



WORKING AS A CERTIFIED DISABILITY MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONAL (CDMP) or CERTIFIED RETURN TO WORK CO-ORDINATOR (CRWC) IN BC

OVERVIEW

In 1999 two levels of occupation in the field of disability management were identified - Certified Return to Work Co-ordinators (CRWCs) and Certified Disability Management Professionals (CDMPs). Employers, workers' compensation boards, unions, disability managers and government agencies from across Canada helped develop the standards along with representatives from management-related companies in the US and elsewhere. The occupational [standards](#) and competency domain areas developed by the National Institute of Disability Management and Research (NIDMAR) have been endorsed by a broad cross-section of Canadian corporations, workers' compensation boards and unions, and are recognized internationally. NIDMAR oversees certification of both CRWC and CDMP professions.

Disability management relates to accommodations and working with employers to make appropriate and sensitive return-to-work (RTW) decisions and understanding the role that medical, psychological, and ergonomic assessments play in the return-to-work process.

Certified Disability Management Professionals (CDMPs) may work internally within their own organization or externally, collaboratively with management, unions or employee organizations, insurance providers, government agencies, health care providers and others to assist the worker in safely returning to the workplace. They may provide direct services to workers with disabilities CDMPs or perform executive functions which may include but are not limited to administration of DM services, development of policies and procedures, promotion of Return To Work (RTW) concepts through education and training, consulting to joint labour-management committees, program evaluation, and other means.

Training is relevant to those working in health care, human resources, counselling, career development, and social services professionals. Graduates are employed in the insurance industry, human resources or other organizations servicing people with disabilities.

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Certified Return to Work Coordinators (CRWCs) responsibilities include expediting, coordinating, and facilitating the return to work (RTW) of persons with injuries, illnesses and disabilities in a range of settings.

Prospective places of employment include industrial work sites, corporate offices, insurance companies, service providers, human resources departments and workers' compensation organizations. As disability management principles are embraced by small and medium-sized firms, there is an opportunity for experienced professionals to establish their own businesses, offering disability management contract services to local employers. Individuals trained in disability management may find positions as disability managers, disability management professionals, case managers, return to work coordinators and vocational rehabilitation consultants.

EDUCATION, TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS

Most individuals currently working in the field have a background in occupational health or other health professions and have received direct training in disability management on the job or through workshops.

Disability management is a complex field, combining skills from 9 different domains and practitioners come from various backgrounds. Candidates for certification have previous education in such fields as health, rehabilitation, occupational health and safety, business, labour relations, benefit administration or vocational rehabilitation as well as experience working in organizations. Practical experience can be gained in the workplace participating in health and safety committees, administering benefit/insurance programs, advocating for workers, or participating in negotiating committees.

Most management positions in disability services require 3 – 5 years related experience combined with a Bachelor or Master's degree in a related field. Some employers require certification. (See Canadian Society of Professionals in Disability Management (CSPDM) [eligibility criteria](#)). A diploma in rehabilitation and disability combined with 2 -3 years of related experience may be accepted for less senior positions.

EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND COURSES

Courses, certificate and diploma programs are available at [post-secondary institutions](#) across Canada, and applicants can opt for the one that best meets their needs with respect to location, full or part-time study, prerequisites and credential offered.

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Programs offered by distance delivery, online, or in print allow the applicant to continue their employment. Some programs include a cooperative education, practicum, or internship component, which are useful for those transitioning their career to the field of disability management / return to work.

The **Pacific Coast University for Workplace Health Sciences** offers Canada's first [Bachelor of Disability Management](#) (BDM) degree. Graduates acquire knowledge and skills necessary to assist management, labour, insurance, service providers, employers, and employees with the development of successful work entry or return to work strategies for persons with disabilities. All courses have been endorsed by the Canadian Society of Professionals in Disability Management (CSPDM) for continuing education credit (CEC) hours for the professional designations of Certified Disability Management Professional (CDMP) and Certified Return to Work Coordinator (CRTWC). The university also offers a Disability Management Practitioner Certificate program in which all courses have been endorsed for continuing education credit (CEC) hours for the professional designations of Certified Disability Management Professional (CDMP) and Certified Return to Work Coordinator (CRTWC).

The Human Resources Professional Association (HRPA) partners with the National Institute of Disability Management and Research (NIDMAR) and Pacific Coast University for Workplace Health Sciences (PCU-WHS) to provide members with workplace disability management assessment tools and educational resources to help establish effective disability management programs.

