

## Welcome to Sheridan's Educational Assistant Diploma program!

Sheridan's EA Diploma program enables you to graduate with skills and knowledge in both **special education**, and **educational technology** - two areas that greatly enhance your employability!

This **Welcome Handbook** is your first reading assignment!

We are confident that the **Keys to Success** ~ a successful start-up and a successful semester ~ are explained in these pages.

We invite you to carefully **read** this handbook **right away**, and complete the various **tasks** that require your **immediate attention**.



The Welcome Handbook highlights some **important** and **time sensitive** details about your studies this Fall. Much of the information refers to both the two year **PCEAD** program, and the Fast Track, Intensive one year **PEDAI** program.

**PEDAI** students have some important tasks to complete **BEFORE** September in order to be ready for Field Placement ~ please keep reading...

These general Sheridan Info sites are also informative.

### Term Start Up Information

<http://goo.gl/yrod2>

### First Year Student Essentials

<http://goo.gl/mnMpl>

## EA Welcome Handbook Checklist

	PEDAI (1 year, Intensive)	PCEAD (2 year stream)
<b>Have you... ?</b>		
🍏 read this document carefully	✓	✓
🍏 emailed Appendix C to Allison Fitzgibbon	✓	For PCEAD, this will be handled in class.
🍏 begun the Criminal Record Check process (see page 9 and Appendix A)	✓ Begin this no later than mid-July	For PCEAD, begin this process in September.
🍏 begun the Health Clearance / immunization updates process (see page 9 and Appendix B)	✓ Begin this right away.	✓ Begin this as soon as possible.
🍏 followed some / all of the tips for success	✓	✓
🍏 (where applicable...) contacted Accessible Learning Services (see page 7)	✓	✓
🍏 acquired a <b>laptop</b> that meets Sheridan requirements. <b>Not</b> having your laptop may affect your continuation in the program.	✓	✓
🍏 ensured that you have high speed Internet access from home.	✓	✓
🍏 <b>If</b> you are ordering some/all <b>textbooks</b> online, have you placed the order in a <b>timely</b> manner? We suggest early August.	✓	✓

## ***The EA Role***

Are you in the right program?

Surprisingly, some students accept admission into the program without being fully aware of all aspects of the EA Role.

Educational Assistants work primarily in Grades 2 to 12, supporting pupils who have special needs (disabilities) in any / all of these areas:

- personal care (includes mealtime and bathroom routines),
- life skills (daily self-care activities such as dressing),
- academics (includes reading, writing and mathematics),
- communication skills,
- social skills and behaviour (may involve typical daily discipline, or more severe verbal or physical aggression).

Supports outlined in Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) often require the EA to be skilled and knowledgeable in the areas of educational and assistive technology. EAs work closely with / under the supervision of the classroom teacher, and Special Education Resource Teacher.

EAs may work at any / all grade levels, and at any level in the cascade model of special education (e.g. segregated school/classroom; withdrawal/ resource room; regular classroom).

An EAs job assignment may be one-to-one, but is much more likely to involve several children in one classroom, or a mixed schedule working in many different areas throughout the day.

Please visit the website listed below and click on 'Programs' to read more about the history and trends related to the EA Role ~ be sure you understand EAs and their role in the field of Special Education.

<http://www-acad.sheridanc.on.ca/scls/ea/main.html>

## Timetables

- Timetables are typically ready in late August, and you will be able to view them via AccessSheridan. We cannot predict exactly what your timetable will look like. It is designed by a computer and, after it is released, there can be minor changes ~ so continue to check this as the first week of classes approaches. Classes can be scheduled anytime between 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.
- **PEDAI** students will have classes on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays. Field Placement days will be Mondays and Tuesdays. Since it takes a bit of time to set this up, placement WILL NOT begin in Week #1, so your first day / class in Week #1 will be Wednesday. All Field Details will be explained in the “Orientation to Field” course.
- **PCEAD** students do not have Field Placement in term 1. Typically, all of your term 1 courses are timetabled over a 4-5 day period.

## Books

Faculty have been thoughtful about adopting textbooks, choosing books which have been judged highly valuable to your studies and useful as references throughout your career.

