Literature Review: Professionalization of Evaluators

Prepared for the CES Evaluation
Professionalization Project

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Executive Summary

This literature review is intended to summarize (a) existing research on evaluator competencies, (b) academic views of professionalization in evaluation and comparable disciplines, and (c) existing processes of professional certification/credentialing in comparable disciplines. Regarding the latter, the issues addressed in this review are intended to augment the information gathered in the interview component of this project.

This review will consider professional standards, competencies, and practice, and will situate credentialing in the context of the range of professional designations. The review focuses chiefly on Canadian examples, but also considers American examples where appropriate.

What are the definitions of the key terms? The terms *licensure*, *credential*, *certification*, and *accreditation* are not always used consistently in the literature on professionalization. To avoid confusion we will rely on Altschuld's definitions which distinguish between certification (as an individual-level assessment and, typically, testing of competencies) and credentialing (as a set of courses or other experiences that a person must go through, which may or may not involve examination).

Altschuld describes *credentialing* as a set of courses or other experiences a person must go through to receive a credential. The credentialing process may be done by a professional society, or by educators/trainers.

He describes *certification* as a process by which a person masters certain skills and competencies in a field as assessed by an external body (usually a professional society in the area of consideration). If one is certified, then an additional step is to become licensed to practice.

Licenses are awarded by provinces or states and are intended to restrict professional practice to those who have duly met the licensing requirements. Persons who practice without a license can be sanctioned by the professional body and/or the jurisdiction in which the person should have obtained a license to practice.

Accreditation is a mechanism whereby the educational program of an institution or agency is examined by an external panel representing the profession, against established criteria for programs. If the program passes the review, it is granted a document indicating that it has been accredited. Usually, accreditation is for a fixed period of time and must be renewed.

What do we know about evaluator competencies? There have been two recent projects conducted under the auspices of professional evaluation associations to develop inventories and descriptions of competencies for evaluators. Both have been done in

North America – one in Canada under the auspices of the Canadian Evaluation Society (CES) and one in the United States connected with the American Evaluation Association (AEA). The Canadian project was conducted by Zorzi, McGuire and Perrin (2002) and yielded a report for the CES as well as an article that summarized key findings from the report (Zorzi, Perrin, McGuire, Long, & Lee, 2002). More recently, McGuire and Zorzi (2005) published a paper based on their earlier work as part of a *Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation* thematic section on evaluator competencies.

The two evaluation association-based projects are similar in that they both develop lists of competencies for evaluators in a wide range of settings and evaluation undertakings. But the approaches are different in important ways. The ECPE list of competencies is intended to be generic. It is clear that the focus is on program evaluation and no efforts are made to distinguish among types of evaluations or domains of practice that might be undertaken by practicing evaluators. Because they are generic, the competencies tend to be general – there would need to be ways of translating and perhaps even expanding particular competencies or clusters to make it possible to map out curricula for workshops, courses or programs.

Is there a consensus on core evaluator competencies? Cousins and Aubry (2006) and Gussman (2005) suggest that the ECPE framework represents an emerging consensus view of evaluator competencies, and hence, is a basis for evaluator training and apprenticeships and practice.

In contrast, Smith (2003) identifies several issues that have and will continue to divide the profession, among them being the qualitative-quantitative debate, and the advocacy versus independence debate. With respect to the former, she suggests that although there have been laudatory efforts to advocate for mixed methods in evaluations (Patton, 1997), there continues to be a deep underlying division within the profession around the epistemologies that differentiate constructivists, who advocate qualitative methods (Lincoln, 1994) from those who advocate for one or another versions of positivism (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002).

The issue of evaluators as program advocates versus evaluators as independent assessors of programs is one that has become more important over time. Empowerment evaluation, for example, developed and promoted by David Fetterman (2001) connects evaluation with efforts to improve social justice. This style of evaluation is intended to assist programs and organizations on their terms, and not impose external (evaluator) judgment on programs.

This advocacy view contrasts with Scriven's (1997) views on the importance of evaluator objectivity. If one compares evaluation with (now) competing professions like internal audit, that stress independence if not objectivity as core values in their practice (Mutchler, Chang, & Prawitt, 2001), the evaluation profession is divided on this issue.

How will recent changes in the field of evaluation affect evaluator competencies? Smith (2003) points out that the nature of evaluation work has changed significantly in

the past 15 years. Beginning with the passage of the Government Performance Review Act (GPRA) in the United States in 1993, jurisdictions at all levels of the public sector in North America, Europe, Australia and New Zealand have embraced performance measurement as a principal way of addressing growing demands for public accountability.

Mayne and Rist (forthcoming) suggest that set-piece evaluation engagements are giving way to streams of evaluative information that play a key part in knowledge management strategies in organizations. This shift means that performance measurement and performance management systems will continue to be a central part of evaluation – likely growing in importance over time

Performance measurement and its connections with performance management need to become explicit parts of evaluation and we need to ensure that the competencies that are arrayed for evaluators include those that take into account the knowledge and skills that are required to design, implement, maintain, revise and even integrate performance measurement systems into different scales of public sector and non-profit organizations. McDavid and Hawthorn (2006) suggest that core performance measurement knowledge and skills can be seen as an outgrowth of program evaluation knowledge and skills – program evaluators are well-positioned to make performance measurement a part of their practice if they are prepared to understand and work with the organizational cultural and political processes that are entailed in successfully developing and implementing performance measurement systems. As well, program evaluators, because they understand assessing program effectiveness, are in a position to position performance measurement systems so that the roles and expectations for them are realistic.

Are some competencies more essential than others? In the Canadian context, Aucoin (2005), in his discussion of the roles that program evaluation plays in Federal government decision-making, makes a strong case for program evaluation being a key contributor to assessing the effectiveness of programs. He argues that in a system that emphasizes results-based management, there is no substitute for program evaluation, given its core focus on program effectiveness. Although program evaluation clearly is capable of doing more than assessing program effectiveness, as has been pointed out by the Zorzi, McGuire and Perrin (2002) in their study for the CES, that role is in the core of what distinguishes program evaluation from other, competing, professions, including internal audit. Being able to design and execute competent effectiveness evaluations continues to be a key part of what evaluators do.

What are the key steps in credentialing, certifying and licensing evaluators? A review of the literature that discusses the processes and issues involved in professionalizing disciplines is necessarily selective. The volume of material available on credentialing, certification, licensing and accreditation is very large and the practicalities of conducting such a review makes it necessary to focus the review of books, articles, reports and websites on topics and issues of particular interest for this project.

