches such as trauma informed care practice.

Elements of the performance

- a. Review the history of colonization and Indigenous peoples in Canada
- b. Examine the impacts of trauma and colonization for Indigenous peoples and communities today, including an in-depth understanding of the residential school system, the 60's Scoop, and intergenerational trauma
- c. Utilize a trauma-informed approach when working with Indigenous peoples and communities
- d. Identify culturally safe practice considerations when engaging with community members or entering an Indigenous community
- e. Engage with communities in ways which respect and support their self-determination
- f. Assist in the development of holistic healing plans that incorporate appropriate cultural resources
- g. Engage in a culture of learning through reflective practice that drives continuous learning and understanding of the role of oppression while focusing on meaningful relationship building with Indigenous individuals, families and communities
- h. Recognize the impact of privilege and develop strategies of self-reflection to develop meaningful relationships with Indigenous individuals and communities

[*See Glossary](#)

Glossary

Activation – behavioral activation uses increased physical activity and mental stimulation to facilitate structured increases in enjoyable activities that increase opportunities for contact with positive reinforcement to treat late life depression in older adults.

Anti-oppressive – an inter-disciplinary approach rooted social work that addresses socio-economic depression, power imbalances in political and social structures in order to develop strategies for creating an environment free from oppression, racism and other forms of discrimination.

Client – the term used to describe the recipient of the services of assessment and commission of services by social workers and social service workers.

Cultural safety – an environment that is spiritually, socially, emotionally and physically safe for people where there is no challenge or denial of their identity, who they are or what they need.

Micro, mezzo, macro levels – the three broad practice categories in social work; micro deals directly with the individual client, mezzo involves neighbourhoods, institutions and other smaller groups and macro refers to interventions on a large scale that affect entire communities or systems of care.

Strengths-based practice – a social work practice theory that emphasizes people's self-determination and strengths, a way of viewing clients as resourceful and resilient in the face of adversity.

Trauma-informed care – a strengths-based practice that is responsive to the impact of trauma, emphasizing physical, psychological and emotional safety for both service providers and survivors, and creates opportunities for survivors to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment.

Essential employability skills

All graduates of the Social Service Worker – Gerontology program of instruction must have reliably demonstrated the essential employability skills learning outcomes listed below, 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 and 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.

Skill category	Defining skills: Skill areas to be demonstrated by graduates:	Learning outcomes: The levels of achievement required by graduates. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to:
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading • Writing • Speaking • Listening • Presenting • Visual literacy 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding and applying mathematical concepts and reasoning • Analyzing and using numerical data • Conceptualizing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. execute mathematical operations accurately.
Critical Thinking & Problem Solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyzing • Synthesizing • Evaluating • Decision making • Creative and innovative thinking 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. apply a systematic approach to solve problems. 2. use a variety of thinking skills to anticipate and solve problems.

Information Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gathering and managing information • Selecting and using appropriate tools and technology for a task or a project • Computer literacy • Internet skills 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. locate, select, organize and document information using appropriate technology and information systems. 2. analyze, evaluate and apply relevant information from a variety of sources.
Interpersonal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teamwork • Relationship management • Conflict resolution • Leadership • Networking 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. show respect for the diverse opinions, values, belief systems and contributions of others. 2. interact with others in groups or teams in ways that contribute to effective working relationships and the achievement of goals.
Personal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing self • Managing change and being flexible and adaptable • Engaging in reflective practices • Demonstrating personal responsibility 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. manage the use of time and other resources to complete projects. 2. take responsibility for one's own actions, decisions and their consequences.

General education requirement

All graduates of the Social Service Worker – Gerontology program must have met the [general education requirement](#) described below, 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 students' 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 Ontario 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.

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.

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, as well as 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 a Canadian 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.

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.

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.

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 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.

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