Click on ‘Details’, then ‘Booklist’ at this website. (Fall Info should be published by June.)

<http://www-acad.sheridanc.on.ca/scls/ea/main.html>

The above site also **outlines purchasing options**. If you choose online purchasing options, **do this soon**. Students who wait until the last minute to do online purchases often wait 4-6 weeks to receive their books, and thus begin their term / studies at *great disadvantage, resulting often in poor academic performance*.

*Required* textbooks are *required*, and students will find that purchasing and reading textbooks contribute to academic success.

## Course Outlines

These are all available, in full, online at the site below. Select Educational Assistant (either PEDAS for the 2 year program or PEDAI for the Intensive program) next to “Program”, and choose Fall 2011 next to “Term” and “Year” to see a list of all outlines.

<http://goo.gl/0yOpT>

## Strategies for Success

Student Success can have as much to do with study habits and planning as with underlying abilities / potential. Students can expect support from faculty and Sheridan Support Services, but ultimately grades are affected by various aspects of student performance. Advice from faculty and our graduates:

- You need to consider “being an EA student” as a **full time job** ~ and for PEDAI students it will be an intensive experience ~ but only for 8 months.
  - You may look at the Program Map and see that you are in class only 17-24 hours per week. How, you may ask, is that a fulltime job? We know that you must plan to spend 1 to 2 hours outside of class for every hour in class (for reading and completing assignments). Suddenly 17 hours becomes 34 to 51 hours per week; 24 hours per week becomes 48 to 72 hours per week.
  - Personal variables will also affect the time you need for your studies. You will find that there is a **considerable amount of reading and writing** required. Each student differs in the time it takes them to complete such tasks. We can offer you suggestions about technology that may help you with reading and writing tasks.
  - You should be able to quickly see that, unless you want your studies to suffer, you may need to scale back on the time you spend at a part time job, or with certain family commitments. Remember, this will be only for the short time that you are in the program.
  - Travel time can also add to the demands upon your time. Unfortunately, we know that some students spend up to 3-4 hours per day traveling, especially if they are using public transit. Take time now to look at your travel options.
  
- **Be there ~ on time!**
  - Not all courses formally take attendance, but being in class ~ on time ~ tends to be linked to academic success. You get the optimal learning experience, first-hand instructions and coaching about assignments etc.
  - This is a job preparation program and you may as well begin now to adopt professional behaviours that are critical in the workplace ~ be there ~ on time.
  - Attendance at your assigned Field Placement School is no different than a real job –~they expect you there on assigned days, on time.
  
- Create a **Study Space**
  - be sure you have a space in your home environment where you can study with minimal interruptions.
  - use a wall chart calendar or digital calendar to map out study/work plans, due dates, and stages for each of your assignments / projects.

- **Network and Create Support Circles**
  - Course work often requires group work ~ this helps to prepare you for being part of a school team. Be prepared to collaborate with classmates and form supportive collegial relationships.
  - Invite your family and personal friends to think of ways in which they can support you in your studies.
  
- **High Speed**
  - Your learning experience will be optimal if you have high speed internet access from home.
  
- **Communicate!**
  - Most faculty have weekly contact with over 100 students and may not always be able to perceive if you are experiencing difficulties. Never hesitate to speak to a course instructor, or your Academic Advisor, or the Program Coordinator – in person or via email. Few students have challenges that we have not encountered before. We often have ideas about how to support you to success.
  
- **The most important person?**
  - You may be surprised to learn that we consider the most important person to be the pupil with special needs who will one day receive support from a Sheridan EA Graduate.
  - In Ontario, regular classroom teachers have little to no training in special education, so support to pupils with special needs ~ often some of the most vulnerable pupils ~ is dependent upon the competence of the EA. These learners need you to be successful in your studies, and to behave competently and professionally.

## ***Academic Supports***

Program standards are high. It is possible to fail a course. (A passing mark is 50%). Low Grade Point Averages (GPAs) can result in a student being placed on academic probation or coded as a student who cannot continue in to the next term

**A Record of Success.** Nonetheless, we have a long track record for successfully supporting students to program completion. Many students before you have blossomed and flourished in the program, achieved success in their studies and in the workplace. Plan now to join them in making a difference!