Given that the terms of reference for the project, as specified by the Canadian Evaluation Society, place particular emphasis on credentialing as an option for professionalizing

evaluators, this literature review has systematically canvassed sources that help us to understand the processes and issues entailed in credentialing professionals. But because credentialing is, in fact, an option that has been selected by comparatively few other professions and because credentialing is usually seen as one step in a multi-step process, this literature review also considers certification and licensure of professionals, albeit in less depth than credentialing.

Based on the literature review, it is possible to list requirements for a *credentialing* process. Because credentialing is seen as the first step in professionalizing a discipline, *certification* generally entails the requirements for credentialing plus others that are appropriate for certification. *Licensing,* like certification, also builds on the requirements for both credentialing and certification, adding additional steps that are primarily focused on the legal status of a profession and its practitioners.

What are the key steps in credentialing? Based on the literature review, the following are generally seen as steps to successfully designing and implementing a credentialing system for a profession.

- ❖ Obtain agreement by the governing body for the professional association/society that credentialing is an appropriate way to begin professionalizing the discipline.

- ❖ Consult with the membership of the professional association to ascertain/confirm the need/demand for a credential.

- ❖ Consult with/enlist the support of the organizations/institutions that would be providing formal education or training as part of obtaining a credential.[1]

- ❖ Assign staff resources in the professional association to the credentialing process.

- ❖ Develop volunteer committees to assist with the process. Their tasks will depend on the range of ways by which practitioners can become credentialed. If experience, for example, is included as an option for credentialing, assessing experience will necessitate committees of practitioners who review portfolios or other evidence of practice.

- ❖ With the aid of academics and practitioners, identify credentialing requirements and options. These may include formal education, training, professional development, experience and various combinations of these options. One important distinction is between education and training for which persons have been granted formal post-secondary credit, and other training or professional development for which no credit has been granted.

- ❖ Although it is not essential that core competencies be defined to credential practitioners, it is essential that a code of ethics be developed for practitioners as well as standards for practice.

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[1] Although accrediting institutions that provide education or training is an option, that process would entail establishing the content and delivery modalities of curricula that would need to be offered. Establishing whether core competencies are being taught can be a part of the accreditation process but is not essential.

❖ A self-evaluation/self-reporting process that is intended to detail relevant experience, may also be required. Criteria for relevant experience will need to be developed. If portfolios are deemed to be necessary for the credential, they are prepared by practitioners will need to be assessed by committees or persons designated for this task. Criteria for the assessment process will need to be developed and validated.

❖ There may be a formal examination process as part of a credentialing process, but this is more typical of a certification process. Developing, validating and periodically revising such an examination is a significant undertaking. The examination may be a part of assessing the experience of practitioners who apply for the credential outside the ambit of formal education or training channels.

❖ If a grandparenting system is developed to credential existing practitioners, criteria will have to be developed to decide who gets grandparented, how long such a privilege is extended to the practice community, and what evidence is required to be granted a credential in this way.

❖ Requirements for continuing professional development can be established. The professional association needs to decide whether the credential is granted for a fixed period of time, subject to maintenance and/or renewal.

❖ There has to be a capacity in the professional association to monitor the credentialing process, and to modify it as needed.

❖ There has to be a capacity to handle complaints and appeals from persons who have been unsuccessful in the credentialing process.

❖ Once a plan for the design and implementation of the credentialing system has been established, a business plan must be developed. The business plan will need to estimate the costs of credentialing, and the revenues that will be needed to offset those costs. Allocating the costs among stakeholders (principally, those persons seeking the credential, costs to governments, costs to the society/professional association, costs to organizations providing education/training, costs to organizations assessing experience) will be a part of the business plan. The business plan will need to be approved by the governing body of the professional association.

❖ A newly-developed credentialing system will need to be marketed to current and future members of the professional association.

What are the key steps for certification? In a word, the requirements for credentialing are also applicable to certifying professional practitioners.

❖ In addition, it is essential that there be agreement on the core competencies for the profession, since there will need to be a process for assessing the competence of each practitioner who applies for certification. The competencies will need to be translated into curricula for the organizations that purvey knowledge, skills and dispositions that are deemed to be appropriate for practitioners.

❖ An examination/assessment process is typical of professions that certify their practitioners. The examinations need to be developed, validated in terms of competencies measured, and revised periodically. Exams are usually administered on a cyclical basis, and may include both a written and an oral component. Professions vary in the requirements for a passing score. Typically, candidates have a limited number of "tries" (one to three) to pass the exams.

❖ Professions that have a certification requirement for practice typically have a body of theoretical knowledge that defines the profession, sponsor organizations that do research, and often have professional publications (journals and books).

❖ Like credentialing, certification does not usually give practitioners an exclusive right to a given field. In other words, even if the name of a certificate is protected by a provincial or state statute, persons who do not have that certificate can still practice in that field.

What are the key steps for licensing? In addition to the requirement for credentialing and certification, there are additional considerations for professions that are licensed to practice. Typically, the rationale for licensing practitioners has to do with public safety (medicine or law as examples).

❖ Licensed professionals are persons who must acquire a license from a regulatory body (typically the profession itself) and/or a government jurisdiction in order to practice in that jurisdiction. What makes licensing unique among professionalization options is that a licensed profession is one where legislation has been passed in a jurisdiction that pertains to the practice of that profession. Almost always, licenses grant the practitioners the exclusive right to practice that profession in the jurisdiction(s) in which they hold valid licenses.

❖ Accompanying the legal aspects of licensing are possible liability issues. Thus, a profession that had succeeded in securing for its practitioners the exclusive right to practice in a field, will incur greater liabilities, typically from applicants who have failed to secure a license to practice.

❖ Competent practice is regulated by the profession, usually organizations that train or educate practitioners are themselves accredited by the profession (medical schools are subject to periodic accreditation reviews, for example).

Literature Review: Professionalization of Evaluators

1.   Introduction

As yet, there is no professional designation that certifies that an individual is qualified to be an evaluator. In addition, as noted by the National Association of State Units on Aging (2000): "Incongruous as it seems, certification is a multidisciplinary field that has no required or mandated standards" (p. 3).The present project for the Canadian Evaluation Society (CES) addresses these issues by exploring the process of professionalization, and identifying the relative advantages and disadvantages of the use of professional designations including credentialing, certification, and licensing, with a chief focus on credentialing.

