

ACR Aboriginal Programs Project Program Template

Program Area:	4.0	Community Relations
Sub Program:	4.2	Building and Sustaining Positive Community Relationships
Template:	4.2.1	Aboriginal Child and Family Services Certificate/Diploma Program
Sponsor(s)	<i>Keyano College</i>	

Objective

The intent of the Aboriginal Child and Family Services (ACFS) program is to provide an alternative to mainstream social work education programs. The curriculum is culturally relevant with practical solutions for meeting the needs of qualified human service workers.

Description

This program prepares human service practitioners to work in a culturally sensitive manner with the Aboriginal population, the general population and with other minority groups. The blending of academic knowledge and Aboriginal values and beliefs add to the uniqueness of this human service program. The Aboriginal Child and Family Services (ACFS) program provides quality human service education within the province of Alberta and other locations as requested. The Program emphasizes the influence that family, education, health and culture have on child development.

The program incorporates human service methods of practice as well as Aboriginal methods of helping. The blending of the two methods provides the student with a rich base from which to practice from. The Aboriginal Child and Family Services (ACFS) program addresses the concerns of First Nations, Metis and Urban Natives as they respond to the redesign of Children's Services for children and families as well as the move by First Nations people to provide local control for social programs.

The ACFS program is designed as a two-year diploma program (20 months) however, participants will be provided with the option of exiting with a certificate after successfully completing one year (10 months). Graduates of this program will be able to fill employment opportunities with First Nations agencies and provincially funded agencies.

Description of Year One Courses.

Communications 1

This course concentrates on written and oral reports relevant to the work of an Aboriginal Child & Services Worker. The practical principles of grammar and punctuation will be emphasized in the writing of letters, memorandums, semi-formal and formal proposals, program reports, case documentation, monthly and year end reports as well as case files. Students acquire effective presentation skills as well as the ability to participate in meetings and discussions.

This course is a prerequisite for ACFS 202 Communications II delivered in the diploma program. This intro communication course prepares students for their entry into the human service field. In addition, students will acquire effective assessment skills in verbal and non-verbal communication.

The course also introduces students to the fundamentals of communication, which will be applied and practiced in the student's field practicum setting.

Child Welfare

This course will explore how the well being of children caught the public's attention and how it developed into its present day form. Throughout this course the participant will attempt to capture the purpose behind the evolution of Child Welfare Services and evaluate the successes and failures of the process.

This course is a prerequisite for ACFS 104 Child Welfare II. Students will acquire the basic assessment skills and will understand the various forms of abuse and neglect as outlined by the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act of Alberta. The course is focused on providing the student with the opportunity to learn about Children's Services in a stimulating environment. The course provides the student with the opportunity to learn about larger social systems.

As many Aboriginal communities strive toward self-determination and delivering their own services to children and families a critique of the present day system as well as an evaluation of what has worked and what has not worked is important.

Traditional Parenting

This course will examine parenting in the Aboriginal community and identify traditional values and societal influences on parenting as it is practiced today.

This course provides the student with the opportunity to explore the inherent differences of parenting within differing cultures. The strengths of traditional Aboriginal parenting models are emphasized and students can compare and contrast different ways of knowing and doing. Current parenting strategies within the Aboriginal community are also explored, as are mainstream parenting strategies.

These acquired skills will be applied and practiced in the student's field practicum setting.

Child Development I

This course explores growth and development of the child through to age eight. Physical, emotional, social, and intellectual development of the child is examined from a cultural perspective. This course provides students with information on the healthy growth and development of children. Aboriginal groups are one of the fastest growing populations within Canada. Having an understanding of child development will assist the Aboriginal Child and Family Services Worker with the knowledge to share with the families and communities that they work with. Mainstream perspectives on child development are also compared and contrasted.

Child Welfare II

This course studies in detail the present Child Welfare Legislation as exemplified by the *Child Youth and Family Enhancement Act of Alberta*. During this course the participant will be

encouraged to interpret this legislation and adapt.

Child welfare services have had a tremendous impact on Aboriginal people. The Program attempts to incorporate the knowledge base needed by students to effectively work within the present day system so that they may best meet the needs of their clientele. Students are provided with the opportunity to examine and interpret the legislation and to critically analyze the historical aspects of the system as well as the contemporary aspects of the system. Students are also encouraged to reflect on the way they feel about the legislation and how this will impact working within the system.

Child Counseling

This course addresses the concept of counseling within the profession of Aboriginal Child and Family Services. It will discuss various counseling techniques available and examine their suitability from a cultural context.

