



SSC # 104 – DISABILITY INSURANCE PLANNING FOR THE GIG ECONOMY AND CONTRACT WORKERS

This course is eligible for:

4.0 Life & A&S CE Credits for BC, SK, MB & ON.

4.0 A&S ONLY CE Credits for AB.

Target Audience

This course is designed for licensed Canadian life and accident and sickness (A&S) insurance advisors, financial planners, and independent brokers who advise clients who earn their income outside the traditional employer-employee relationship. This includes freelancers, independent contractors, platform economy workers, creative professionals, tradespeople operating as sole proprietors, consultants, and gig workers across all sectors of the Canadian economy.

The course is particularly valuable for advisors whose client base includes younger Canadians entering the workforce through contract and platform-based work, professionals who have left salaried employment to pursue self-employment or consulting, and skilled tradespeople and knowledge workers who work on a project basis for multiple clients simultaneously. Advisors who serve clients in technology, creative industries, transportation, home services, healthcare consulting, and professional services will find the course directly applicable.

Course Overview

This course provides a comprehensive and practically oriented examination of the insurance planning challenges and opportunities presented by Canada's rapidly expanding gig economy. The course is organized into sections that progress from an analysis of the gig economy landscape — including the 2026 workforce participation data from Statistics Canada and independent research — through the technical, regulatory, and behavioural dimensions of advising gig and contract workers on disability insurance and related living benefits products.

This coverage gap represents both a professional obligation and a market opportunity for advisors who understand the unique planning challenges that non-traditional income earners face. The absence of employer-sponsored group disability coverage, the complexity of variable income underwriting, the difficulty of demonstrating insurable income from platform earnings or short-term contracts, and the affordability constraints that gig workers often face — these are not obstacles to avoid but problems to solve.

Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, the advisor will be able to:

- 1 Describe the current scale and composition of Canada's gig economy using 2026 labour market data, including the proportion of Canadians engaged in platform work, independent contracting, and freelance activity, and explain why this population is systematically underserved by the existing insurance distribution system.
- 2 Distinguish between the insurance risk profiles of gig workers, independent contractors, incorporated self-employed professionals, and salaried employees, and explain how these distinctions affect policy design, underwriting, and suitability analysis.
- 3 Apply disability insurance policy design principles — including own-occupation definitions, benefit periods, elimination periods, residual disability riders, and cost-of-living adjustment riders — to the specific circumstances of non-traditional income earners.
- 4 Explain the income verification standards that Canadian insurers apply to self-employed and gig worker clients, including the use of the Notice of Assessment, T1 General returns, T4A slips, business financial statements, and platform earnings records as documentation of insurable income.
- 5 Evaluate the suitability of a disability insurance recommendation for a gig worker client by applying provincial suitability obligations, conducting a needs analysis that accounts for income variability, and documenting the basis for the recommendation in the client file.
- 6 Recommend affordability structuring strategies for gig worker clients with budget constraints, including the appropriate use of longer elimination periods, shorter benefit periods, limited benefit definitions, and phased coverage increases tied to income growth.
- 7 Identify the role of Business Overhead Expense (BOE) insurance, critical illness insurance, and term life insurance in a comprehensive insurance plan for self-employed and gig worker clients and explain how these products interact with individual disability insurance.
- 8 Apply the documentation, disclosure, and compliance standards that govern insurance advising for non-traditional income earners, including the obligation to conduct and record a needs analysis, to disclose compensation, and to recommend coverage that is genuinely suitable for the client's circumstances.