This literature review is intended to summarize (a) existing research on evaluator competencies, (b) academic views of professionalization in evaluation and comparable disciplines, and (c) existing processes of professional certification/credentialing in comparable disciplines. Regarding the latter, the issues addressed in this review are intended to augment the information gathered in the interview component of this project.

The research will consider professional standards, competencies, and practice, and will situate credentialing in the context of the range of professional designations. The review focuses chiefly on Canadian examples, but also considers American examples where appropriate.

There are eleven key questions addressed by the primary research of this project. This literature review cannot provide information on *all* of the questions, but is intended to gather helpful information from reports, academic research, and case studies that will assist in the development of an action plan for the CES. Aside from discussing the relative advantages and disadvantages of credentialing (and alternatives), the literature review draws upon case studies and academic literature to address nine questions (where information is available), drawn from the original eleven project questions. For the professions included in this literature review:

1. What are the professional standards of practice?
2. What training and professional development options are acknowledged?
3. Is/was a 'grand parenting' system invoked for existing members at the time of system installation?
4. Who delivers training?
5. Are professional experience parameters acknowledged and incorporated into the credentialing system? How?
6. Are differential levels of professional credential identified and maintained? On what basis are distinctions made?

7. Is demonstration of continuous learning required of members in order to maintain credentials? What sorts of learning experiences qualify?

8. How is the system financed?

9. Are tangible benefits of the credentialing system in evidence? What are they?

Due to the range and diversity of information available from reports, websites, and academic articles, each question is not covered as a separate section of this review. Four professionalization processes are summarized at the end of the section that reviews academic articles. Later in the review, six professions are examined as cases, and the information relevant to the project questions is summarized in a table at the end of these case studies.

The balance of this literature review offers: a presentation of key definitions of the terms that will be used in this report; typical steps to credentialing; legal implications of various systems of professionalizing; a discussion of the current understanding of evaluator competencies; a brief review of the current key reports and articles on the topic of professionalization of evaluation; a selection of academic articles on professionalization of disciplines that have commonalities with evaluation; and, finally, a more detailed set of seven examples of systems of designation used by comparable professions.

2. Definitions

The terms *licensure*, *credential*, *certification*, and *accreditation* are not always used consistently in the literature on professionalization, partly because of jurisdictional differences in how these issues are handled, and partly because of some overlaps in the understanding of the terms. For example, *certification* can signify that an individual has been *certified* to have a certain level of competency within a profession, including testing by a professional (typically non‑government) body, *or* that a person has gained a *credential* by completing a specified set of educational, and perhaps experiential, events that do not specifically test whether the individual has reached a certain level of competency. In most cases *licensure* is seen as a form of mandatory certification of a profession; if one is not licensed, one is generally not permitted to practice.[2] Professions needing licensure are typically ones where public health, safety, or well‑being merit regulatory protection, such as dentistry, law, occupational therapy, optometry, pharmacy, and teaching.

Because one of the key aims of this project is to identify the relative advantages and disadvantages, for the evaluation profession, of the use of professional designations including credentialing, certification, and licensing, it is important to take an approach

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[2] *Licensure* in the United States means that only when a person is licensed by the associated regulatory body is he or she allowed to practice that profession, whereas in Canada there are some cases where a person is allowed to practice in a profession that does have a licensure system, yet he or she is not licensed (CICIC, 2006b). The Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC) does, however, define licensure as: Mandatory procedures for determining licence eligibility, granting licences, and protecting the public regarding licensed occupations (CICIC, 2006b).

that clearly differentiates these terms. Below, we review some of the more thorough approaches to defining these terms, and we provide a set of definitions that explain the terminology used in this report.

Altschuld (2005) notes "There is a fairly sharp demarcation between certification and credentialing, especially in regard to legal ramifications" (p. 159). While acknowledging that distinctions among some of the terms "are not absolute, and for some, more a matter of degree than substance" (p.159)[3] Altschuld provides an instructive table of key terms and concepts, partially reproduced below.

Table 1: Definitions of Certification, Credentialing, Licensure, and Accreditation

(Adapted from Altschuld, 2005)

Terms/Concepts	Meaning	Comments
Certification (also see Licensure)	A process by which a person masters certain skills and competencies in a field as assessed by an external body (usually a professional society in the area of consideration).	Most often done through a formal test or set of tests (certification exams) as in law, medicine, engineering, etc.
		Certifying body may be legally liable for the skills that they designate as being attained by an individual
		Certification may have to be periodically renewed most frequently (but not always) via continuing education
Credentialing	A set of courses or other experiences a person must go through to receive a credential	Does not specify the skill set attained by the person credentialed, only that they have gone through delineated experiences and courses
	May be done by a professional society or sometimes by trainers as in a credential for having been trained	Tests or certification exams may be, but generally are not, used for credentialing; instead it is the courses or training experiences that the individual has taken
		The legal implications for credentialing are less than for certification
Licensure	Licenses are awarded by states, branches of government, and legal jurisdictions	One may be certified but not licensed as in the case of a physician who has passed the necessary medical examinations but is found to have defrauded patients or illegally used drugs
	One must have a license to perform services or undergo penalties if they are performed without a license	Legal jurisdictions set up review panels in cases where there is malfeasance or unsafe practice
	Many times the criteria for licensing are the same as certification and are determined by professional societies/groups	Control of licensure resides outside of the professional group but is almost always highly influenced by it
Accreditation	A mechanism whereby the educational program of an agency or educational institution is examined, by an external panel against established criteria for programs	Accreditation is for a program whereas certification, credentialing, and licensure relate to an individual
	The program, if it passes review, receives a formal document indicating that it is accredited	Accreditation reviews rely on the courses and experiences that comprise a program, the skills gained by those going through it, their proficiencies as determined by tests and other outcome measures, and the processes through which the program is delivered

Note that with the Altschuld table of definitions, *licensure* is seen as a category of certification, but *credentialing* is kept as a separate category. This is acceptable for our

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[3] As an example of the various views on credentialing and certification, Perrin (2005) does not use the term *credentialing*, and defines *certification* as ranging from "being required to pass an examination or to otherwise demonstrate one's competencies, to successful participation in an accredited course of study, to certification of attendance at a course (even if someone sleeps throughout the entire course or perhaps slips out the door after signing the attendance registry)" (p. 181).

purposes, as a key focus is an examination of credentialing. Licensure is a very specific and high-level form of certification, involving mandatory standards typically set in legislation for public protection reasons. The legislation is typically provincial, though not always.