University of Northern BC (UNBC) offers both an online course-based option in [Masters in Disability Management](#) and a thesis option which requires students to travel to campus in Prince George. The graduate program can be completed full or part time and provides the knowledge and skills necessary to successfully develop disability management strategies, including work entry or return-to-work strategies for injured workers and/or persons with disabilities. Program graduates may pursue the accreditation Canadian Certification for Rehabilitation Counselors or may continue their education through the National Institute for Disability Management and Research to become a Certified Return to Work Coordinator (CRTWC) or Certified Disability Management Professional (CDMP).

It attracts students from the field of economics, community health, social work, psychology, education, business, human resources, occupational therapy, social work, and related professions.

BCIT offers [OCHS 3620 Disability Case Management](#) as part of its Occupational Health and Safety program.

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Elsewhere in Canada, **Ryerson University** (Ontario) offers an online [COHS 477 Disability Management](#) course through their continuing studies department.

The **Canadian Center for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS)** offers a [Return to Work: The Basics](#) one-day e-course as one of their Occupational Health and Safety program courses. The course provides a practical overview of return-to-work strategies, solutions and program implementation.

CERTIFICATION WITH THE CANADIAN SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONALS IN DISABILITY MANAGEMENT (CSPDM)

The Canadian Society of Professionals in Disability Management (CSPDM) is the only association in Canada representing the profession.

Potential applicants are encouraged to review the [self-assessment tool](#) as a form of gap analysis to determine if completing additional coursework or participating in workshops would complement and augment their current education background. that are part of the Occupational Standards, where additional and/or complementary education may assist in successful completion of the examination Education opportunities should fall within the occupational standards identified in nine core skill and competency areas. The Examination Preparation Guide is the basis on which exam questions are formulated.

Certification eligibility criteria is usually based on experience and/or formal education and the successful passing of some form of examination. CSPDM only accepts full-time paid employment (FTE) or its equivalent as a valid fulfillment of the employment criteria. Roles and responsibilities of employment must have been in the direct provision of disability management / return to work services for workers with disabilities encompassing the domain areas identified. A letter of attestation completed by the supervisor must be included in the application package. Official transcripts are required. and must bear the official seal of the institution, the signature of the institution's registrar, and the seal on the envelope bearing the transcript cannot be broken. A [table](#) outlines eligibility requirements for both certifications.

- **Examination Information**

The Certified Disability Management Professional (CDMP) and Certified Return to Work Coordinator (CRTWC) certification examinations are offered once a year, usually in May in metropolitan centers across Canada. Certifications are awarded by the International Disability Management Standards Council (IDMSC). Exams take place over 7 hours on one day (two, 3.5-hour sessions). Exam preparation guides are available on their

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website. Exams are closed book. A [CRTWC Examination Preparation Guide](#) and [CDMP Examination Preparation Guide](#) are available for reference.

Individuals successfully completing an exam are awarded certificates and entitled to use the official designation marks, 'Certified Return to Work Coordinator (CRTWC)' or 'Certified Disability Management Professional (CDMP)', provided their certification is maintained.

RESOURCES

Canadian Society of Disability Management Professionals (CSDMP)

<https://www.cspdm.ca/certification/certified-disability-management-professional-cdmp/>

Center for Research on Work Disability Policy (list of education programs in Canada) -

<https://www.crdp.ca/en/disability-study-programs-canadian-universities>

Certified Disability Management Professional (CDMP) Examination Guide -

https://www.nidmar.ca/certification/cdmp/CDMP_Examination_Preparation_Guide.pdf

Certified Return to Work Coordinator (CRTWC) Examination Guide -

https://www.nidmar.ca/certification/crtwc/CRTWC_Examination_Preparation_Guide.pdf

Canadian Center for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) - <https://www.ccohs.ca>

International Disability Management Standards Council - <https://www.idmsc.org/about-the-idmsc/>

National Institute for Disability Management and Research (NIDMAR) - www.nidmar.ca

Pacific Coast University for Workplace Health Sciences (PCU-WHS) - www.pcu-whs.ca/programs/

University of Northern BC (UNBC) - <https://www.unbc.ca/health-sciences/disability-management>



JOB BOARDS

Canadian Society of Disability Management Professionals (CSDBP) (members only) -
<https://www.cspdm.ca/job-centre/>

Indeed.ca -
<https://ca.indeed.com/jobs?q=Disability+Management+Professional&l=Vancouver%2C+BC>