As mentioned above, it is always best to seek support sooner rather than later. This comes in many forms – and sometimes may even include changes to your workload.

## Student Services

Sheridan offers a wide range of Student Services for all learners – including mature students who are returning to the classroom, and students for whom English is their second language. This includes printed and online resources, peer tutors, and workshops.

<http://www.sheridancollege.ca/Services/Student%20Learning%20Services.aspx>

### Do you require support from Accessible Learning Services?

- Do you have an identified disability? exceptionality?
- Do you have special needs?
- Did you have an IEP when you were in elementary or high school?
- Did you access supports from a school Resource room?
- Do you suspect that you have an unidentified disability that is affecting your learning experience and performance?

If you answered “yes” to any of the above, you will want to visit Accessible Learning Services (ALS).

<http://goo.gl/73APG>

This is your choice.

It is better to approach them sooner, rather than later. You may find them to be less busy in the summer than they are in the first few weeks of the term.

**Disclosure and Transitions.** If you did have an IEP before joining Sheridan it will not have been automatically transferred from your high school. Sheridan will know nothing about your specific learning needs until / unless you disclose this. It is best to disclose first to ALS. They will prepare a profile outlining accommodations that you require. You will be in total control of how this information is shared with your faculty.

**Remember** ~ never hesitate to speak to a course instructor, or your Academic Advisor, or the Program Coordinator – in person or via email.




## Mobile Computing



Technology is becoming an integral part of the learning tool kit available to pupils at all levels. All educators are exploring meaningful ways of using **Educational Technology** in the classroom.

More importantly, solutions for learners with disabilities increasingly involve **Assistive Technology** – specialized computer-based software / hardware. EAs are on the front line when it comes to using Educational and Assistive Technology in classrooms.

**Picture yourself as an educator** who will...

-  have cutting edge tech skills, because you will be using your laptop everyday,
-  understand how to best use technology in education, from first hand daily experience,
-  understand the issues, challenges and benefits related to technology in education

Classroom design optimizes technology supported learning, and courses are all web-supported so you can access many value-added course materials and tools. The **Instructional Technology Support Centre** located in the Learning Commons offers personalized support. Once enrolled, students will receive free access to over 1000 online tutorials via <http://www.lynda.com/>.

Faculty and classmates can assist with your technology needs. In general, we are hoping that your learning needs related to such things as operating the computer, doing email, internet research etc. can be addressed in ways that do not substantially reduce the class time that's necessary to address curriculum outcomes. Laptops and online support will enhance, but not replace, face to face classroom time. Only one course is delivered by Distance Learning. All other courses are face to face, requiring regular attendance.

**Ensure that you have your laptop BEFORE classes begin.** Students are required to have laptops in class. Not having your laptop may affect your continuation in the program. Before classes begin, please be sure to make arrangements to sign on with a local ISP (Internet Service Provider), which enables you to connect to the internet from home. **(This is a requirement. We highly recommend a high speed service!!)**

We hope you agree with us that Mobile Computing will make your Sheridan experience even more valuable!

<http://it.sheridanc.on.ca/mobile.html>

<http://it.sheridanc.on.ca/self-help.html>

<http://it.sheridanc.on.ca/support-services.html?tab=1#TabbedPanels1>



### **Field Placement: Pre-requisites**

- The “Orientation to Field” course is devoted to preparing students for this practical workplace experience.
- For **PCEAD** students, this course meets 1 hour per week in term 1 and the entire term is devoted to achieving all that is required before local school boards will accept you on the placement that begins in term 2.
- For **PEDAI** students:
  - We have only 4 weeks to prepare you for a **week 5 commencement** of placement. It is important that you begin placement in week 5 in order to finish before the end of term.
  - However, you will **not be permitted** to begin placement until you have **Health Clearance** and a **Criminal Record Check**.
  - If you wait until the first week of class to attend to these matters we know from experience that you will **not** be ready to begin placement in time.