Cousins and Aubry (2006), too, consider licensure as a form of individual certification, and distinguish credentialing from certification: "A credentialing system does not specify the skill set attained by the person who is credentialed, only that they have gone through delineated experiences and courses" (p. 18). They further note that this view is "consistent with Love's (1994) distinction between a *professional development* approach and a *licensure* approach to certification. Credentialing aligns with the professional development approach" (Cousins and Aubry, 2006, p. 18). Worthen (1999) is another key academic writer in this area who similarly differentiates between certification and credentialing. Generally, both certification and credentialing are *non-compulsory*.

Harris and Bernhart (2001), in the U.S.-based *Guide to National Professional Certification Programs*, distinguish three types of "certification": *portfolio-based*, *competency-based*, and *curriculum-based*. Using our definitions, *curriculum-based certification* would actually be considered a *credential*, as it would not be based on confirming competencies. A university certificate program would be an example, then, of credentialing, whereas a *portfolio-based* or a *competency-based certification* program would have a process to assess a person's education, experiential background, and their current competencies, and would be considered an example of becoming *certified*.

Others, too, have definitions differing from those outlined by Altschuld. For example, the Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC) defines a *credential* as follows:

> Documented evidence of learning based on completion of a recognized
> program of study, training, work experience, or prior learning assessment.
> Degrees, diplomas, *certificates, and licences* are examples (CICIC, 2006b
> italics added)

The CICIC defines *certification* as "documented recognition by a governing body that a person has attained occupational proficiency", which matches Altchuld's focus on individually-tested proficiency, yet they define a *certificate* as "a document attesting to the successful completion of an educational course or program that is normally less than four semesters in length. A certificate may also qualify holders for entry into an occupation (e.g., Certificates of Qualification in the skilled trades)" (CICIC, 2006b)

Nevertheless, in an effort to avoid confusion we will follow Altschuld's example, delineating between certification (as an individual-level assessment and, typically, testing of competencies) and credentialing (as a set of courses or other experiences that a person must go through, which may or may not involve examination).

Overall, then, no matter how individual authors may be using the terms, we will make it clear that when they are covering professionalization through individual-level testing of

competencies they are referring to *certification*, or being *certified*, and when covering professionalization through taking courses and/or experiences, they are referring to *credentialing*. *Licensure*, again, is a specific, legally more stringent, form of individually-tested certification, normally related to the protection of the public. (Note, however, that a *certificate* may be gained through certification, credentialing, or licensing.)[4] And, finally, *accreditation* simply refers to the assessment of a program within an educational institution to confirm that it is meeting established criteria (CICIC, 2006b). In almost all cases of a credentialing or certification system, the professional body undertakes an accreditation process with the institutions that are offering courses or programs.

It is worth mentioning that there can be several levels, or graduations, of qualifications within licensing, certification, or credentialing.

3.   Typical Steps to Credentialing

In general, the articles addressing credentialing of evaluators cover a set of steps typical to the credentialing process for many professions:

- ♦   Staff is assigned to oversee the development of the credentialing process;
- ♦   Volunteer committee(s) are identified to assist in the development of the process;
- ♦   With the aid of distinguished practitioners and, sometimes, academic faculty, a professional body undertakes to establish core competencies and the minimum educational and experiential requirements for the credential[5];
- ♦   Typically the professional body establishes a Code of Ethics or Code of Professional Conduct
- ♦   In some cases, a self-evaluation process is established to guide progression through the credentialing process;
- ♦   Courses and/or workshops that must be taken are specified;

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[4] For example, when Cousins and Aubry (2006), among others, speak of "graduate level university certificate programs" (p. 55), they are speaking of credentialing, not certification.

[4] In *Next Steps Towards Professional Credentialing in Informatics*, Parker-Taillon (2005a) suggests that the development of a competency profile would take about one year, and provides the following key steps (expected to cost approximately $50,000 in Canada):

- ♦ Identification of a contractor, oversight committee and working group made up of "content experts" that are representative of the profession (i.e. represent diversity in terms of educational background, geographic location and levels of experience).
- ♦ Review of the literature to identify all existing documents relevant in the development of the profile (i.e. similar documents from other countries/professions, curriculum documents).
- ♦ Workshop with working group to develop first draft of profile.
- ♦ National validation of draft profile (either through survey, focus groups, or both).
- ♦ Revision of profile (Note: several rounds of consultation and revision usually occur).
- ♦ Final review by oversight committee and review/adoption by Board. (p. 5)

- There may or may not be a work experience component (most cases do have this);
- In some cases, applicants must be a member of the professional body;
- In some cases, applicants must have one or more letters of recommendation and/or sponsors;
- Often, there is a time-limited grandparenting period where, for a fee, those experienced in the profession can apply for the credential, without having taken the pre-requisite courses;
- In some cases, there are mentors assigned to candidates;
- Sometimes, though more commonly in the case of certification, there is a written exam component administered by the professional body; in some cases there is also an oral exam (it is important to establish the validity of these examinations);
- In the case of certification, and sometimes in credentialing, there is a continuing professional development requirement, to maintain the credential;
- The professional body monitors compliance with the Code of Ethics or Code of Professional Conduct, and can revoke the credential;
- The professional body monitors and adapts the credentialing process over time, as well as handling complaints and appeals from unsuccessful candidates.

Parker-Taillon's (2005b) study of credentialing in health informatics suggests that it is common to pilot the process for a time before fully launching it.

3.1 Additional Responsibilities of the Professional Body

The National Association of State Units on Aging (2000) published a *White Paper* that examines the "concepts and prerequisites associated with professional certification" and compares several strategies and models of certification. The report does not distinguish between certification and credentialing, but many of its key points apply to both. It provides "arguments for certification", "bottom line" cautions, and five potential strategies for beginning an *Information and Referral Specialists in Aging* certification process.

The paper expands on some of the steps necessary for a credentialing or certification system that goes beyond a university-based program, some of which may apply to a credentialing system for evaluators:

Assisting Candidates to Become Certified

- ❖ Cross-referencing standards (body of knowledge) to readily available self-study or text books
- ❖ Accrediting continuous education (CE) courses and training programs
- ❖ Developing new courses or training programs, perhaps in consultation with colleges and universities, tailored to teach the national standards. (Typically,

these courses are mandatory and often they are a prerequisite for
certification.)

