



**SOUTH CAROLINA
DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL
(SC-DSP)
TRAINING PROGRAM
POLICY MANUAL**

Effective: NOVEMBER 16, 2020

Overview of the South Carolina Direct Support Professional Training Program **(DSP- Basic, Initial Proficiency and Advanced Proficiency)**

The South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs (SCDDSN) is designated to have the oversight of the South Carolina Direct Support Professional Training and Competency Evaluation Program. SCDDSN will ensure that the approved Direct Support Professional Training program is in compliance with state and federal regulations for entry level direct support professionals and with South Carolina Core Curriculum.

The Direct Support Professional Training program is a State approved program which offers training to candidates that desire to become eligible for certification as a Direct Support Professional (DSP). South Carolina DDSN will allow non- DDSN provider training programs to offer three (3) levels of initial training for pre-service DSP candidates. SCDDSN will allow approved programs to offer three levels of DSP certification. Approved training programs can provide the South Carolina Basic DSP, the South Carolina Initial DSP, and the South Carolina Advanced DSP. The requirements for each of these three are outlined in the South Carolina Direct Support Professional Training Program: Standards and Competencies Training Requirements document.

After completion of the State approved training program the candidate must take and pass the competency evaluation examination with a score of 80 or above. The examination includes a written/oral and skills competency examination that is developed and administered by SCDDSN. Candidates who successfully pass the written/oral and skills examination can apply to SCDDSN to be issued a South Carolina DSP Credential according to the requirement level that the candidate has demonstrated mastery.

Testing information and training program materials such as the Direct Support Professional training application, list of approved training programs, SCDDSN policy, training presentation and FAQ's can be found on the website: www.scddsn.sc.gov.

SCOPE OF SERVICE FOR THE DSP PROGRAM

Objective of the Direct Support Professional Program

To provide a basic level of both knowledge and demonstrable skill for individuals who provide direct support services to individuals who have developmental disabilities and related disabilities served by SCDDSN and who are not currently employed or volunteers (no monetary compensation).

This training program is designed to offer high school and other higher education institution students an introduction to the career of a DSP and to provide training in the basic skills needed for the entry level DSP. Students completing this certification will be issued a certificate that establishes the skills and criteria attained through the approved training program. Students who are issued a DSP Certificate from an approved education institution will be able to provide their training certificate to DDSN Qualified providers for review and can waive previously demonstrated training requirements met through this certificate program. Students must be age 18 to be employed by a DDSN Qualified provider.

GUIDELINES FOR DSP TRAINING PROGRAM APPROVAL

1. Requests for Program Approval Requirements

- The South Carolina Direct Support Professional Training Program Application must be completed in its entirety and submitted to the South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs (SCDDSN), for review of state approval to obtain approval to provide a Direct Support Professional training program.
- SCDDSN will respond within 30 days of the date of request for approval of a Direct Support Professional training program or the receipt of additional information from the requester.
- The SC- DSP Training Program must have a program director and one qualified instructor when applying for initial approval. The training of DSP students must be performed by or under the general supervision of an instructor who possesses a South Carolina teaching certificate in the area of Health Sciences and a minimum of two (2) years of teaching experience in the area of health science. The Instructor must complete the SCDDSN Instructor training program prior to providing the training program to students.
- Prior to program approval, a SC-DSP Program must have a Practicum Contract Agreement from all DDSN Qualified Providers who will be used as a practicum site. The contracts must be signed by the Facility Administrator/Executive Director or CEO within the past six (6) months or specifies the time period the agreement is valid. A sample agreement is provided on the SCDDSN website.
- Upon approval of a SC-DSP Training Program, SCDDSN, must be informed of substantive changes to the program by submitting documentation on the South Carolina Direct Support Professional Training Program Application to SCDSP@ddsn.sc.gov.
- Applicants must accept the terms of agreement which contains the process and requirements for continued participation in the SCDDSN DSP Training Program. Annual renewal process includes the following: an annual site visit by SCDDSN staff, copies of updated practicum agreements, and an updated contact form and schedules.