**PEDAI** students – please see Appendix A, B and C ~ outlining important tasks you must do **as soon as possible!!**

### **Field Placement: Where will you be placed?**

- **Note that placements are set up by the College. Please do not** attempt to set up your own placement or talk to schools about a possible placement. You may have some input into the geographical area of your field placement, but you will not choose your particular field placement school(s).
- We would like to begin contacting schools at the end of August to set up your placement. To assist us with that **please complete and return Appendix C via email as soon as possible.**
- Emails related to Field Placements should be directed to our Field Placement Officer, Allison Fitzgibbon, at [allison.fitzgibbon1@sheridanc.on.ca](mailto:allison.fitzgibbon1@sheridanc.on.ca).

## ***Fees and Registration***

If you have enquiries related to registration and fee payment, contact...

... the Registrar's Office

<http://myotr.sheridaninstitute.ca/>

...or the Student Advisement Centre

<http://goo.gl/3NLEZ>

## ***Curriculum and Delivery***

Questions related to curriculum and delivery can be directed to me ~ however I will be on holidays during July and August. I will periodically check my email.

We look forward to seeing you at **Orientation** on Tuesday, August 30th - 10AM-1PM, and as students in our program in September 2011!

Dr. Diane Galambos,  
EA Coordinator

845-9430 x2386  
diane.galambos@sheridanc.on.ca

Also – visit this website and see “Details”

<http://www-acad.sheridanc.on.ca/scls/ea/main.html>

## **Appendix A: Criminal Record Check (CRC): Vulnerable Sector Screening**

**(PEDAI ONLY requires this for / by September)**

PCEAD students will be instructed to begin this process in week 1 of the “Orientation to Field” course.

School Boards **will not allow** you to begin Field Placement until you can produce a CRC that includes Vulnerable Sector Screening. The CRC must have been done within the last 3 months. For a placement beginning in October that means the CRC / VSS Report must be dated July, August or September. This is School Board Policy ~ no exceptions; no flexibility. Police will only do this if you live in their region / catchment area.

Students who **live in PEEL** go to:

Peel Police Records Search Unit  
7750 Hurontario Street  
Brampton, ON, L6V 3W6

ASK FOR THE VOLUNTEER RECORD SEARCH (FORM A) which includes the Vulnerable Sector Search.  
More information is at [www.peelpolice.on.ca](http://www.peelpolice.on.ca)

\*If the Police ask for a letter from the College, you can print out Appendix D.

Students who **live in HALTON** go to:

Halton Regional Police Headquarters  
1151 Bronte Road  
Oakville, ON, L6M 3L1

ASK FOR THE VULNERABLE SECTOR CHECK AND COMPLETE THE VULNERABLE SECTOR SCREENING FORM.  
More information is at [www.hrps.on.ca](http://www.hrps.on.ca)

\*If the Police ask for a letter from the College, you can print out Appendix D.

Students who live in **areas outside Peel and Halton** must go to:

- the Police Station in the area where you live to complete the process.

In some cases, your local police service may be an **OPP Detachment**.

**If** this applies to you:

1. You will need to visit the OPP Detachment in your area to obtain their CRC/VSS Form.
2. Complete it.
3. Be sure that you show 2 pieces of ID when you sign the form at the station. This provides to the OPP proof that you are who you say you are.
4. FAX the form to our Field Placement Officer (see FAX # below).
5. It is important that you email Sheridan’s Field Placement Officer to indicate that you

have sent your FAX for further processing ~ this will alert us to look out for this and process it with minimal delay.

6. The form will then be signed by our Field Placement Officer, and faxed back to the OPP.
7. Check with the OPP detachment to find out if their next step involves contacting you to say it is ready for pick up? or do you have to contact them? will they mail it to you?

ATTN: Field Placement Officer,  
Educational Assistant Program  
Allison Fitzgibbon  
FAX: 905-815-4072

[allison.fitzgibbon1@sheridanc.on.ca](mailto:allison.fitzgibbon1@sheridanc.on.ca)

In some cases, you may have the same name and year of birth as another individual with a criminal record. In such cases, the Police will inform you of the need to process your CRC/VSS application through the RCMP. This can take up to 18 weeks, so it is imperative that you start the process by July!!

\*If the Police ask for a letter from the College, you can print out Appendix D. Students dealing with an OPP detachment will need to use the form in Appendix D.