Publicity
- ❖ Selling the professional community and the public on the value and benefits
  of the designation
- ❖ Maintaining a publicly accessible directory of certificants' skills and areas of
  expertise.

(National Association of State Units on
Aging, 2000, p. 5)

3.2   Survey of Evaluation Practice and Issues in Canada

Results from a survey of evaluators, *The Survey of Evaluation Practice and Issues in
Canada* completed by Borys *et al.* (2005), while addressing "certification", could also be
used to inform decision-making when determining the educational and experiential
requirements of a credentialing process. For example, of the 1,005 respondents, 20%
already had a bachelors degree, 61% had a masters degree, and 16% had a PhD (p. 11).
Only 54% of respondents were satisfied with training they received on the job (p. 23),
and 52% felt they needed "additional training to carry out their responsibilities as an
evaluator" (p. 30). Indeed, 71% agreed that they would like additional training related to
their evaluation responsibilities (p. 30).

The survey addressed perceived barriers to further training (p. 31):

- ❖ lack of time: 63% agreed
- ❖ lack of availability of training on advanced topics: 60% agreed
- ❖ lack of availability of training on evaluation on specific content areas: 58%
- ❖ lack of availability of a mentor: 51% agreed
- ❖ cost of training as a barrier: 50% agreed
- ❖ lack of local availability of training: 46% agreed
- ❖ lack of employer support: 26%

Seventy-eight percent of respondents felt that on-the-job experience was their most
important source of knowledge about evaluation, and while 19% said they would like to
tap into additional formal education, 69% cited professional development workshops and
47% mentioned conferences as ways they would like to continue professional
development (p. 32). Additionally, 64% indicated that they wished there was a way that
they could identify themselves as qualified evaluators [e.g., certification] (p. 33), and
62% agreed that "I would likely pursue the requirements of certification" (p. 35).

4.   Legal Implications

There are legal implications to consider when setting up a credentialing or a certification system, although the main concern is to be clear about the difference between *regulated* (typically "licensed", but occasionally "certified") occupations and *non-regulated* (typically "certified" or "credentialed") occupations. While information on these implications does not seem to be widely available, particularly for the Canadian situation, they are addressed in the Long and Kishchuk[6] (1997) paper, and the CICIC provides helpful differentiation between *regulated* and *non-regulated* occupations in Canada.

The CICIC defines a regulated occupation as one that is "controlled by provincial and territorial (and sometimes federal) law *and* governed by a professional organization or regulatory body" (italics added, CICIC, 2006a, p. 1). Requirements for a [regulated] profession may vary from one province to another, and one *must* have a licence or certificate to work in the profession and to use the title. *Regulated* occupations, then, are ones where, in the terms we have been using, *licensure* is needed to practice.

Non-regulated professions are defined as "a profession/trade for which there is **no legal requirement or restriction** on practice with regards to licences, certificates, or registration. **The vast majority of occupations** in Canada fall into this category" (original bolding, p. 1).

The CICIC website states that "occupations in the category of management consultants are **not regulated** in legislation in Canada, except in Quebec" (CICIC, 2006e, p. 1).

For the fields of accounting and auditing, however, CICIC notes differences across Canada:

> The occupations of financial auditors and accountants are **regulated** by legislation **in most jurisdictions**. Requirements to practise vary, but membership in a professional accounting association is usually required. (CICIC, 2006c, p. 1)

For the field of economics, CICIC notes:

> The occupations in the field of economic are **not regulated** in Canada. Requirements for employment may vary from one province/territory to another, and the levels of education and experience are determined by individual employers in areas such as finance, agriculture, natural resources, energy, investment, and international trade.

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[6] Long and Kishchuk (1997) use the terms "exclusive designation" to cover a typical mandatory licensure arrangement, and "protected designations" to cover non-mandatory certification in a profession that has statutory protection of its name (e.g., "Registered Professional Planner"), but that anyone can practice the profession *without* the designation. "Semi-protected" designations are those protected only by the federal *Trade-marks Act* ("Trade-marks Act, [R.S., 1985, c. T-13]," 1985); the professional organization itself would have to pursue civil damages if a non-certified person used the trademarked designation without actually having earned it. "Non-protected" designations are "without any legal basis preventing its use by non-members" (Long & Kishchuk, 1997 p 11).

However, membership is available but voluntary in various professional organizations and for various specialties within the field of economics. (CICIC, 2006d, p. 1)

The CICIC information is far from comprehensive, and it is clear that the protection of a credentialing designation is not a black and white issue. Likely some of the legal parameters around protection of designations have changed over the nine years since the Long and Kishchuk (1997) paper, but it is beyond the scope of this literature review to entirely cover the legal implications of the various possible forms of certification and credentialing.

Gussman (2005) provides a starting point for comparing the legal implications of licensing, certification, and credentialing[7]: His summary table of options is partially reproduced here, to illustrate the differences in the legal implications of the various approaches.

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[7] His report *Improving the Professionalism of Evaluation* also includes a "competencies" option; essentially an agreed-upon set of skills that would be expected for evaluators who have gone through university programs established under negotiation with the Treasury Board Secretariat.

Table 2: Summary of Options for Improving the Professionalism of Evaluators [8]

(Adapted from Gussman, 2005)

