

DISCOVERY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

SCHOOL OF HEALTH SCIENCES

Health Care Assistant Program

CURRICULUM GUIDE

Recent revisions: June 2020; October 2020; November 2021; March 2022; October 2023; January 2024; March 2024.

Current revision: October 2024.

PURPOSE

Revised: March 2024.

Discovery Community College's Health Care Assistant Program is designed to provide students with opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to function effectively as frontline caregivers and respected members of the health care team. Under the direction and supervision of a regulated health professional, graduates provide person-centred care aimed at promoting and maintaining the physical, psychological, cognitive, social, and spiritual health and well-being of clients and families.

Upon completion of the program, graduates are prepared to work in a variety of practice settings including home support, assisted living, group homes, complex care, special care units, other home and community care settings, and acute care.

PROGRAM Methods of Delivery

This program is offered in two delivery models:

- Combined in person in class over video conference (using MS Teams) for theory courses (synchronous) and in the simulation centre at a DCC campus for practice courses with work experience placements in the community.
- In person in the classroom and simulation centre at a DCC campus for theory and practice courses with work experience placements in the community.

PROGRAM DESIGN

The program consists of these courses and practice education experiences:

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Course name	Hours	Weeks	Delivery method
GO Week 901: online learning, DCC policy and procedure, financial literacy	20	1	In class or video conference
Workshops: first aid & FoodSafe	24	1	In class or video conference
Concepts for practice	70	2.5	In class or video conference
Introduction to practice	30	1.5	In class or video conference
Interpersonal communications	50	2.5	In class or video conference
Lifestyle and choices	30	1.5	In class or video conference
Common health challenges	120	6	In class or video

			conference
Cognitive and/or mental health challenges	60	3	In class or video conference
Personal care and assistance	120	6	In class simulation centre 85 hrs; in class or video conference 35 hrs
<i>Practice education experiences</i>			
Practice experience in multi-level and/or complex care placement including a placement focused on specialized dementia care: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Instructor led clinical placement 160 hrs. ▪ Practicum placement 60 hrs. 	220	11	On site
Practice experience in home support, assisted living, and/or group home setting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Preceptorship 60 hrs. 	60	3	On site

TOTALS

- **Orientation and Workshop classes = 44 hours**
- **Theory and Simulation Centre classes = 480 hours**
- **Practice Education classes = 280 hours**
- **Total program = 804 hours delivered over 41 weeks**

PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES

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Upon successful completion of the HCA program, graduates will be able to:

1. Provide person-centred care and assistance that recognizes and respects the uniqueness of each individual client.
2. Use an informed problem-solving approach to provide care and assistance that promotes the physical, psychological, cognitive, social, and spiritual health and well-being of clients and families.
3. Provide person-centred care and assistance for clients/residents experiencing complex health challenges.
4. Provide person-centred care and assistance for clients experiencing cognitive and/or mental health challenges.
5. Interact with other members of the health care team in ways that contribute to effective working relationships and the achievement of goals.
6. Communicate clearly, accurately, and sensitively with clients and families in a variety of community and facility contexts.
7. Provide personal care and assistance in a safe, competent, and organized manner.
8. Recognize and respond to own self-development, learning, and health enhancement needs.
9. Perform the care provider role in a reflective, responsible, accountable, and professional manner.

The above learning outcomes will be achieved as the students' progress through the program courses. Knowledge, skills, and behaviours are learned and practiced and reinforced until each student is competent and confident.

As students' progress through the program, they will begin to take responsibility for their knowledge and application of that knowledge, for the caring practice they provide to their clients, for identifying and suggesting remedies for either making further progress in their own development or overcoming deficits, and for all professional and ethical aspects of their behaviour in all areas of the program.

Career Occupation

The Health Care Assistant program prepares students for career occupations as health care assistants, care aides, community health workers. They are frontline care providers in a variety of institutional and community settings including home support agencies and residential care facilities. They may be employed by public and/or private health care providers (NOC 2021 code 33102).