## **Appendix B: Health Requirements**

### **(PEDAI ONLY requires this for September)**

Sheridan's Field Placement policy is to offer placement agencies the assurance that students they accept on placement are free from communicable diseases, with up to date immunizations. You **will not be permitted** to begin Field Placement until Sheridan's Health Centre give you a Health Clearance.

If your immunizations are not up to date, **the time it takes** to have this done can be **lengthy**. This could delay the start-up of your placement. **PEDAI students must be ready to begin placement in week 5 of the Fall term.** (PCEAD students have to have this done by December.)

As soon as possible, visit Sheridan's Health Services website (or drop by their office which is next to the bookstore on the Trafalgar / Oakville campus).

<http://tinyurl.com/39perpd>

Click on, open and print the **Immunization Pamphlet** and **Immunization Form**.

Follow the instructions ~ which indicate that you can engage in this process via our Health Services or by visiting your own physician. From the pamphlet, **please note**:

"The process can be difficult and lengthy. Sometimes, students take the forms to their family physician to fill out. If you chose to take the immunization form to your doctor to fill out, you must ask for them to put their office stamp somewhere on the form. Some of the old immunization forms do not have a spot for this, you just need to ask. Our forms have since been updated to show this, but you may have gotten an older form."

Note that there is a **cost** associated with updating one's immunization records at the College's Health Centre - about \$20-\$40, BUT this may be quicker than going to one's family doctor, especially for students from out of town.

Once you have clearance you will be given a 'green slip' to pass along to the EA Program's Field Coordinator.

**Act now to ensure that you can begin your placement on time!!**

### Appendix C: Placement Request Form Fall 2011 (PEDAI ONLY)

Please complete this form and return it to the EA Field Coordinator: Allison Fitzgibbon. **How?**  
Save this document; enter your preferences digitally and then **email** it to

allison.fitzgibbon1@sheridanc.on.ca

(Note the number "1" after fitzgibbon- best to copy/paste the email )

Name:	
Student #	
Email address:	
Please list any schools where you have had previous volunteer or placement experience (include school name, city and dates):	
Please list any schools where you have previously been employed (include school name, city and dates):	
Please list any schools where your children or immediate relatives currently attend or work (include school name and city):	

- Next to the school board names listed below, please indicate your **first choice** (enter the number "1") and your **second choice** (enter the number "2"). Feel free to list choices 3 and 4 or NA for boards you prefer not to do placement with. Note that the Peel Catholic Board requires students to provide a pastoral reference.
- Then we need to know your first and second choice re the location within those school boards. Next to the city enter "1" for your first choice, "2" for your second choice etc.

Halton Public ____	Halton Catholic ____	Peel Public ____	Peel Catholic ____
__ Oakville	__ Oakville	__ Mississauga	__ Mississauga
__ Burlington	__ Burlington	__ Brampton	__ Brampton
__ Milton	__ Milton	__ Caledon	__ Caledon
__ Georgetown	__ Georgetown		

**Optional** ~ the locations listed below are not always available, but feel free to indicate preferences.

<input type="checkbox"/> Hamilton	<input type="checkbox"/> Niagara Peninsula	<input type="checkbox"/> Toronto	Other (please specify)
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**Optional** ~ the experiences below are not always available, but indicate which might interest you

<input type="checkbox"/> Parkholme (Brampton: Medically Fragile and Autism Spectrum Disorders -ASD)	<input type="checkbox"/> Applewood (Mississauga: ASD Transition)
<input type="checkbox"/> Bloorview Kids Rehab (Toronto)	<input type="checkbox"/> EC Drury (Milton: Deaf & Hard-of-Hearing; students would require some proficiency in Sign Language)

**Appendix D**

To: Local Police Services staff,

This is to confirm that \_\_\_\_\_ is a student enrolled in the Educational Assistant program at Sheridan College. As part of their course of study, students are required to complete unpaid field placements in school board settings in our community. School boards now require that a Criminal Record Check (including Vulnerable Sector Screening) be completed before the student can begin their placement.

Please contact me if you have any questions regarding the necessity and purpose of this documentation.

Dr. Diane Galambos  
EA Coordinator: Sheridan College

905-845-9430 ext 2386

diane.galambos@sheridanc.on.ca