Approach	Definition	Implementation Strategies/Options	Pros	Cons
Licensing	Licensing authority tests candidates to national standards and issues license giving the holder a legal right to perform certain duties	Requires national standards; negotiations with provinces; setting up licensing agency; collection of fees; renewals; redress mechanism Likely implementation range 8-10 years	Adherence to stringent standards would ensure evaluators had desired skills	▪ Need to negotiate with provinces and professional groups - administrative complexity and higher costs ▪ enforcement and monitoring needed- potential for legal challenges ▪ need for redress body/mechanism
Certification	Granting of a written or printed statement testifying to an individual's qualifications to perform certain duties	Would require standard written and oral tests, specifying educational requirements and agreement on a certification body Likely implementation range 5-7 years	▪ Less onerous than full licensing ▪ ensures minimum quality among practitioners ▪ could create more certainty for evaluators	▪ if not a voluntary process, could become divisive ▪ complex to set up and monitor ▪ process is continuous ▪ expected resistance from current practitioners
Credentialing	Letter or certificate given to an individual and stating that the person has the right to exercise a certain position or authority	TBS and CES could agree on the minimum standards of experience/training and the society could issue letters to assert that various individuals have the necessary credentials Likely implementation range 3-5 years	▪ could raise revenues for professional body overseeing the process ▪ would shift the onus of testing from government to a professional association ▪ allows for grandparenting of existing evaluators	▪ Outside body would face higher costs of monitoring evaluators and issuing letters attesting to their credentials (partly offset by higher revenue from fees) ▪ without credentialing, anyone can claim to be an evaluator ▪ system remains subjective and grandparenting can create problems ▪ may not improve situation regarding new recruits
Competencies	Agreement on common skill sets that demonstrate an individual's competence to carry out evaluation work. These areas reflect the knowledge, skills, experience and attitudes that enable a researcher to function as an effective evaluator	TBS, CEE and the AES have published competency profiles. Recent academic research has reconciled these and could support short term action. Likely implementation range 18 months-2 years	▪ not restrictive and avoids legal challenges ▪ would create a standard set of skills expected for evaluators ▪ can be dealt with outside government ▪ this is strongly supported by the academic sector and gaining credibility in the evaluation literature ▪ would support internal training regime ▪ growth of university programs presents	▪ lacks the enforceability of government managed certification or licenses (but benefits far outweigh costs) ▪ shifts administrative burden and testing responsibility away from TBS ▪ will require some negotiation and MoU with institutions and associations

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[8] Although the definition of *credentialing* in this table does not conform to the definition we are generally using, the reason for including the table is to provide the listing of legal implications which show up in the "pros" and "cons" column.

Approach	Definition	Implementation Strategies/Options	Pros	Cons
			opportunity for skills enhancement for current staff	

Long and Kishchuk (1997) comment that "organizations can of course change the 'level' of their designation" and note that while the Certified Management Consultant (CMC) designation was originally protected by certification marks (under the federal *Trade-marks Act*) it is now protected "in most if not all provinces" (p. 12)[9].

5. Competencies in Evaluation: The Search for a Core Body of Knowledge and Skills

5.1 Existing Competency Frameworks in Evaluation

There have been two recent projects conducted under the auspices of professional evaluation associations to develop inventories and descriptions of competencies for evaluators. Both have been done in North America – one in Canada under the auspices of the Canadian Evaluation Society (CES) and one in the United States connected with the American Evaluation Association (AEA). The Canadian project was conducted by Zorzi, McGuire and Perrin (2002) and yielded a report for the CES as well as an article that summarized key findings from the report (Zorzi, Perrin, McGuire, Long, & Lee, 2002). More recently, McGuire and Zorzi (2005) published a paper based on their earlier work as part of a *Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation* thematic section on evaluator competencies.

A third project was conducted by Federal Government of Canada for the Centre of Excellence for Evaluation in Treasury Board Staff in 2002 (Treasury Board of Canada, 2002). This project was more focused, given its goal of developing a competency profile for Federal evaluators. It will be compared, selectively, to the two broader projects.

The AEA-sponsored Essential Competencies for Program Evaluators (ECPE) project, led by Stevahn, Ghere, Minema and King (Ghere, King, Stevahn, & Minnema, 2006; King, Stevahn, Ghere, & Minnema, 2001; Stevahn, King, Ghere, & Minnema, 2005a) continues to be an active research, consultation and professional development process. The ECPE project began with an attempt to find a consensus among a group of practitioners around a list of core competencies. There appeared to be a consensus for a large proportion of the competencies that were offered by the researchers and rated by the participants – the results of this study were published in the *American Journal of Evaluation* in 2001 (King et al., 2001).

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[9] For example: *The Institute of Certified Management Consultants of Manitoba Act*; the *Certified Management Consultants Regulation* in Alberta, enabled under the *Professional and Occupational Associations Registration Act, R.S.A. 2000*; *The Certified Management Consultants Act* in Saskatchewan; and, the *Certified Management Consultants Act* in Nova Scotia.

Since then, the same team has continued their work, presenting their competency list in conferences, to seek feedback and promote the framework. They have revised it, reorganized it, and have published a revised version that includes 61 core competencies in six categories: professional practice (6 competencies); systematic inquiry (20 competencies); situational analysis (12 competencies); project management (12 competencies); reflective practice (5 competencies); and interpersonal competencies (6 in total) (Stevahn et al., 2005a). Although the team stresses that their work still needs to be more widely validated, they also assert that it is important to put the provisional list of competencies into circulation, working with them in professional development settings so that members of the evaluation community and other interested stakeholders can suggest changes, and generally test them for completeness and robustness (across settings and types of evaluation engagements).

The two evaluation association-based projects are similar in that they both purport to develop lists of competencies for evaluators in a wide range of settings and evaluation undertakings. But the approaches are different in important ways. The ECPE list of competencies is intended to be generic. It is clear that the focus is on program evaluation and no efforts are made to distinguish among types of evaluations or domains of practice that might be undertaken by practicing evaluators. Because they are generic, the competencies tend to be general – there would need to be ways of translating and perhaps even expanding particular competencies or clusters to make it possible to map out curricula for workshops, courses or programs.

The work that has been done in Canada has yielded a competency framework that is more detailed than its American counterpart. Unlike the ECPE framework, the Canadian framework not only lists competencies that would pertain to the process of doing program evaluations, but also includes types of evaluations and a more detailed listing of skills that could translate more directly into workshops, courses and programs.

The advantage of the ECPE approach is that it presents competencies so that they do not overlap – the CES model, by featuring types of evaluation projects, detailed sections on research design, sampling and measurement, as well as sections that describe phases of the evaluation, creates the impression that competencies are repeated, or overlap with each other. A second advantage of the ECPE framework is that it crosswalks several other sources of competencies, including the CES Essential Skills Series, into the 61 competencies that are listed. Because the ECPE and CES models both have only been validated in preliminary ways, neither can claim to have canvassed evaluation practitioners with a view to confirming that the competencies listed are appropriate, complete and are a sound basis for building towards an evaluation profession via training and education programs, credentialing evaluators, or accrediting evaluation training programs.

5.2   Have We Reached a Consensus on Core Competencies for Evaluators?

Gussman (2005), in his paper *Improving the Professionalization of Evaluation*, completed for the Centre for Excellence in Evaluation in Treasury Board Canada,

indicates that his consultations of both public officials and the academic literature suggest "… we can define core skills and competencies for evaluators. The literature and debate in this area centre on what core competencies ought to underlie the basic credentials an evaluator ought to bring to the job." (p. 18). He includes the Stevahn, King, Minnema and Ghere (2005a) ECPE framework as an Annex to his report, suggesting that their work is the most advanced for the purposes at hand.