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

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Applicants must meet these minimum program entry requirements:

- Proof of Grade 10 completion (or equivalent)¹ OR mature student status²
- Proof of meeting HCA program entry – English language competency requirements
 - For applicants with three years of full-time instruction in English*: English 10 completion or equivalent
 - For applicants with less than three years of full-time instruction in English*: Standardized English language proficiency test score

**Defined as three years of full-time secondary and/or post-secondary education in the English language at a recognized institution on the list of approved English-speaking countries³. Secondary education starts at grade 8. ESL courses will not be considered.*

Note: applicants wishing to apply to Student Aid BC for financial aid, must have graduated from a BC secondary school (grade 12) or equivalent from another school system OR be a mature applicant (19 years of age on the first day of class).

Note: International students must provide a clear police certificate from their country of origin prior to acceptance – this is a program entry requirement. HCA students provide care to vulnerable clients within the practice education portion of the program. To avoid potential hardship for students arriving from another country, the police certificate is an admission requirement. Please refer to information provided at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/application/medical-police/police-certificates/how.html>.

Applicants must also:

- Submit completed application forms.
- Meet with a DCC official and complete required documents.

¹ To determine equivalency, refer to [ICES Country Specific Information - BCIT](#)

² Must be 19 years of age on the first day of class.

³ Refer to DCC admissions advisor for list of approved English-speaking countries or click this link <https://www.cachwr.bc.ca/resources/pdf/educators/HCA-Minimum-Program-Entry-Requirements.pdf>

HCA program entry – English language competency requirements

Applicants are required to demonstrate proficiency in English. Students must be able to communicate effectively in English to be successful in their studies and capable of providing safe and competent care to patients/clients/residents in the work environment during practice education components.

Applicants who provide evidence of three years of full-time instruction in English* must also provide proof of one of the following:

- Completion of grade 10 English⁴ (or higher); a minimum C grade is acceptable.
- Completion of college courses determined to be equivalent to grade 10 English by post-secondary institutions. A minimum C grade is acceptable.
- Accuplacer next generation test: reading 230, writing 230, WritePlacer 4.

**Applicants must provide a transcript or a BC personal education record as evidence to confirm completion. Applicants must have studied over a period of three years and completed a minimum of two semesters of studies within each year. It is expected that the student will be taking full time studies (30 credits to a minimum of 18 credits per academic year). Typically, a minimum of six semesters with between 54-90 total credits would be completed over the three-year timeframe.*

Applicants who cannot provide evidence of three years of full-time instruction in English are required to provide proof of one of the following standardized proficiency tests from an authorized assessment agency:

- Canadian Language Benchmarks Placement Test (CLBPT) or CLBPT Remote – test in the last year.
 - Listening 7, speaking 7, reading 6, writing 6
- Canadian Language Benchmarks Placement Assessment (CLBPA) – test in the last year.
 - Listening 7, speaking 7, reading 6, writing 6.
- Canadian English Language Proficiency Index Program (CELPPI General or CELPIP Online) – test in the last two years.
 - Listening 7, speaking 7, reading 6, writing 6.
- International English Language Testing System (IELTS Academic, IELTS General, IELTS Academic Online) – test in the last two years.
 - Overall score of 6 with a minimum of 6 in speaking and listening and 5.5 in reading and writing.
- Canadian Academic English Language Assessment (CAEL or CAEL Online) – test in the last two years.
 - Overall score of 60, with no section less than 50.
- The Test of English as a foreign Language (TOEFL iBT or TOEFL iBT Home Edition) – test in the last two years.
 - Overall score of 76, with no score lower than 20 in speaking and listening and 18 in reading and writing.

Note:

- An applicant may be accepted if s/he already has Canadian English Language Benchmark Assessment for Nurses (CELBAN) results, the test must be in the last two years with scores of speaking 7, listening 7, reading 6, writing 6.

⁴ Includes any English language arts 10 course or GED indicating completion of the English requirement.

