

Supporting Canadians to navigate learning and work: Updating the Standards and Guidelines for career professionals

 ceric.ca/2019/10/supporting-canadians-to-navigate-learning-and-work-updating-the-standards-and-guidelines-

October 7,
2019



As a milestone anniversary approaches, the S&Gs are undergoing a significant update with collaboration, inclusivity and transparency top of mind

Kathy McDonald

Did you know the Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners (S&Gs) are close to 20 years old? The S&Gs were created in the late 1990s by a broad cross-section of career development practitioners (CDPs) and stakeholders through a grassroots approach managed by an elected volunteer National Steering Committee. Following extensive consultation across Canada from 1996 to 2000, the S&Gs were launched in early 2001, mapping out the code of ethical behaviour, knowledge and skills required to work within the career development sector. Despite the accelerating pace of global change, the S&Gs stood still until 2004, when volunteers tackled the challenge of revitalization in efforts to make the S&Gs increasingly measurable, inclusive and relevant. Now, approaching this milestone anniversary, it is evident that a significant and focused update is needed.

CDPs across Canada agreed that the renewal of the S&Gs is necessary to reflect the evolving nature of our work. Specifically, they said the S&Gs need to be more inclusive of the diversity of CDPs and the clients they serve. By updating the S&Gs, we will ensure they can be used to underpin targeted training and professional development, promote clarity of role and scope of practice, and promote awareness and professional recognition.

That was then – this is now

In September 2018, the Canadian Career Development Foundation (CCDF) received funding through the Government of Canada's Sectoral Initiative Program for its Supporting Canadians to Navigate Learning and Work (CDP Competence) project. The 35-month project is led by CCDF in partnership with the Canadian Council for Career Development (3CD), working closely with career development stakeholders across Canada.

In addition to updating the S&Gs, we are expanding the framework to reflect current and emergent practice in the career development field, including the full range of professionals doing career development work across diverse settings. We plan to reach employers, training providers and professional associations throughout the project. Collaboration with all provincial and territorial associations and partners is well under way as, together, we explore possibilities for stronger cohesion and professional mobility through a pan-Canadian approach to certification.

The project will build on the strong foundations established through the original S&Gs and the ongoing dedication of two 3CD working groups: the S&Gs Revision Working Group and the Certification Working Group. It will also build on the enormous efforts and investments of provincial associations and territorial organizations in building professional identity, promoting professional development and advancing certification. Consistent with the rollout of the original S&Gs project, the CCDF and the 3CD will conduct all phases of the project with the principles and values of collaboration, inclusivity and transparency top of mind. We want career development practitioners to be the focus and the driver as the S&Gs evolve to become the new Career Development Professional Competency Framework.

Phase 1: Awareness and engagement

The first four months of the project centred on engaging stakeholders and building the 25-member National Stakeholder Committee (NSC), which has representatives from every province and territory. At a meeting in late 2018, stakeholders engaged in discussion surrounding the process for the development and maintenance of a new model – a pan-Canadian competency framework (ie, a coherent library of competencies), which builds on the important work done to date by the 3CD working groups. A benefit to this new competency framework model is that it can accurately define a field of practice and a standard for a profession, which can inform practice in the Canadian career development ecosystem. The competency framework model is dynamic and scalable, and individual

elements can be updated to reflect current practice as the work world evolves. We are designing it this way so that CDPs can clearly see themselves and their work reflected in the framework, both now and into the future.

Phase 2: Consultation and consolidation

The second phase of the project began in January 2019 and will continue until early 2020, with a focus on communicating and consulting with stakeholders across the country. All CDPs can participate in shaping the framework by visiting our [website](#) to tell us about their practice, consider the new definition of Career Development Professional, and complete other polls and surveys.

Regional focus groups, provincial and territorial coffee consultation sessions, structured interviews, surveys, polls and conference presentations and sessions have begun, and will continue throughout the fall. The final validation and ratification of the CDP Competency Framework will occur with the National Stakeholder Committee in early 2020.

Career Development Professional definition

Career Development Professionals help individuals navigate learning and employment transitions across the lifespan. Career Development Professionals help individuals to manage learning and employment, acquire and enhance skills, seek and create employment, and access community services that support personal and professional growth in an increasingly complex, interdependent and changing world. Career Development Professionals collaborate with employers, education and training providers, community-based services, and other private and public institutions to promote positive health, social and economic outcomes of individuals, institutions and communities.

Phase 3: Implementation

Promoting and actively supporting the adoption and implementation of the new CDP Competency Framework by CDPs, their employers, training providers and professional associations will be the emphasis of the third phase of the project during the spring and summer of 2020. Applications of the framework may include individual learning plans, organizational training plans, community-based and post-secondary training and professional development, and recruitment and recognition of CDPs. An online, user-friendly self-assessment tool will be developed so that CDPs can determine their strengths and areas in which they might want to pursue training. Individual and group learning plans can be informed by this self-assessment in a proactive manner, so that all practitioners are supported in further developing and enhancing their knowledge and skills.

Phase 4: Certification and sustainability

During the spring, summer and fall of 2020, we will explore options for promoting national cohesion through a pan-Canadian or national approach to certification. A pilot certification

process will be field-tested with volunteers, and a summary report and recommendations will be presented to the NSC for consideration. This early certification process is a fantastic opportunity for interested CDPs to take a leadership role and shape the adoption of certification across the country.

Embracing the future together

This CDP Competence project recognizes, respects, and builds on the expertise, trust and goodwill that characterize the career development community. We are eager to continue to work and learn alongside CDPs and stakeholders like you to update the S&Gs. Through collaborative action, we can strengthen the sector's coherence. Working together, we will set the standard of professional practice for CDPs in Canada, ensuring all Canadians have the supports they need to navigate learning and work.

Kathy McDonald, Project Director with CCDF, has worked in key educational leadership roles at the school, school board and ministry levels. She has a record of accomplishments in the research, design, development and implementation of provincial, regional and pan-Canadian curriculum, programs, frameworks, strategies and policies. McDonald is honoured to collaborate with career development stakeholders across Canada to lead the Supporting Canadians to Navigate Learning and Work project.