



Seeking CES Members Input on Competencies for Canadian Evaluation Practice

As part of the Professional Designation Project, the Professional Designation Core Committee (PDCC) is seeking CES membership input on proposed *Competencies for Canadian Evaluation Practice*. If acceptable to the membership, these competencies (along with our Guidelines for Ethical Conduct and the Program Evaluation Standards) will be *used as a basis to develop evaluation credentials*.

Core Competencies for Canadian Evaluators

The proposed *Competencies for Canadian Evaluation Practice* draws from recent literature, our research and the current Canadian evaluation environment. It attempts to fully capture the specialized skills, knowledge and abilities of our community, yet be generic enough to be applicable to the broad range of evaluation work we undertake.

We see each of the 5 categories as essential components of our overall evaluation practice, tried to be comprehensive without being exhaustive and, notably attempted to include the ever increasing work done in the area of performance measurement. Please refer to these definitions as you examine the proposed competencies, which follow:

Stakeholder: For our purposes, stakeholder is used synonymously with audience, beneficiary or evaluand. It includes the spectrum from evaluation participants to evaluation users to public interest groups, who may not be readily definable as having an interest in the evaluation. As such it may be a person or an organization who has a direct or indirect investment, involvement or interest in the evaluation.

Evaluability: Describes the degree to which a program can be evaluated. Program evaluability depends on the presence of goals, agreement of purpose and use of the evaluation, agreement between program managers, service providers, and others involved in the evaluation as to the criteria for successful outcomes, the evaluation's contribution to performance (cost-effectiveness), implement-ability or specificity of the interventions, and the action-ability of the results of the evaluation. An evaluability assessment can remediate these and other barriers related to evaluability.¹

Feasibility: Serves as a functional test for evaluation procedures and methodology and adds value to evaluations in three ways. It aligns possible and practical evaluation procedures and methodologies. It serves as a foundation for accuracy, propriety and utility of the evaluation and is supported by resource accountability. See Joint Committee Program Evaluation Standards.

Context: Is defined by the cultural, political, and economic environments as well as the geographical circumstances in which the program occurs, including community, region, state, and country. It is said to be multidimensional and may include program history, purpose, laws and rules, funding and organizational structure, as well as the culture, values and needs of the program sponsors, managers, clients and other stakeholders.

Program Theory: Stevahn et al (2005) defines program theory as a program's logic model, or program's theory of change, assumptions underlying the effectiveness of a program; explanations of the mechanisms believed to make a program effective.

Design: Stevahn et al (2005) defines evaluation design as specifying the evaluation questions, data sources, data collection and analysis methods, and procedures for conducting an

¹ Joint Ctte. Program Evaluation Standards Document (2007); J. Wholey (1970); M. Scriven Evaluation Thesaurus (1991); W.J. Prosvac & R..G. Carey (2003).



evaluation study and reporting results; a plan for conducting an evaluation. The term evaluation framework may also be used for evaluation plan.

