



APPRENTICESHIP PATHWAY

Frequently Asked Questions

Answers to common questions about the Developmental Services Worker apprenticeship — from working with multiple employers to what happens after you're certified.

1 What if I have more than one employer?

You can still complete your on-the-job training. If you work for more than one employer in the developmental services field, a qualified trainer at your other workplace is able to sign off as you demonstrate individual skills.

That said, your official sponsoring employer stays in the driver's seat: they're the ones who ultimately confirm your overall competency and sign the Skill Set Completion documentation. Once they submit that form, they're accepting full responsibility for your workplace training — no matter which location the hours were actually completed at.

Good to know: If this applies to you speak to your Sponsor and your Apprenticeship Advisor at STO to confirm this approach and how it will be handled.

2 How do I complete in-class training?

The academic courses are an important part of your apprenticeship and covers the theory behind the skills you're building on the job across a set of reportable subjects, including:

- Developmental disabilities & dual diagnosis
- Person-directed planning & intervention strategies
- Teaching strategies & community building
- Abuse prevention, health & wellness, and pharmacology
- Professionalism and philosophy of support

Depending on your college, courses are offered through day release (one day a week, year-round), evening classes, or online delivery. Most apprentices take one or two courses per semester, and class time is typically 2-3 hours per week, plus several hours a week of your own reading and assignments outside class.

Your sponsoring employer is expected to help adjust your work schedule so you can attend your scheduled classes. If you have previous related College education you may be eligible for a transfer credit, speak to your Program Coordinator for more information.

3 What's the difference between the Apprenticeship and Diploma programs?

Both lead to recognized credentials in the field, but they get you there very differently:

Apprenticeship

- Requires a sponsoring employer to register a training agreement with
- Most training happens on the job (85–90%) while you keep earning a paycheck
- Most classroom costs are subsidized
- Covers 12 reportable subjects over ~780 hours of coursework
- Ends with a Certificate of Apprenticeship

Diploma (direct entry)

- Apply directly to a college — no employer sponsor required
- You cover full tuition yourself
- A full-time, 2-year classroom program plus 400–600 hours of unpaid field placement
- Includes additional courses, including general education requirements
- Ends with a College Diploma

Worth noting: Completing the Apprenticeship first (then bridging — see Question 4) usually costs less and takes less additional time than starting the Diploma program from scratch, since much of the coursework already counts.

4 What are the steps in bridging?

"Bridging" is the process of turning your completed Apprenticeship into a full DSW Diploma by taking a few extra courses and completing a field placement. Here's how it works:

- 1 Once you've received your Certificate of Apprenticeship, contact the college you'd like to bridge with to ask about their bridging process and any specific requirements. It's usually best to apply to the same college where you completed your apprenticeship coursework.
- 2 Send in your Certificate of Apprenticeship as proof that you've completed your required on-the-job and in-class hours.
- 3 Work with the Program Coordinator to arrange your courses and field placement.

5 What are some best practices for program success?

Apprentices who finish strong tend to lean on a few habits:

- **Start early.** Registration and scheduling can take time — sometimes up to a year before classes begin — so the sooner you get the process moving, the better.
- **Make a plan.** Sketch out a rough timeline for your on-the-job skills and your coursework so you know what you're working toward each semester.
- **Define your skills concretely.** Sit down with your coach/mentor and turn broad skill descriptions into specific, real examples from your day-to-day work.
- **Ask questions.** Use your coach/mentor, your peers in the program, and your Program Coordinator — you don't have to figure it out alone.
- **Keep a journal.** A written record of what you're learning helps you track progress and gives you something concrete to bring to check-ins with your mentor.
- **Manage your time.** Be honest about whether one or two courses a semester is realistic for you, and block out regular time for studying and assignments around your work schedule.

Have a question that isn't covered here? Reach out to your Program Coordinator.

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