Althshuld (2005), in his review of the articles included in a Thematic Segment on Evaluator Competencies for the *Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation* also suggests that there is general agreement on competencies:

> This pattern of similar competency lists and specifications is also inherent in many other materials, as noted by Stevahn et al. Indeed, more than 30 years ago, Stufflebeam (1968) suggested steps for conducting an evaluation that has a fair amount of overlap with the skills seen as needed today. (Altschuld, 2005, p. 164)

Is it fair to say that we have reached a point where we have a list (albeit one that needs more validation) of core competencies for evaluators? If that is so, then we are in a position to work on the contents of workshops, courses, and programs that educate and train evaluators. Having a list of core competencies also supports efforts to rate individual evaluator proficiency, either through self evaluations (Ghere et al., 2006) or through some kind of process that would externally assess evaluator competencies for purposes of certification.

Smith (2003) has a different view of the coherence of the evaluation profession and suggests that there are both persistent schisms in the profession and a continuing evolution of theory and practice that hamper our attempts to identify core competencies. Smith was involved in two rounds of thinking and discussion (1994 and 2001) to forecast the future of the evaluation profession. In a special issue of *Evaluation Practice* (M.F. Smith, 1994), she invited 16 leaders in the field to offer their views on the future of evaluation. Again in 2001, she and Melvin Mark (2001) invited 23 theorists and practitioners to forecast what the field of evaluation would or should be like in 2010. Collectively, those two exercises provide a basis for identifying enduring issues that have and will continue to influence the evaluation profession.

In her summary, Smith (2003) identified several issues that have and will continue to divide the profession, among them being the qualitative-quantitative debate, and the advocacy versus independence debate. With respect to the former, she suggests that although there have been laudatory efforts to advocate for mixed methods in evaluations (Patton, 1997), there continues to be a deep underlying division within the profession around the epistemologies that differentiate constructivists, who advocate qualitative methods (Lincoln, 1994) from those who advocate for one or another versions of positivism (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002).

The issue of evaluators as program advocates versus evaluators as independent assessors of programs is one that has become more important over time. Empowerment evaluation,

for example, developed and promulgated by David Fetterman (2001) connects evaluation with efforts to improve social justice. This style of evaluation is intended to assist programs and organizations on their terms, and not impose external (evaluator) judgment on programs.

This advocacy view contrasts with Scriven's (1997) views on the importance of evaluator objectivity. If one compares evaluation with (now) competing professions like internal audit, that stress independence if not objectivity as core values in their practice (Mutchler, Chang, & Prawitt, 2001), the evaluation profession is divided on this issue.

5.3   Are Evaluation Competencies Generic?

If we compare the CES and the ECPE approaches to constructing the competency lists, the ECPE approach emphasizes developing a generic set of competencies for evaluators. Although the developers recognize that it is not possible for everyone to have developed all 61 of the competencies that they have generated (Stevahn et al., 2005a) the metaphor that they use to begin their discussion of university evaluation training programs in a special issue of the *Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation* (Stevahn, King, Ghere, & Minnema, 2005b) is preparing the well-equipped traveler:

> The well-equipped traveler becomes a helpful metaphor for our work as program evaluators and educators in university-based evaluation training programs. An effective evaluation study shares the attributes of a successful journey. Each requires knowledge, skills and dispositions in a decision-making process aimed at achieving a specific purpose. Equipped with tools such as maps, gear, navigational skills, and perseverance, the traveler targets a geographic destination. Similarly, the program evaluator targets a successful evaluation study by applying an array of tools, including evaluation approaches and designs, technical skills, management know-how, contextual savvy, interpersonal competence, standards of practice, and so on. In both cases, it is common to wonder throughout if all of the necessary tools are on hand and ready to use. (p. 102)

The well-equipped traveler appears to treat all journeys the same way – the preparations are generic. Likewise the list of competencies in the ECPE framework are intended to be generic, somehow distilling what is core to the range of distances, climates, cultures, political and economic circumstances to which the evaluator "travels".

The CES competencies project distilled a list of 152 knowledge elements into 23 more general elements that were in turn grouped into six clusters: ethics; evaluation planning and design; data collection; data analysis and interpretation; communication and interpersonal skills; and project management. Knowledge elements were gleaned from several different information collection efforts: "… a literature review, two internet consultations with the evaluation community, two discussion sessions with delegates at the CES 2002 National Conference, and on-line discussions among the members of an

invited, international expert reference panel" (Zorzi, McGuire et al., 2002, p. i, executive summary).

The project used a logic model to depict the program evaluation process. It is reproduced in Figure 1 below. (Zorzi, McGuire et al., 2002, p. 3)