- An applicant may be accepted with a CLB Report Card from a LINC Program indicating “Completing” CLB speaking 7, listening 7, reading 7, writing 7, AND “Recommended Class Placement” as speaking 8, listening 8, reading 8, writing 8.

REQUIREMENTS for PRACTICE EDUCATION PLACEMENTS

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Prior to being placed in the first practice education experience, evidence of completion of the following must be in each student’s file:

- First aid certification
- CPR level “C” certification or “Basic Life Support (BLS)” certification
- FoodSafe level 1 certification (or a certificate course deemed equivalent [Food Handlers Training Courses Equivalent to BC FOODSAFE Level 1.pdf \(bccdc.ca\)](#))
- Completion of the Student Practice Education Core Orientation (SPECO), available on the Learning Hub, which must include the following:
 - A signed checklist [SPECO Checklist.pdf \(phsa.ca\)](#)
 - Proof of meeting current immunizations / vaccinations as per health care organization policies / guidelines (or a signed vaccination exemption form, except TB)⁵
 - Criminal record check from the Criminal Records Review Program, including clearance to work with vulnerable adults⁶
 - Provincial Violence Prevention Curriculum e-Learning modules
 - WHMIS – Provincial course
- Completion of the Health Care Assistant Practice in BC e-Learning modules (learning hub)
- Completion of the Recognizing and Responding to Adult Abuse course (learning hub)

Information about additional practice education and workplace specific health and safety requirements and/or additional training or certification standards will be given to students prior to their practice placements.

The required courses listed above (e.g., first aid, FoodSafe etc.) are not included in the HCA Program Provincial Curriculum and will be provided in addition to the course/program hours required. Discovery Community College will schedule these. Applicants already having any of these certifications must provide the originals to a college official prior to program start so that a copy may be made and witnessed and placed in the student file.

Immunization Guidelines

Discovery Community College refers to the *Practice Education Guidelines for BC* for guidance on immunization requirements in Regional Health Authorities. All health care staff (including students and PSI educators) should be protected against vaccine preventable diseases. Health care organization (HCO) immunization guidelines and policies are based on the Communicable Diseases and Immunization Guidelines from the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) (www.bccdc.ca) – on their website is an “immunization manual” in which they post information updates. PHO orders are also posted at <https://www2.gov.bc.ca>.

⁵ For placements at BC Health Authority sites, consult the Practice Education Guidelines of BC (PEGs) to ensure compliance with practice guideline standards.

⁶ No other types of criminal record checks are acceptable.

The *Practice Education Guideline 1-3 Communicable Disease Prevention* (July 2021) describes in detail the immunizations required for students and on-site PSI educators for experiences in practice education settings, including the requirements for maintaining current records of immunizations. Here is a link: [PEGs | HSPnet \(hspscanada.net\)](#). Applicants to the HCA programs must also be aware that immunization requirements may be changed at any time by Public Health Order (PHO).

All students and on-site PSI educators must meet the immunization guidelines and policies to participate in a practice education experience. Immunization records for students and PSI educators must be maintained and stored by the PSI. Proof of immunization must be available upon request by the HCO; the HCO may request these records at any time in preparation for, or during the placement.

Any student whose immunization status does not meet these guidelines before the first practice education placement may not be accepted by the receiving agency. Students who cannot be placed in a practice education experience cannot graduate from this program and will be withdrawn.

Applicants and/or students who are unable to comply with these immunization guidelines cannot be accepted into the HCA program.

Criminal Record Check Guidelines

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There are two types of criminal record check (CRC):

- A CRC with the local police
- A CRC with the Criminal Record Review Program (CRRP) of BC

Because graduates of the HCA program must register with an oversight body (the BC Care Aide & Community Health Worker Registry – refer to www.cachwr.bc.ca), only criminal record checks completed through the Criminal Record Review Program (CRRP) will be accepted for students in the HCA program.