This course provides the opportunity for students to begin to understand the process of counseling children. Students examine different theories as they relate to counseling children. Current theories are explored and students will have a beginning understanding of what the counseling process means to them.

Introductory Aboriginal Language

This course provides a general introduction to the development of oral language and the syllabics alphabet. Vocabulary related to family, seasons, legends, and other conversational topics will be developed by the student with the addition of an oral language component. No prior knowledge in an Aboriginal language is assumed.

Students have an introduction to the Cree language. They will be provided with an overview of the way of life, customs, traditions, and the ways in which language impacts communication. Students are provided with a basic overview of the language that will help them to relate to clients from a different worldview.

The Program teaches from the perspective that all cultures are unique it is important for students to explore a language that is predominant in the area, as well as explore another worldview.

Cultural Heritage

In this course students will explore their identity as an Aboriginal person. This will be accomplished by investigating family history, traditional lifestyle and values.

Working with others from different cultures is a reality in the field of human services. Understanding oneself as a cultural being is a focus of this course. By understanding oneself you are more open to seeing others with awareness of how your cultural lens filters your interactions. How we interpret the world is impacted by our cultural identity.

The work toward providing culturally relevant services to Aboriginal people is important to the program. Having students explore their cultural identity will provide them with an opportunity to engage in a process of appreciation for other cultures.

Ethics

This course will examine appropriate standards and rules of conduct in working with children and families. In particular, the course will explore and focus on ethical issues in the context of Aboriginal values and tradition.

Ethical standards are important within the helping profession. There are specific codes of conduct individuals employed within the helping profession. The Aboriginal Child and Family Services Program recognizes these codes of conduct and teaches a course that will prepare students to work within the parameters of professional social work practice. Upon completion of this course students will have a knowledge base that incorporates specific examples of codes of conduct, ethical decision making processes, standards of practice, and professionalism.

Working within the helping profession will provide students with the opportunity to critically analyze ethical standards of practice.

Introduction to Human Services and Basic Counseling Skills

This course will introduce the student to the broad range of opportunities available in the human services field. Additionally the course will introduce the student to basic professional counseling skills, preparing them to enter into a professional helping role.

This is an introductory course that provides students with the opportunity to explore the human service role. The student is provided with information on the history and evolution of the social work profession, the values inherent in the profession and how the role has changed over time. The student is also provided with an introduction to the multiple roles of a human service worker and an overview of the reality of the work and knowledge of traditional helping systems,

Upon completion of this course students will have an understanding of the role of a human service worker and what that entails. This course is important for students to understand the role of a human service professional and will provide students with a solid base to practice within the community.

Introduction to Computers

This course will provide a general introduction to computer skills with a focus on Excel, word processing, Power point, and so forth. The emphasis will be on teaching presentation skills and how to prepare major papers and assignments by use of the computer.

Paperwork is an essential skill in the human services field. Within this course students are taught how to use a computer to complete projects, presentations and assignments.

This is a transferable skill that can be used in any work environment.

Practicum

The student will demonstrate competency of acquired theoretical skills in the workplace. Integration seminars are imbedded in the 480 hours.

The practicum is a major component of the program. This is the opportunity for students to practice what they have learned in a work environment. As well as critically analyze how theory and practice blend to create a meaningful work experience. Students are placed in agencies

within the City of Edmonton or in agencies within the surrounding Aboriginal communities. Within the first year placement they are provided with the opportunity to explore their skills as a beginning helper, ask questions in a safe environment and learn about the helping profession. Students learn the processes of teamwork, the responsibilities of the helping profession, and how to practice ethical standards of conduct and practice.

Students go out to make a difference in the lives of others. Many of the students go out to work within the Aboriginal community. Others work within mainstream agencies or continue on with their education. Whatever the case, the practicum provides them with the opportunity to be actively involved with their education right from the beginning

The entire first year courses assist and provide the student's with the educational knowledge, which is based on theory and practice, to support the student in the field practicum setting.

The student is able to acquire the necessary educational skills and apply those skills directly in their practice setting.

Diploma: Year 2 Course Descriptions

Community Development

The redesign of Children Services puts a greater emphasis on community designed services. To prepare the student for this reality this course will introduce the basic principles, concepts, techniques and processes of community development, which will be discussed from a cultural perspective.

This course builds on the content learned within the first year courses. As students begin to understand the fundamental processes of human service work they will come to recognize that community development is an integral area of the work. They will be provided with an overview of the theories of community development so they can begin to integrate them into their second year of practice.