2. Staffing Requirements

a. Program Director

The Program Director is the individual that has the administrative authority for the Direct Support Professional training program. This must be one individual and it may be an administrator of the high school, career center or school district. This individual, or their designee, must sign all correspondence from SCDDSN and ensure that the training program meets all SCDDSN standards and procedures for the South Carolina DSP program.

b. Program Coordinator/Primary instructor

- i. The primary instructor must be a certified as a South Carolina Health Science Teacher with two (2) years of experience as a health science teacher.
- ii. Proof of certification in South Carolina as a Health Science Instructor.
- iii. Resume documenting required experience for the program.
- iv. The primary instructor must have successfully completed the SC-DDSN Instructor Training Program and must complete any additional training requirements per SCDDSN policy.
- v. Works under the supervision of the Program Director.

vi. The primary instructor is responsible for conducting the classroom and practicum training of the SC-DSP program under the general supervision of the Program Director.

c. Other instructors

- i. The secondary instructor would ideally be a person with at least two (2) years of experience working with individuals with disabilities. This person could be from a local SCDDSN approved provider or could be a person who holds a South Carolina Teaching Certificate with certification in the area of Special Education.
- ii. This person will supplement/work under the general supervision of the Primary Instructor.

3. Classroom

- a. The SC-DSP Training Program will utilize the South Carolina Direct Support Professional Training Standards document to ensure training is consistent with the SCDDSN requirements for the South Carolina Direct Support Professional.
- b. A Practicum Competency Evaluation (Skills Checklist) for SC-Direct Support Professional students should be utilized based on the curriculum guidelines.
- c. Competency with respect to all the practicum lab skills is to be verified by the instructor prior to the beginning of the practicum rotation, and a record should be placed in the student's file.
- d. To maintain certification status, all class/practicum schedules must be submitted to SCDDSN prior to their occurrence. The schedules should be e-mailed to SCDSP@ddsn.sc.gov.
- e. Student records must be maintained on file for a period of five (5) years and/or according to school policy. The records must include a record of attendance for each trainee, the SCDDSN Qualified provider(s) for practicum experience and the dates and hours of attendance at each provider.
- f. The program must provide all students, upon successful completion, with a certificate of completion and/or transcript, or a letter on the program's letterhead certifying the student's successful completion of the program. The total number of program hours and the checklist of required competencies must be on the certificate of completion. The student will submit the SC-DSP- Candidate Packet to request addition to the SCDDSN Direct Support Professional- Program Completer Directory. This packet is located on the SCDDSN website. Students will be encouraged to maintain a portfolio (electronic or hard copy) while enrolled in the DSP Training program.
- g. A program that does not meet the requirements for certification after the initial application, will be required to submit and implement a plan of correction prior to being reinstated as a Direct Support Professional training program.

4. Practicum

- a. The primary instructor is responsible for the supervision of the practicum performance of all other school district instructors. The Primary Instructor must be available on call by telecommunications for other instructors supervising students in the practicum setting.
- b. The instructor/student ratio ideally would be 1:4, but could go up to, but not exceed 1:6 students in the practicum setting. Practicum site setting ideally will be varied to provide students with a variety of experiences. Setting, space requirements and staffing ratios must be considered when placing students in practicum settings. For example, practicum student-consumer-staff ratios would need to be smaller in a community training home rather than a day program setting.

