

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Academic Year:	2026-2027
Credential:	Ontario College Diploma
Program Delivery:	Full-Time
Duration:	2 Years
Length:	4 Semesters
Program Code(s):	A156 - Distance

DESCRIPTION

The Educational Support program provides integrated, practical learning experiences to students along with a body of knowledge that prepares graduates to work competently, effectively and safely upon entering the educational support field.

This program is informed by the best principles and practices in educational support that contribute to the learning, development and independence of all learners. Collectively, these factors enable graduates of the program to reliably demonstrate the skills required to work collaboratively with members of the school community in support of all learners in a variety of educational settings.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Graduates of Northern College's Education Support program will be well-equipped to supervise and monitor behavior, document and prepare classes, and assist exceptional students up to the age of 21.

Educational Support Assistants are needed in diverse educational settings, such as public and private schools, elementary and secondary schools, treatment centers, special needs schools, school boards, and community-based programs.

Graduates can pursue various career paths, including:

1. Educational Support Assistant
 - Support activities that enhance children's physical and emotional well-being.
 - Foster emotional, social, language, cognitive, and physical development.
2. Learning Support Assistant
 - Provide clerical and administrative support to multiple learning coordinators.
3. Education Assistant
 - Assist in the delivery and development of educational programs.

VOCATIONAL LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Comply with legislation, standards, regulations, policies, practices, and procedures in the provision of educational support.
2. Support learner development with evidence-based behaviour and mental health strategies with a focus on self-regulation.

3. Collaborate as part of a multi-disciplinary team to design and implement evidence-based educational support strategies, practices, and programs.
4. Model empathetic, positive, and pro-social behaviours to facilitate the development of social competence in all learners and contribute to safe and equitable learning communities.
5. Promote independence and/or provide assistance in the performance of routine and instrumental activities of daily living.
6. Choose and implement assistive technologies and daily living aids to build capacity in learners.
7. Monitor, document, and report on the behaviour, performance, and progress of learners.
8. Create strategies for ongoing personal and professional development to enhance performance, maintain currency, and foster holistic self-care.

PROGRAM COURSES

The following reflects the planned course sequence for full-time offerings of the program. Programs at Northern College are delivered using a variety of instruction modes. Courses may be offered in the classroom or lab, entirely online, or in a hybrid mode which combines classroom sessions with virtual learning activities.

Semester 1		Hours
CM1323	Professional Communication	42
ED1001	Literacy Fundamentals I (Primary/Junior)	42
ED1011	Introduction to the Role of Educational Support	42
ED1021	Working in a Team Environment	42
ED1031	Introduction to Exceptionalities and Individualized Education Plans	42
ED1041	Introduction to Interpersonal Relationships	42
ED1051	Child Development	42
ED1061	Field Placement Orientation and Observation	28
Semester 2		
ED1003	Literacy Fundamentals II (Intermediate/Senior)	42
ED1013	Data in the Classroom and Special Education Department	42
ED1023	Exceptionalities and Exceptional Learners I	42
ED1033	Working with Diversity	42
ED1053	Math and Literacy in the Classroom	42
ED1066	Field Placement I	84
GN1443	Indigenous Culture & Awareness	42
Semester 3		
CM2303	Communication in the Workplace	42
ED2003	Supporting Instruction in the Classroom	42
ED2013	Exceptionalities and Exceptional Learners II	42
ED2023	Diverse Families	42
ED2033	Developmental Psychology	42
ED2046	Field Placement II	84
EL1041	General Education Elective	42

Semester 4

ED1063	Child and Adolescent Psychopathy	42
ED1076	Field Placement III	280
EL1042	General Education Elective	42

PROGRAM PROGRESSION

The following reflects the planned progression for full-time offerings of the program.

Sem 1: Fall 2026

Sem 2: Winter 2027

Sem 3: Fall 2027

Sem 4: Winter 2028

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) or equivalent
- Grade 12 English (C, U) (Minimum 60% GPA required) or equivalent
- Computer proficiency in Microsoft Office (word processing, spreadsheets), web search engines and e-mail systems.

Academic prerequisites for this program may be obtained free of charge through [Academic Upgrading](#).

Applicants who do not have a high school diploma or equivalent and will have reached the age of 19 years on or before the start of the program must undergo academic testing and may be required to complete [Prior Learning Assessment & Recognition \(PLAR\)](#) process to demonstrate equivalency of admission requirements prior to admission into a program.

For more details, please contact the Admissions Office at 705-235-7222 or admissions@northern.on.ca.

