



**Criteria for a Social Service Work Program or Equivalent Program
Offered Outside Ontario to be Approved by Council as
Equivalent to a Social Service Work Program Offered in Ontario
at a College of Applied Arts and Technology¹**

Approved May 6, 2022

Purpose

Under the terms of the *Social Work and Social Service Work Act, 1998* (the “**Act**”) and the regulations made under the Act, the Registrar may grant a certificate of registration for social service work to a person who has obtained a diploma from a social service work program or an equivalent program offered outside Ontario that is approved by Council as equivalent to a social service work program offered in Ontario at a College of Applied Arts and Technology. This policy sets out the criteria that Council will apply in deciding whether to approve a social service work program or an equivalent program offered outside Ontario as equivalent to a social service work program offered in Ontario at a College of Applied Arts and Technology.

Introduction

Social service worker programs offered in Ontario at Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology distinguish themselves by their generalist approach. The generalist approach has been adopted by the profession as its way of defining itself. The generalist approach is reflected in the broad base of courses, interventions and practicum opportunities in the social service worker program. The generalist approach reflects the diversity of individuals, families, groups and communities to whom social service workers may provide services.

The vocational learning outcomes approved by the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities in 2018 are specific to social service worker programs delivered by all Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology under MTCU funding code 50721.²

As stated in the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Social Service Worker Program Standard with respect to the vocational standard:

¹(Approved October 28, 2003, March 22, 2011, May 6, 2022)

² Social Service Worker Program Standard approved by the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities published by that Ministry, October 2018, page 1.



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All graduates of Social Service Worker programs have achieved the ten vocational learning outcomes (VLOs), in addition to achieving the essential employability outcomes and meeting the general education (GE) requirement.

[...]

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 individuals, families, groups, and communities in identifying and mobilizing resources to facilitate opportunities for positive change.

Social Service Worker 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 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, provide, 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.³

³ ibid, page 4.



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As published in the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice Handbook of the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers, the scope of practice of the profession of social service work means:

“The assessment, treatment and evaluation of individual, interpersonal and societal problems through the use of social service work knowledge, skills, interventions and strategies, to assist individuals, dyads, families, groups, organizations and communities to achieve optimum social functioning.”

Requirements

In this policy, “Social Service Worker Program Standard” refers to the document published by the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities in October 2018 entitled “Social Service Worker Program Standard”.

In order for a social service work program or an equivalent program offered outside Ontario to be approved by Council as equivalent to a social service work program offered in Ontario at a College of Applied Arts and Technology, Council must be satisfied that the program meets the following requirements:

1. The program must be offered at a post secondary institution.
2. The program must meet the practicum requirements set out in Requirements A – Practicum, including that graduates are required to complete supervised practicum hours. (See Requirements A – Practicum, below).
3. The program must meet the program standards set out in the Social Service Worker Program Standard. In this regard, the program must meet the general education requirement, essential employability skills standard, and vocational learning outcomes for social service worker programs set out in the Social Service Worker Program Standard, in accordance with the requirements set out in Requirements B – Content Areas. (See Requirements B – Content Areas, below)
4. The program must be at least two years in length and a minimum of four academic semesters in duration. The total number of instructional hours completed in the program must be at least 1200 hours.
5. The program must demonstrate that graduates are required to complete instructional hours related to the vocational learning outcomes through



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approximately 17 vocational courses.⁴ A field placement may be considered as a vocational course. (See B2: Vocational Learning Outcomes, below)

6. The program must demonstrate that graduates are required to complete 3-5 general education courses that relate to at least one of the areas of study described in B1: General Education Requirement, below.

7. A letter must be provided from the senior administrator of the educational institution at which the program is offered, indicating support for the program to be approved as equivalent to a social service work program and verifying that, in the view of the administration, the program meets the Social Service Worker Program Standard.

8. The program must demonstrate that it achieves the generalist approach of social service work programs offered in Ontario at Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology. Graduates from the program must be competent to practise within the scope of practice of the profession of social service work as described above.

Requirements A: Practicum

It must be demonstrated that the practicum requirement for the program includes the following:

- A learning contract, which includes learning goals, between the student and the organization providing the field placement
- A formal evaluation of the supervised practicum experience by the student and the practicum supervisor
- A minimum of 650 supervised practicum hours. These hours may include those completed in Integrative Seminar and/or Preparation for Practicum courses.
- A student practicum setting that is consistent with the scope of practice of the profession of social service work as described above. During the supervised practicum hours, the student must have direct responsibility for providing social service work services to individuals, dyads, families, groups, organizations, and communities or any of the foregoing.

⁴ A typical course at a College of Applied Arts and Technology in Ontario is comprised of 39-45 instructional hours and has an evaluative component. Thus the Vocational Learning Outcomes would typically be met with a minimum of 680 instructional hours.



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- An appropriate and relevant set of criteria that is used to select and approve its field supervisors, including criteria relevant to their academic credentials and professional training/competencies.

Field Practice Manuals from the program may be used to provide evidence of the above.

Requirements B: Content areas

To provide evidence that the graduates of the program meet the required learning outcomes, the program must provide documentation regarding the program's course content, the specific learning objectives of courses, and their indicators or elements of performance. Program descriptions and detailed course outlines must be included in the documentation provided to the College.

B1: General Education Requirement

In programs of instruction leading to either an Ontario College Diploma or an Ontario College Advanced Diploma, it is required that graduates of the program 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.⁵

The program must demonstrate that graduates are required to complete general education courses that relate to at least one of the areas of study described in the next paragraph. This will typically be accomplished by the completion of 3 to 5 courses (or the equivalent).

