

DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES WORKER (DSWP)

Make a difference to those who live with disabilities

Embark on a rewarding career and make a difference in the lives of children and adults who live with physical, developmental, and intellectual disabilities or dual diagnoses by learning how to support their emotional, mental, physical, and social needs.

You'll gain a solid foundation of the stages of human development and the community supports available to those living with a disability. You'll learn alternate modes of communication, including sign language and a picture exchange communication system. Using a person-centred approach and positive reinforcement to build relationships, you'll help individuals with disabilities and their families live safe, respectful lives of quality and inclusion.

Program highlights

- Choose to take this program on campus or online
- Community expert guest speakers
- Field placement opportunities in all four semesters with the potential of completing placement during paid employment
- Fast-track option if you have previous experience in the developmental services or education sector

Flexibility

We understand that every student's learning journey is unique. Cambrian's DSW program offers flexible learning options. Students can register for on-campus in-person classes or complete classes fully online. Our engaging on-campus learning activities are ideal for those who prefer in-person and hands-on learning experiences. Students who prefer to complete their program online will be engaged in interactive self-navigating content using Cambrian's Learning Management System and will have the option to connect directly with professors virtually for content delivery and questions. Online students will also be able to complete course presentations, evaluations, tests, assignments, and projects using Cambrian's Learning Management System. Field placements can be coordinated in the student's home community.

Program of study for 2025-26 Academic Year

Semester 1		Credits
DSW 1026	Field Seminar	2
DSW 1027	Self Care Skills	2
DSW 1117	Disabilities Strategies I	3
DSW 1125	Understanding Disabilities	2
PSY 1135	Issues in Developmental Psychology	3
HSC 1136	Basic Nursing Skills	3
ENG 1002	College Communications	3
One General Education course. ¹		3
Credits		21
Semester 2		
DSW 1022	Field Work IIA	4
DSW 1210	Community Employability Skills	3
DSW 1221	Person Centered Planning and Advocacy	3

DSW 1222	Positive Behaviour Supports	4
HSC 1236	Basic Nursing Skills II	3
ENG 1242	Speaking/Writing Comm. Services I	3
One General Education course. ¹		3
Credits		23
Semester 3		
DSW 1021	Pharmacology for Developmental Services Worker	2
DSW 1023	Field Work IIB	4
DSW 1217	Disabilities Strategies II	3
DSW 1225	Crisis Management and Prevention	3
DSW 1230	Autism Spectrum Disorders	3
DSW 2310	Dual Diagnosis Assessment and Treatment	3
DSW 2317	Disability and Communication Systems	3
One General Education course. ¹		3
Credits		24
Semester 4		
DSW 1028	Field Work III	14
Credits		14
Total Credits		82

¹ For more information regarding General Education courses, click here (<https://cambriancollege.ca/general-electives/>).

Admission requirements

For graduates of the new curriculum (OSS): Ontario Secondary School Diploma (30 credits) or equivalent or mature student status, including:

- Any grade 12 English (C) or (U)

Additional admissions requirements

- Ability to support individuals living life with disabilities in all aspects of daily living, such as lifting and transfers.

Recommendations

- Computer competency in relevant software
- Any grade 11 mathematics (C), (U) or (M)
- Any grade 11 biology (C) or (U) or grade 12 biology (U)

Program delivery

2025-2026

Fall term start

SEMESTER 1: Fall 2025
SEMESTER 2: Winter 2026
SEMESTER 3: Fall 2026
SEMESTER 4: Winter 2027

Winter term start

SEMESTER 1: Winter 2026
SEMESTER 2: Spring 2026
SEMESTER 3: Fall 2026
SEMESTER 4: Winter 2027

Specific program pathways

Graduates of this program can further increase their skills and expand their options for employment by enrolling in:

- Applied Learning Disability Studies (LDGC) (<https://cambriancollege.ca/programs/applied-learning-disability-studies/>)
- Community Health Services Navigation Program (CHSN) (<https://cambriancollege.ca/programs/community-and-health-services-navigation/>)

College or university degree opportunities

If you are a graduate of this program, you may continue your studies at a college or university, and you may receive credit(s) for your prior college education. Refer to Cambrian's college and university agreement (<https://cambriancollege.ca/supports-services/articulation-agreements/universities-in-canada/>) details for further information.

Employment opportunities

Graduates of the Developmental Services Worker program make a difference in the lives of individuals living life with physical disabilities, developmental and intellectual disabilities, dual diagnosis, and their families. As a skilled and caring developmental services professional, you can support individuals to live, work, play, and participate in their communities as valued citizens. As a graduate of the Developmental Services Worker program, you can also make a difference in a variety of classrooms. You will acquire the knowledge and skills to work effectively as a support staff in elementary and secondary school classrooms to assist teachers and other classroom staff in implementing academic studies and education plans. Your understanding of a diverse spectrum of disabilities, professional competencies, communication skills, person- and student-centered planning, positive behaviour supports, instructional strategies, and your passion to support others will empower you to build a rewarding career.

Graduates of the Developmental Services Worker program support children and adults living life with disabilities. This can lead to a range of positions, including:

- Developmental Services Professional / Direct Support Professional
- Educational Assistants
- Supported Employment Professional
- Independent Contracting Professional
- Respite Professional
- Community Participation / Day Support Professional

Contacts

Tracy Love

Program Coordinator / Professor
705-566-8101, ext 6972
tracy.love@cambriancollege.ca

Elizabeth McPhee

Program Coordinator / Professor
705 566 8101, ext 6259
Elizabeth.McPhee@CambrianCollege.ca

INTERNATIONAL ADMISSIONS

mailboxadmissions@cambriancollege.ca