Canadian
Evaluation Society

Société canadienne
d'évaluation

Context

One of the key roles of the Canadian Evaluation Society (CES), the professional association for program evaluation in Canada, is to contribute to the professionalization of evaluation practice. The CES Credentialed Evaluator (CE) program is designed to support professionalization efforts by defining, recognizing, and promoting the practice of ethical, high quality and competent evaluation in Canada. The program is founded on three pillars: professional standards, a code of ethics, and defined competencies. The CE designation is a service provided by CES to its members, who may elect to become credentialed on a voluntary basis.

The education requirements for the CE designation are either of: a graduate level degree (Master's or PhD), or an undergraduate degree along with a Graduate Certificate/Diploma in Program Evaluation. However, CES recognizes that among its members are practitioners who possess all the necessary experience and competencies, but who have not been able to access the types of required education. Therefore, applicants who have neither a post graduate degree, or a post graduate diploma or certificate in program evaluation, may be able to demonstrate the equivalent learning through extensive work experience and professional development. This will be demonstrated through submission and assessment of a professional portfolio.

NB: The process described below is newly introduced, and so will be piloted and evaluated. A first pre-pilot will be conducted in 2019 with individuals who have already expressed interest in the PLAR for their CE application. A more formal pilot will be conducted with the next set of new applicants. Results of both pilots will be used to improve the policy and process.

Eligibility criteria

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) "defines processes that allow individuals to identify, document, have assessed and gain recognition for their prior learning. The learning may be formal, informal, non-formal, or experiential. The context of the learning is not key to the process as the focus is on the learning." [1]

To be considered for post-secondary equivalence in the context of professional evaluation practice, prior learning must meet the following criteria:
- Be verifiable;
- Be applicable outside the context in which it was learned;
- Have a theoretical and applied component (knowledge, performance, and evidence from prior learning);

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[1] http://capla.ca/what-is-rpl/

- Be drawn from reflection above and beyond ordinary work/life experience;
- Relate to a recognized vocation, profession, or academic discipline.

Operationally, to be eligible for PLAR, it is required that:
- The applicant has been in the work force for at least **10 years**; and
- Within those 10 years, the applicant has at least **six years** of full-time experience[2] in program evaluation, as recognized in letters of validation from employers in program evaluation as defined by CES[3] from one or more employers, clients, supervisors or Elders.

PLAR Application process

PLAR applicants will pay a one-time fee of $550 that will cover the both the assessment of their PLAR portfolio and their Credentialed Evaluator application.

Step 1: Pre-approval. Prior to paying the CE PLAR Application Fee, individuals interested in the PLAR pathway are asked to submit:
- a maximum one-page letter to the PDP Administrator explaining how they meet the eligibility criteria
- the self-assessment pre-application checklist for the CE (Appendix 1 of the CE Applicant Guide), highlighting the educational requirements area;
- a copy of highest formal education degree(s) or courses (e.g. transcripts showing number of credits), certificates, and/or other forms of education recognition obtained.

  The Administrator will review these documents and contact the Vice-President as necessary; the latter may also contact the applicants. This is a gate-keeping step, intended to ensure that PLAR applicants have the potential to be successful. The applicants will then be informed as to whether they should or should not apply. Once pre-approval is confirmed, the applicant will be asked to pay the fee of $550.

Step 2: Portfolio submission. After pre-approval from CES, the applicant will submit a portfolio[4]. The portfolio must include:
- A letter or memo not to exceed three pages outlining professional experience and education and how the applicant views his or her learning as equivalent to that required in the CES Competencies for Canadian Evaluation Practice. In particular, this document, as well as the entire portfolio, should demonstrate that the applicant has knowledge of program evaluation theories, models and approaches, and quantitative and qualitative social science research methods.
- A full and up-to-date resumé detailing work history, making clear which positions were in evaluation, and for what proportion of time, so that the criterion of 10 years in the workforce

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[2] The requirement for non-PLAR CEs is two years of experience. The six years required for PLAR aims to establish a learning period equivalent to a four-year degree.
[3] Evaluation is the systematic assessment of the design, implementation or results of an initiative for the purposes of learning or decision-making. https://evaluationcanada.ca/what-is-evaluation
[4] An example of a portfolio structure is found in MacAulay, G. 2009, Taking charge of my career and life journey by plotting my direction with a Learning Portfolio. http://capla.ca/plotting-my-direction-with-a-learning-portfolio/

with six years in evaluation can be assessed. Letters of validation and names/current contact information for employers/supervisors in each of these positions must be appended.

- A summary description, not to exceed two pages, of formal, informal, and professional development learning and study throughout the last 10 years. This may include training (including online), independent study, volunteering and mentorship learning, professional development events including those of evaluation associations, and others as they apply to program evaluation competencies.
- Examples of two complete evaluation work products (reports, documents, technical products) in electronic format, clearly identifying the audience and context. If these are joint or team products, the examples should include a statement of the applicant's contributions and role; and the names of employers or supervisors who can attest to the applicant's contribution.

This portfolio should be submitted by email to the Application Administrator, who will check it for completeness.

Assessment and approval of Prior Learning Recognition

The portfolio is then reviewed by a) two Credentialing Board (CB) members with experience in assessing educational equivalencies; and b) the Vice-President. Approval of two out of three reviewers is required. This process may take up to two months. No appeal is possible. If successful, the Administrator informs the Applicant and assists him or her in moving on to the CE application process. If not successful, the applicant is provided with the reviewers' rationale.

Submission of the Application for the Credentialed Evaluator Designation

Applicants whose prior learning is recognized as eligible for purposes of the Credentialed Evaluator application are then free to complete the remainder of the application, as described in CE Applicant Guide.

Once a CE application is submitted, it will follow established procedures and will be sent to two CB reviewers different from those who assessed PLAR. The PLAR portfolio will be made available to these reviewers.