Many Aboriginal communities are in the process of taking control of human service work in their communities. They require highly skilled individuals to work within these agencies. This course will provide them with information on how they can best assist the communities in accomplishing these changes.

Communications II

The student will develop the speaking and listening skills necessary for conducting interviews and understand their importance in the workplace. Effective writing skills will be further developed in the writing of assessment and referral reports.

This course is the second communications course in the program. It continues to build communication skills in the area of interviewing and communication. Students are also provided with more advanced information on how to write assessments as well as referral reports. Further assessment of verbal and non-verbal communications will be explored in depth in this year two course.

This falls in line with the program goal to prepare students to work effectively in the human services field.

Facilitation

This course will provide the student with the necessary skills and knowledge to plan and facilitate initiative at the community level. Principles and techniques of community facilitation will be introduced as a tool for bringing about social change and developing healthy communities.

This is a second year course that provides the basis for students to work within community driven services. Practicum students are developing the necessary skills of facilitation and many are asked to conduct presentations or participate in meetings.

The program promotes social change and advocacy. It also promotes healthy communities. This course offering is fundamental to our program's overall objectives in providing qualified human service workers to the human service profession.

Contemporary Aboriginal Society

The student will focus on developing an enhanced understanding of themselves as an Aboriginal person by examining contemporary events and issues affecting Aboriginal people. Historical and cultural influences will also be discussed.

This course is a stand-alone course. It provides the student with the opportunity to explore contemporary Aboriginal realities. The impact of history is also analyzed. All of the teachings within this course emphasize the impact of events on various Aboriginal peoples.

By providing students with the opportunity to examine historical and contemporary events they will develop: Knowledge and insight into a few of the social problems experienced by Aboriginal people, develop understanding as well as the ability and skill to provide an empathic response to situations they encounter. As student's knowledge base builds they will be able to identify and assess problematic areas and will have the skills to work toward the resolution of issues or concerns that impact Aboriginal people.

Today's Family

This course will discuss the Aboriginal family and the issues, which arise in traditional family values within modern society.

Students will discuss the various family systems and theory and models to assist in understanding and assisting Aboriginal families and children within a contemporary context. The student will understand the assumptions and core concepts of the family system theory and will learn the application of the necessary family strategies to complete the first and second order tasks. The student will understand how families create identity, collectively and individually in a healthy manner. The student will learn how a family system exercises boundaries, maintains resources, and manages an emotional climate. This course will also examine the various types of stressors families cope with and how they are able to move through the change process of adapting to a healthy family system.

Family Counseling

This course will discuss the nature and structure of the Aboriginal Family unit. Family counseling techniques for balancing needs, facilitating interactions and decision-making procedures are

developed.

The course provides an introduction to the theory and practice of family counseling and consideration is given both to the history and development of family counseling approaches. The student will acquire the necessary basic skill level of procedures for an Aboriginal counselor to act as a healing agent in the family.

Addictions Awareness

This course will discuss the addictions, which may exist within a community. The student will study the physical, psychological and social impacts of the addictive person on the child, the family and the community.

Students will analyze the effects of addiction on the family through a thorough examination of codependency. This course will provide a broad overview of the drugs both legal and illicit which have a potential danger of abuse. This course will discuss recent research of the major classifications of psychoactive drugs, and the drug categories within each classification. The course will further address the significance of addressing the recovery issues for the family who is impacted by the addicted family member.

Introductory Supervision

The student will be able to recognize their personal management style and to understand and practice personal and professional ethics as they relate to their employment situation. The student will study the relationship of traditional values, culture, and the contemporary work place.

The student will understand the difference between management, leadership and supervision. The student will also be able to examine the steps and requirements of conducting successful job interviews.

Crisis Intervention

The course will assist students in developing the necessary skills to maintain a safe environment for children. Students will also focus on basic first aid emergency and CPR practices. Students will discuss and explore creative ways to provide healthy environments both for home and office areas.

Training offered includes: Suicide intervention skills, basic first aid emergency and CPR for infants and children, non-abusive psychological and physical intervention and the Substance Abuse Subtle Screening Inventory. Students will discuss and explore creative ways to provide healthy environments both for home and office areas. Upon successful completion of the above named courses, the student will receive the appropriate certificates from a qualified instructor.

Teaching of the Elders

The Elders will discuss their traditional perspective on families and children. Teaching the Medicine Wheel and discussions around living a balanced and harmonious lifestyle are also included in this course. Guest Elders will share their teachings to the class.