Proposed Competencies for Canadian Evaluation Practice

1.0 Reflective Practice competencies focus on the fundamental norms and values underlying evaluation practice and one's awareness of their evaluation expertise and needs for growth.
1.1 Applies professional evaluation standards
1.2 Acts ethically and strives for integrity and honesty
1.3 Respects all stakeholders
1.4 Considers the public welfare in evaluation practice
1.5 Aware of self as an evaluator (knowledge, skills, dispositions) and reflects on personal evaluation practice (competencies and areas for growth)
1.6 Pursues professional networks and self development to enhance evaluation practice
2.0 Technical Practice competencies focus on the specialized aspects of evaluation, such as design, data collection, analysis, interpretation, and reporting.
2.1 Understands the knowledge base of evaluation (theories, models, types, methods and tools)
2.2 Specifies program theory
2.3 Determines the purpose for the evaluation
2.4 Determines program evaluability
2.5 Frames evaluation questions
2.6 Develops evaluation designs
2.7 Defines evaluation methods (quantitative, qualitative or mixed)
2.8 Identifies data sources
2.9 Collects data
2.10 Assesses validity of data
2.11 Assesses reliability of data
2.12 Analyzes and interprets data
2.13 Draws conclusions and makes recommendations
2.14 Reports evaluation findings and results
2.15 Notes strengths and limitations of the evaluation (including methods)
3.0 Situational Practice competencies focus on the application of evaluative thinking in analyzing and attending to the unique interests, issues, and contextual circumstances in which evaluation skills are being applied.
3.1 Respects the uniqueness of the site
3.2 Examines organizational, political, community and social contexts
3.3 Identifies impacted stakeholders
3.4 Identifies the interests of all stakeholders
3.5 Serves the information needs of intended users
3.6 Attends to issues of evaluation use
3.7 Attends to issues of organizational and environmental change
3.8 Applies evaluation competencies to organization and program measurement challenges
3.9 Shares evaluation expertise
4.0 Management Practice competencies focus on the process of managing a project / evaluation, such as budgeting, coordinating resources and supervising.
4.1 Defines work parameters, plans and agreements
4.2 Attends to issues of evaluation feasibility
4.3 Identifies required resources (human, financial and physical)
4.4 Monitors resources (human, financial and physical)
4.5 Coordinates and supervises others
4.6 Reports on progress and results
4.7 Identifies and mitigates problems / issues
5.0 Interpersonal Practice competencies focus on people skills, such as communication, negotiation, conflict resolution, collaboration, and diversity.
5.1 Uses written communication skills
5.2 Uses verbal communication skills
5.3 Uses listening skills
5.4 Uses negotiation skills
5.5 Uses conflict resolution skills
5.6 Uses facilitation skills (group work)
5.7 Uses interpersonal skills (individual and teams)
5.8 Uses collaboration / partnering skills
5.9 Attends to issues of diversity and culture
5.10 Demonstrates professional credibility



How the Core Competencies for Canadian Evaluators were developed

CES, through National Council, agreed to pursue a voluntary system of professional designations for evaluation in Canada, in August 2000. The Council noted that “a well-structured and agreed knowledge base is essential to any system of professional designation” and proposed “undertaking a “cross-walk” (cross referencing with the goal of determining points of overlap and difference) of different extant knowledge bases in order to develop a comprehensive list of evaluator competencies.”

The Professional Designation Core Committee has undertaken this crosswalk, which is posted in the grey literature data base on the CES website <http://go.97.ca/?hikxbijt> for your review. It is an extensive piece of work, which has informed the development of the competencies proposed here. The crosswalk aligns competences from:

- Our (CES) Essential Skills Series program, which contains the skills and knowledge CES deems important to evaluation
- The Core Body of Knowledge Study, commissioned by CES in 2002
- The Treasury Board Secretariat Competencies for Evaluators in the Government of Canada
- The Joint Committee Program Evaluation Standards,
- The American Evaluation Association’s Guiding Principles, and
- The United Nations Competencies for Evaluators in the United Nations System, **with**

- Essential Competencies for Program Evaluators put forward by L Stevahn, J. King, G. Ghere and J. Minnema, J in *Establishing essential competencies for program evaluators in a 2005 issue of the American Journal of Evaluation*.

This exercise allowed us to identify gaps and overlaps. We see the Crosswalk as validating and providing sufficient confidence in our existing knowledge base to put forth the proposed Competencies for Canadian Evaluation Practice, for your input and feedback.

Competencies are “the knowledge, skills, and dispositions program evaluators need to achieve standards that constitute sound evaluations” (Stevahn et al., 2005) Competencies are attributed to people, to their skills which constitute the source of their ability to carry out effective, quality evaluations.

There is another important consideration to your review of the enclosed competencies – and that is how these ‘fit’ with other dimensions of evaluation practice, notably standards and ethics. An alignment of these ‘three pillars’ of professional designations can be found at http://evaluationcanada.ca/txt/three_pillars.pdf. This table demonstrates the crosscutting and overlapping nature of these three dimensions, and importantly, that the proposed competencies provide the requisite coverage of the standards. We believe it says that given these competencies, an acceptable standard of product can be produced. It also demonstrates the comprehensive coverage of the three pillars or underpinnings of Canadian Evaluation Practice – from which credentials can be developed.

Enough from us, now we need you thoughts. Please give us your feedback by April 26, 2008 through the short survey (6 questions only) posted at <http://evaluationcanada.ca/callweb.cgi?en:consult>. We need your input to proceed in the project and will post survey results, once completed.