PROGRAM SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS & ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

It is important to note that this program requires a field work component. While the intent is for placements to be arranged in the student's own community, when this is not possible, alternate communities will need to be considered. Students are responsible for the costs of travel to and from field work placement sites, parking costs, etc.

International students require a criminal reference check from their home country on top of their criminal reference check in Canada in order to be able to go on placement.

In order to prepare you for fieldwork placement, you will be required to have a current resume and cover letter. Fieldwork placement (FWP) agencies may require additional documentation in order for you to begin FWP. The specific documents will be made known to you in your Field Placement Orientation and Observation course. A recent criminal reference check – (within 3 months) may be required prior to the start of classes in September.

Students who do not comply with the immunization requirements may not be allowed into the field work settings and as such may not be able to complete the placements and practicums required for graduation from the program.

To be eligible for participation in field work practice, students must not have been convicted of any criminal offence for which that person has not been pardoned. An unpardoned criminal record may result in inability to participate in fieldwork practice courses and will prevent the student from graduating. Any costs for these tests/certifications will be the responsibility of the applicant.

A passing grade of 60% is required for all Community Services program courses and 50% for General Education Electives.

Work Integrated Learning Opportunities

This program requires a field work component.

Articulation / Transfer Agreements

A number of articulation agreements have been negotiated with universities and other institutions across Canada, North America and internationally. These agreements are assessed, revised and updated on a regular basis. Please contact the program coordinator for specific details if you are interested in pursuing such an option. Additional information can be found at [Articulation Agreements](#).

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

- 20 Program Courses
- 2 Communications Courses
- 3 General Education Course

Graduation Eligibility

To graduate from this program, a student must attain a minimum of 60% or a letter grade of CR (Credit) in each course in each semester unless otherwise stated on the course outline. Students should consult departmental policies and manuals for additional details and exceptions.

Graduation Window

Students unable to adhere to the program duration of two years (as stated above) may take a maximum of four years to complete their credential. After this time, students must be re-admitted into the program and follow the curriculum in place at the time of re-admission.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For questions about being admitted into the program, please contact Northern College Admissions at admissions@northern.on.ca or by phone at 705-235-3211 ext. 7222. For questions about the content of the program, contact the Program Coordinator.

Erin Holmes, Program Coordinator

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COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Semester 1

CM1323 Professional Communications

In this course, students will learn essential skills for success in college and the workplace. This course focuses on developing and strengthening oral and written communication skills, and critical thinking ability. During this course, students will engage in a variety of forms of communication with a focus on upholding the principles of academic integrity. Students will develop the skills necessary to create discipline-specific documents, practice business etiquette and professionalism, and apply critical thinking strategies to practical scenarios. Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to plan and draft concise, coherent and well-organized writing assignments that are tailored to specific audiences and purposes.

ED1001 Literacy Fundamentals Part 1 – Primary/Junior

In this course, students will explore the fundamentals of literacy development in children at different ages through various forms of communication and different forms of writing.

ED1011 Introduction to the Role of the Educational Support

Students will explore the various aspects of professionalism that are associated with the role of the education support workers in the classroom environment, and within Individual Education Plan (IEP) and special education teams.

ED1021 Working in a Team Environment

In this course, students will develop their communication and interpersonal skills to build team rapport and collaborative partnerships. Students will learn how to cultivate a collective and caring classroom environment, use appropriate classroom team language, and will explore and identify professional boundaries.

ED1031 Introduction to Exceptionalities and Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)

In this course, students will learn to identify the five categories of exceptionalities that define exceptional pupils in the classroom, as identified in the Education Act, including: behaviour, communication, intellectual, physical and multiple exceptionalities. Students will also understand the subcategories that are outlined in the Education Act, as well as IEP placements in Ontario classrooms. Students will also explore appropriate assistive technologies to support the respective exceptionalities and learn how to leverage technology to support all learners.

ED1041 Introduction to Interpersonal Relationships

This course equips Educational Support with the skills to build positive and meaningful interpersonal relationships with students and staff, thereby creating a foundation for effective communication and fostering an inclusive learning environment that acknowledges student diversity and needs. Participants will develop strategies for managing distress and challenging behaviours with empathy and professionalism. Through authentic activities, critical reflection, and real-world scenarios, participants will enhance their proficiencies to promote inclusivity and implement preventive approaches that respect individual strengths and identities. This course emphasizes practical techniques that can be applied to all educational support staff roles.

ED1051 Child Development

Students will be introduced to the developmental stages of childhood from birth to young adolescence and will explore the possible impact prenatal development may have on later development. Students will apply theoretical and practical applications to study the social, emotional, cognitive and physical development of infants, toddlers, preschool children, middle childhood, and young adolescents.