- c. Instructors must not be involved in more than one role while supervising students in the practicum setting.
- d. Instructors or a DDSN Provider Staff member must be assigned to all students under age 18 and are required to remain with students who are under age 18 at all times.
- e. DDSN qualified provider must have a designated staff member available on site that is not assigned to provide direct consumer care while students are participating at the practicum site if program instructor is not on site. The DDSN additional staff member can serve as the secondary instructor if designated in the program application.
- f. Practicum assignments are to be made by the primary instructor with the approval of the DDSN qualified provider supervisory staff.
- g. Primary Instructor must ensure and maintain documentation that students have completed all requirements for the DDSN provider facility prior to the students being allowed on the practicum site (SLED or FBI background check, PPD documentation, drug screen test, and student intern practicum application packet which includes a signed internship agreement, confidentiality agreement and code of conduct agreement).
- h. The assigned consumer's person centered description and pertinent information should be reviewed at the beginning of each practicum experience. It is suggested that a worksheet be developed for the students that contains pertinent information to provide appropriate care for the consumer. Consumer's should be asked and must agree to working with an intern prior to sharing of information. Consumers have the right at any time to revoke consent to work with an intern.
- i. Student assignments should be scheduled and communicated at the DDSN Qualified provider facility before the student provides direct support to the consumer. The assignment sheet should include the name of the DDSN staff member who is making the assignments, the DDSN staff at the practicum site, the school, the names of the students, and/or the name of the consumer and the location of the direct support to be provided. Sample forms are available.
- j. Students should be given individual assignments. More than one student should not be assigned to the same consumer at the same time.
- k. Practicum assignments should provide opportunities for the student to experience care of a variety of consumers with various needs and in a variety of settings (day program, residential, community services, group employment etc.).
- l. Practicum experiences include a minimum of 10 hours total. A minimum of eight (8) hours must take place in an approved DDSN Provider facility or setting.
- m. Program can utilize opportunities to partner with special education programs within their school district for training; however, no more than two (2) hours can count toward the practicum experience. The two (2) hours counted toward the practicum must meet the following criteria:
 - i. Occur in a special education classroom or school site that serves individuals with an intellectual disability, autism spectrum disorder or a traumatic brain injury.

- ii. Practicum students must work with students who are ages 16-21 years of age and would likely meet the requirements for services from SCDDSN.

5. Physical Facilities

- a. The classroom and skills training facility will provide adequate temperature controls, clean and safe conditions, adequate space to accommodate students, adequate lighting and all equipment needed for instruction of the Direct Support Professional training program.
- b. The practicum site, a qualified DDSN provider facility must ensure that the site meets the above conditions. Consideration must be given when scheduling practicum students to sites to ensure adequate space and safety conditions are met when students are on site.
- c. Students will take the competency evaluation examination at the school site and examination will be administered by the Instructor. The examination will be on-line, a test proctor will be required, and test security procedures must be followed.

6. SC-Direct Support Professional-Training Program Documents

- a. Facility Files must include:
 - i. Approval letter from SCDDSN.
 - ii. Copy of SC-DSP training program application.
 - iii. Training Facility Code (issued by SCDDSN upon application).
 - iv. Copies of all correspondence from SCDDSN.
 - v. Location of testing records.
 - vi. Location of training program records.
 - vii. Listing of Program Administrator (name, phone and e-mail).
 - viii. Listing of all program instructors (name, contact information, resume, sled check, nursing license and DDSN Instructor training certificate).
 - ix. Practicum site agreement with all DDSN Providers used for practicum experiences.
- b. Student Files must include:
 - i. Enrollment Application.
 - ii. Signature sheet from student handbook to include understanding of confidentiality, code of conduct etc.)
 - iii. Copies of DDSN required documents (TB results, drug screen, background check etc.)
 - iii. Affirmation of Practicum hours and location
 - iv. Skills performance checklist.
 - v. Training verification form.
 - vi. DDSN DSP exam score.

7. SC-Direct Support Professional Training Program Renewal

a. Overview of Program Renewal

The renewal process is for programs currently approved by DDSN. DDSN will renew programs every two years and re-approval will be dependent on satisfactory ratings based on evaluation by SCDDSN.

b. Requirements for Program Renewal

1. This process will include an on-site visit, review of the program's candidate pass rate, DDSN Practicum site program rating score and other requirements as indicated in the Program Manual.
2. Programs will receive a renewal notice from DDSN 3 months prior to the renewal, which will include the week the on-site visit will occur and documentation required for renewal. DDSN reserves the right to make unannounced evaluations of DSP training programs.
3. The on-site audit will include a review of facility files, student files and an on-site visit to, include an observation of the classroom and classroom instruction.
4. A program that does not meet the DDSN requirements as a DSP approved training site will be required to complete a plan of correction to be re-certified. If a site does not meet requirements after the plan of correction, they will not be re-certified and must wait for a period of one (1) year to reapply to DDSN.