The areas of study for the general education requirement are as follows:

- i. Arts in Society: recognize and evaluate artistic and creative achievements.
- ii. Civic Life: understand the patterns of human relationships that underlie the orderly interactions of a society's various structural units.

⁵ Social Service Worker Program Standard approved by the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities published by that Ministry, October 2018, page 22.



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- iii. Social and Cultural Understanding: gain an awareness of one's own place in contemporary culture and society by acquiring knowledge of the patterns and precedents of the past.
- iv. Personal Understanding: develop and understand themselves as integrated physiological and psychological entities in order to be fully functioning persons.
- v. Science and Technology: understand the basics of scientific inquiry that deals with fundamental or basic questions of science and technology in a non-applied manner.

Courses used to demonstrate achievement of the general education requirement cannot be used to demonstrate achievement of the vocational learning outcomes or the vocational learning outcomes instructional hour requirement.

B2: Vocational Learning Outcomes

The program must demonstrate that graduates are required to complete instructional hours related to the vocational learning outcomes through approximately 17 vocational courses.

The ten vocational learning outcomes are as follows:

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 individuals, 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 and services, recognizing the diverse needs and experiences of individuals, groups, families and communities, and meeting these needs.



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5. examine current social policy, relevant legislation, and political, social, historical, and/or economic systems and their impacts for individuals and communities when delivering services to the user/client.
6. develop strategies and approaches that support individual clients, groups, families 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 individuals and communities when responding to the diverse needs of 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 individuals, groups, families and their 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 individual, 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.

Courses used to demonstrate achievement of the vocational learning outcomes cannot be used to demonstrate achievement of the general education requirement or the general education instructional hour requirement.

B3: Essential Employability Skills

The program must include the development of the eleven essential employability skills. The eleven essential employability skills are as follows:

- i. the ability to communicate clearly, concisely, and correctly in the written, spoken, and visual form that fulfils the purpose and meets the needs of the audience.



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- ii. the ability to respond to written, spoken, or visual messages in a manner that ensures effective communication.
- iii. the ability to execute mathematical operations accurately.
- iv. the ability to apply a systematic approach to solve problems.
- v. the ability to use a variety of thinking skills to anticipate and solve problems.
- vi. the ability to locate, select, organize, and document information using appropriate technology and information systems.
- vii. the ability to analyze, evaluate, and apply relevant information from a variety of sources.
- viii. the ability to show respect for the diverse opinions, values, belief systems, and contributions of others.
- ix. the ability to interact with others in groups or teams in ways that contribute to effective working relationships and the achievement of goals.
- x. the ability to manage the use of time and other resources to complete projects.
- xi. the ability to take responsibility for one's own actions, decisions, and consequences.

Evidence of meeting the essential employability skills standard will be determined by Council based on the course documentation provided.

Process

Set out below is the College process for a program offered outside Ontario (the "Program") to be considered for approval by Council as equivalent to a social service work program offered in Ontario at a College of Applied Arts and Technology:

1. The Program must apply to the College by submitting a completed application in the form provided by the College together with supporting documentation.



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2. Council shall review the application and supporting documentation provided by the Program and prepare a report analyzing the extent to which the Program meets the requirements of this policy. Council may request the Program to provide additional material and information for the purposes of the review. Council may assign these tasks or any of them to the Registrar and/or to other College staff.
3. Council shall consider the application, supporting documentation, any additional material and information received by the College under paragraph 2, and the report prepared in accordance with paragraph 2.
4. Subject to paragraph 5, after considering the documentation referred to in paragraph 3, Council may approve the Program as equivalent to a social service work program offered in Ontario at a College of Applied Arts and Technology.
5. If Council intends not to approve the Program as equivalent to a social service work program offered in Ontario at a College of Applied Arts and Technology, Council shall, prior to making its decision, provide the Program with:
 - a) notice of its intention not to approve the Program as equivalent to a social service work program offered in Ontario at a College of Applied Arts and Technology;
 - b) Council's reasons for its intention referred to in subparagraph a); and
 - c) an opportunity to make written submissions to Council within a reasonable period of time, such period of time to be determined by Council.
6. After receipt of the written submissions from the Program or the expiry of the time period for receipt of such submissions, whichever is the earlier to occur, Council shall consider the documentation referred to in paragraph 3 and the written submissions of the Program, if any, and may do one of the following:
 - a) determine not to approve the Program as equivalent to a social service work program offered in Ontario at a College of Applied Arts and Technology; or,
 - b) determine to approve the Program as equivalent to a social service work program offered in Ontario at a College of Applied Arts and Technology.



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7. The Program shall be advised in writing of Council's decision under paragraph 4 or 6.
8. Council's decision with respect to the application of a Program is final.
9. A Program may reapply to the College, provided that the application is made at least six (6) months after Council made its decision with respect to the previous application.

Term

An approval granted to a Program by Council under this policy shall remain in effect for five years from the date of approval (the "Approved Period"). At the end of the Approved Period, the approval under this policy shall lapse and the program must apply for renewal.

Persons who graduate from an approved program during the Approved Period will be eligible for registration in Ontario as a social service worker. For greater certainty, the eligibility for registration in Ontario as a social service worker under this policy applies only to individuals who graduate **during** the Approved Period.

Notwithstanding the approved status, the Program must immediately inform Council if it makes substantive changes to program delivery during the Approved Period. Council may require a review be undertaken in order to maintain program approval.

Should the SSW Program Standard be revised by the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities during the approved period, Council will advise if a review is required sooner than at the conclusion of the five-year period. In the event of such a review, Council may make any of the decisions available to it under paragraphs 4 and 6 of "Process", above.