Students will explore parenting as a source of continued existence in a life of balance and harmony that depends on the realization of the responsibilities for the perpetuation of life

through children. It is a realization children are the future.

Integration Seminar

The integration seminar attempts to incorporate the conceptual and practical learning that one encounters in the helping process. By using a seminar format students will be able to learn and develop skills in a safe and learning environment. The seminar will be student oriented and will be facilitated by an experienced M.S.W., R.S.W. instructor.

The student will learn methods and techniques of personal self-care, understand personal coping skills, model professional behavior, and reflect on their current practice as well as the practice of others.

Practicum II

The student will demonstrate competency of acquired theoretical skills in the workplace.

The practicum is a major component of the program. This is the opportunity for students to practice what they have learned in a work environment, as well as critically analyze how theory and practice blend to create a meaningful work experience. Students are placed in agencies within the City of Edmonton or in agencies within the surrounding Aboriginal communities. Within the second year placement they are provided with the opportunity to explore their skills, ask questions in a safe environment and further learn about the helping profession. Students continue to learn the processes of teamwork, the responsibilities of the helping profession, and how to further practice and maintain ethical standards of conduct and practice.

Students go out to make a difference in the lives of others. Many of our students go out to work within the Aboriginal community. Others work within mainstream agencies or continue on with their education. Whatever the case, the practicum provides them with the opportunity to be actively involved with their education right from the beginning.

The entire first year and second courses assist and provide the student's with the educational knowledge, which is based on theory and practice, to support the student in the field practicum setting. The student is able to acquire the necessary educational skills and apply those skills directly in their practice setting and translate these skills into paid employment.

Where applicable these acquired skills will be applied and practiced in the student's field practicum setting.

Implementation

The Aboriginal Child & Family Services Diploma program minimum entrance requirements include:

- Alberta High School Diploma or equivalent, with a minimum 50% in English 30 or English 30-1 or 65% in English 33 or English 30-2.
- RCMP/Police Check
- CYMS check (formerly Child Welfare Information Systems check)
- Program Admission Interview - includes a personal statement, employment/work history, and volunteer experience (attached)

* The program has proposed the addition of three (3) letters of reference be added to the minimum entrance requirements.

Timeframe for Results

The ACFS program is designed as a two-year diploma program (20 months) however, participants will be provided with the option of exiting with a certificate after successfully completing one year (10 months). Graduates of this program will be able to fill employment opportunities with First Nations agencies and provincially funded agencies.

Measurable Criteria

These include:

- The program will foster education that is holistic in nature.
- It will incorporate human service methods of practice as well as Aboriginal methods of helping. The blending of the two will provide the student with a rich base from which to practice from.
- The majority of students will be offered full time employment during their first year of education. The reasons that have been given to because the employers in the field appreciate current, relevant and culturally appropriate training that is provided to the students.
- The heavy emphasis on practicum hours allows the employers/practicum setting to expand the students growing knowledge and insight into the field.

Budget

<u>Certificate Program:</u>	<u>Diploma Program:</u>
Tuition: \$4,989.00	Tuition: \$4,989.00
Books: 750.00	Books: 850.00
Total: \$5,739.00	Total: \$5,839.00

Partners and Sponsors

The ACFS program currently has no full time partner or sponsor agreements in place but Keyano College is in discussions with Saskatchewan Indian Institute for Technology (Saskatoon) to bring the program to their site.

The ACFS program will offer several courses to the Government of North West Territories employees as a supplement to the groups that are completing their Community Wellness Certificate Program. This will be offered in the beginning of January 2006.

Experience with the Program

In the past Keyano College partnered with the Shuswap Band for a 2-year pilot project. This project was successful in graduating 12 students.

The ACFS program has been offered in Stoney Plain, Edmonton, since 2000.

The majority of the program students are gainfully employed in the field. The campus is a smaller setting and as a result, past students remain in contact with Keyano College to provide ongoing updates of their successes in the field. Approximately 5 of the last 2 years of students have continued with their education into the degree areas of the human services field.

General Applicability

This program may be of interest to companies/organizations who are interested in supplying Human Resource support for employees and their families in order to improve retention.

Additional Information or Support

Donna Bell Rachmistruk, Chairperson

Human & Community Services

Keyano College

15103B Stony Plain Road

Edmonton, AB T5P 3Y2

Telephone: (780) 444-4975

Email: donna.bell@keyano.ca

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