To accomplish the criminal record check (CRC) with the Criminal Record Review Program (CRRP) of BC, DCC will provide the link for the applicant to log in to the CRRP to complete their criminal record check request, as well as instructions to complete the next steps.

The status of the CRC does not automatically prevent an applicant from attending this program. However, any CRC that reveals “relevant” offences may make it difficult or impossible to place the student in a practicum or clinical. Students who cannot be placed in a practicum or clinical cannot graduate from this program and will be withdrawn.

Some practice experience hosts may require their own criminal record check. It is the student’s responsibility to provide this directly to the host. If the criminal record check reveals information that raises concerns relevant to the placement the host may decline the placement. Students who cannot be placed in a practice experience cannot graduate from this program and will be withdrawn.

A criminal record check is a requirement for registration with the BC Care Aide & Community Health Worker Registry (BC CACHWR). The Registry may not register any applicant who has a relevant criminal record. We strongly recommend that applicants who are concerned about their criminal record complete both their CRC through the CRRP and their CRC through the RCMP before they begin the Health Care Assistant program.

RECOMMENDED STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Before applying for this program, applicants should learn as much as possible about this career. Successful care aides and community health workers are genuinely interested in caring for the elderly in either long term care facilities or in their homes. You should be respectful, sensitive, and responsive to the needs of the frail elderly. You should also be mindful of the need to take care of your own health and safety needs.

Students with the following characteristics can anticipate success in the program and in their future career:

- Be in good health with an ability to work physically hard.
- Have excellent interpersonal skills.
- Enjoy being with and have a strong sense of compassion for the frail elderly.
- Be able to give very personal care and be tolerant of unpleasant odors.
- Maintain a responsible attitude with high standards of personal and professional integrity.
- Be able to communicate clearly in writing.
- Be able to work effectively as part of a team.
- Maintain a professional appearance and adhere to the dress code standards of a facility.

Students must always be willing to conduct themselves in a professional and ethical manner. As part of your preparation for work in the profession of health care, instructors and staff will apply the principals of the profession to their expectations of your conduct. This will be a supportive process.

Students will be required to adhere to a clinical dress policy designed to portray the same professional image that is required in any health care facility.

Students should be interested in the complex tasks required of a health care assistant, with a special emphasis on the skills, knowledge, and behaviours needed in a health care setting. You should also possess a deep sense of compassion for and caring towards all people but especially towards the elderly and infirm.

Students should be willing to engage in class discussion and debate, enjoy reading, research, and study, and be able to write and record their thoughts and information gathered.

METHODS of EVALUATION

Student progress and success will be assessed regularly throughout the program. This will be accomplished using a variety of evaluation tools; these are fully described in course outlines.

Final transcripts will record all marks for courses within the program.

The passing grade for each course is 70%. Each course within the program must be passed to graduate and each course must be successfully completed before moving on to the next course.

A separate certificate will be awarded to each student attaining 95% or better attendance.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Schedules may vary, and students must be able to attend in person, online, and practice (in facility) classes as scheduled. Some practice education classes begin at 6:45 a.m., and may be scheduled on

days, evenings, and weekends. Schedules will be distributed at the beginning of the program, but these are subject to change.

The practice education (clinical and preceptorship) takes place in the care facility. Students will be required to supply their own transportation to all locations. Practice education placements will be at a variety of sites in the provincial health authority region where your program is based; however, this may vary.

For online learning students will require a suitable device such as a laptop computer (preferably using Windows operating system), and access to internet services. We recommend a laptop with a keyboard (not just a touch screen) and additional devices such as a cell phone.

The instructor will use various strategies including lectures, demonstrations, group discussion and/or presentations, student practice, videos, and guest speakers. There may be field trips arranged during the program as opportunity and resources allow. Students will be required to supply their own transportation for these.

Revisions

Information contained in this curriculum guide is correct at the time of publication. Content of courses and programs is revised on an ongoing basis to ensure relevance to changing educational, employment, and marketing needs. Students will be given notice of any changes as soon as possible.