ED1061 Field Placement Orientation and Observation

Students will observe, document, and report on learners with exceptionalities' behaviour, performance and progress in accordance with their IEP.

Semester 2**ED1003 Literacy Fundamentals Part 2 – Intermediate/Senior**

Students will build on the fundamental skills they developed in Communications for the Education Sector 1, furthering their knowledge and understanding of literacy development in children and how best to support their acquisition of needed skills.

ED1013 Data in the Classroom and Special Education Department

In this course, students will learn how to collect and analyze student behaviour using appropriate technology. Students will record observations and analysis to inform approaches and interactions and update students' IEPs, as required.

ED1023 Exceptionalities and Exceptional Learners I

Students will build on their knowledge and understanding of different exceptionalities. Students will further their study of appropriate assistive technologies to support all learners, including those with exceptionalities.

ED1033 Working with Diversity

In this course, students will explore and examine the many layers of diversity that surround individuals and identifiable groups in society to better understand how these layers contribute to a rich, diverse Canadian cultural landscape. Students will identify, discuss and define core terminology, including privilege, cultural competence, and cultural safety. Students will have the opportunity to reflect on their personal attitudes, assumptions and views toward diverse population groups and will explore the impact of governmental policies on certain segments of Canadian society.

ED1053 Math and Literacy in the Classroom

In this course, students will learn how to support students who have an IEP in math and in literacy-based classrooms, using appropriate technologies to support learners' math and literacy skill development.

ED1066 Field Placement I

Students will begin to integrate theory with practice in an educational setting. Students will define the required competencies needed in the field and will follow all required policies and process of their placement host, helping them to understand their role and responsibilities. Using reflective practice, students will be introduced to professional development as a means of lifelong learning.

GN1443 Indigenous Culture & Awareness

In this course, students will improve their knowledge and understanding of the history of the Indigenous peoples of what we now call Canada. This is an important step towards enabling Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, organizations, and communities to work together more respectfully. Throughout this course, students will have the opportunity to learn, discuss and reflect about a variety of topics relevant to the learning journey towards reconciliation.

Semester 3**CM2303 Communications in the Workplace**

In this course, students will develop professional communication skills required for success in the workplace. Students will continue to develop and strengthen their oral and written communication skills and critical thinking abilities. During this course, students will use various modes of communication to complete assignments designed to meet program and professional expectations. Students will utilize a variety of technologies for the purpose of creating a professional presence in a digital environment. Students will develop the necessary skills to create polished workplace documents such as letters, resumes, cover letters and reports tailored to specific audiences. Students will learn to conduct themselves with professionalism in both workplace interviews and job searches. Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to create clear, concise and coherent workplace and employment documents that are error-free and designed for specific audiences and purposes.

ED2003 Supporting Instruction in the Classroom

In this course, students will identify cognitive profiles based on information and observation of learners, apply appropriate universal design for learning strategies, and select technologies to support differentiated learning approaches to meet learners' needs.

ED2013 Exceptionalities and Exceptional Learners II

Students will use their knowledge and understanding of different exceptionalities to select appropriate assistive technologies and strategies to support all learners, including those with exceptionalities.

ED2023 Diverse Families

In this course, students will learn how to support Canadian families in contemporary society. Using an anti-oppressive lens, students will examine the challenges that Canadian families face to develop awareness of the principles and values that guide human service practice.

ED2033 Developmental Psychology

Using a developmental psychology lens, students will improve their understanding of self. Students will examine the human lifespan to gain understanding and perspective of development across physical, cognitive, social and personality contexts. Fundamental theories, historical arguments and perspectives will be examined in the context of current issues to further develop students' critical thinking skills.

ED2046 Field Placement II

Following all required policies and process of their placement host, appropriate to their role, they will demonstrate their skills by supporting learners in an educational setting. Students will continue to use reflective practice to further their professional development.

EL1041 General Education Elective

General Education Courses are selected online each semester by the student from a list provided and exposes students to a related area of study outside of their immediate academic discipline. Certain programs have predetermined electives.

Semester 4**ED1063 Child and Adolescent Psychopathy**

In this course, students will learn the biopsychosocial model of analysis to better support learners from different domains including emotional, social, cognitive, and physical.

ED1076 Field Placement III

In this final placement, students will apply all of their acquired skills and knowledge to support learners in an educational setting with minimal supervision in accordance with host policies and procedures, relevant legislation, including health and safety regulations.

EL1042 General Education Elective

General Education Courses are selected online each semester by the student from a list provided and exposes students to a related area of study outside of their immediate academic discipline. Certain programs have predetermined electives.