Figure 1: Program Evaluation Logic Model for the 2002 CES Project

A Program Evaluation Logic Model
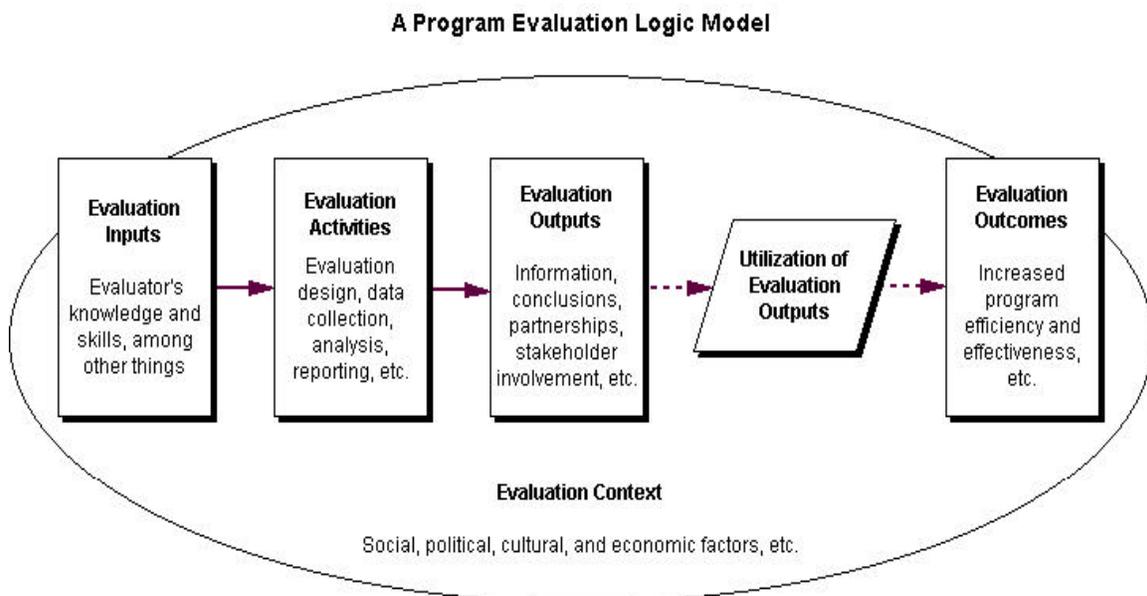
The knowledge and skill elements that were distilled from the project overlap with the core competencies that are included in the taxonomy produced in the ECPE project. Gussman (2005), in his discussion of ways to improve the professionalism of program evaluation, notes that, "…There is general agreement within government and the academic/practitioner communities about the core competencies of an "evaluator" but the issue has been left at the 'agreement' level due to the lack of an enforcement mechanism." (p.19). Although Gussman references the 2002 CES study, he does not mention its knowledge/competencies elements preferring instead to feature the list of 61 competencies that Stevahn, King, Ghere and Minnema (2005a) have produced.

If we look at the CES knowledge and skill elements generated in the 2002 study, there are some important differences between them and the generic competencies that have been generated in the ECPE framework.

The CES elements vary in breadth and depth. In addition to competencies that are generic, that is, have a similar look and feel to the ones in the ECPE taxonomy, the CES version includes "competencies" that consist of a listing of different types of evaluation studies: needs assessments; evaluability assessments; process evaluation/implementation evaluation; outcome evaluation/impact assessment; and efficiency evaluation/cost

analysis. In addition, there are knowledge elements/competencies for different theories or approaches to evaluation: evaluation paradigms (including positivism and constructivism); utilization-focused evaluation, empowerment evaluation; participatory evaluation; goal-free evaluation; and realistic evaluation. Finally, there are detailed and specific knowledge elements for research designs, including experimental, quasi-experimental, and non-experimental designs, and detailed step-by-step knowledge elements for phases in the evaluation process: 12 elements for the *Groundwork phase*; 8 for the *Evaluation Planning phase*; 15 for the *Data Collection phase*; and 18 for the *Data Analysis phase* of the process.

Overall the CES knowledge and skills elements/competencies list, because it is specific, has the potential for being useful as a framework to design curricula for workshops, courses or even evaluation-related programs. The list is also redundant at points and its length and specificity make it unwieldy. Although it is reprised in the *Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation* Thematic Segment on evaluator competencies (McGuire & Zorzi, 2005), it has not been promulgated like its American counterpart. In fact, when the Stevahn, King, Ghere and Minnema team cross-walks their 2005 list of 61 competencies to their own earlier version in 2001, the 1994 Joint Committee on Program Evaluation Standards, The 1995 American Evaluation Association Guiding Principles and the 1999 CES Essential Skills Series, there is no mention or even a reference to the CES 2002 study or it products (Stevahn et al., 2005a).

If we focus on the AEA competency list, what are we to make of it? What are its strengths? What are its limitations? How useful is it as a way to assist the professionalization of evaluation, including developing curricula for training, education and professional development?

The ECPE framework is based on several rounds of research, with limited numbers of evaluators participating. The 2001 version was built with input from 31 evaluation-related professionals in Minnesota. Since then, the competency list has been modified, streamlined, and offered as the basis for professional development workshops (Ghere et al., 2006). The developers of the ECPE recognize that their framework needs more validation, but it has galvanized discussions and renewed interest in professionalizing evaluation in both the United States and in Canada. Its authors recognize that a key part of what needs to happen is to make the evaluator competencies more accessible to individuals in the profession. In fact, one has the impression that they have launched a campaign to popularize the competency framework as is – making it the basis for professional development workshops that offer evaluators an opportunity to use the framework to assess their own competencies.

Gussman (2005) points to the ECPE generic competency framework as a useful way to delineate the competencies that are core to evaluators who are or will be working in the Canadian Federal Government. He offers the ECPE framework as a basis for considering professionalization options for evaluators: credentialing, certification, licensing, and accreditation (of training/education programs).

After considering the advantages and disadvantaged of each of these options, He recommends an approach that emphasizes credentialing evaluators using the ECPE competencies as a way to design training and education programs. The credentialing option has these advantages:

- It is not restrictive [does to prohibit evaluators gaining or claiming competencies though other modalities] and avoids legal challenges [that are more likely with credentialing and licensing options to professionalize evaluators];
- Would create a standard set of skills expected for evaluators;
- Can be dealt with outside of government [presumably by some combination of actions by Canadian universities and the Canadian Evaluation Society];
- Is strongly supported by the academic sector and gaining credibility in the evaluation literature;
- Would support [an] internal training regime; and
- The growth of university programs presents opportunities for skills enhancement for current staff [in the Federal government and perhaps other governments as well]. (Gussman, 2005, p. 23)

In enumerating a shorter list of disadvantages, Gussman highlights the fact that the credentialing option would not give the government and Treasury Board Staff the same amount of control of the process as do options that keep the training and credentialing process closer to the government. The British government (the Government Social Research Unit, Cabinet Office), for example, has partnered with the Institute for Education at the University of London to create an MSc degree in Policy Analysis and Evaluation "…in the interests of evaluation quality assurance in government." (Cousins & Aubry, 2006. p. 38). The program appears to emphasize quantitative analytical approaches and methods to evaluation (Government Social Research, 2006).[10]

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[10] Although neither the Cousins and Aubry (2006) and Gussman (2005) reports reference the 2002 Centre of Excellence for Evaluation report (TBS 2002 report) that focused on competencies for Federal evaluators, it is appropriate to briefly summarize that report and offer a comparison with the CES and AEA -sponsored competency frameworks.
The 2002 TBS report, entitled, "Building Community Capacity: Competency Profile for Federal Public Service Evaluation Professionals," was based on a survey and interviews with 355 evaluation and audit professionals in the Federal Government, representing 59 departments and agencies. The competency profile that was developed included 14 competencies, with specific indicators for each of three levels of competence (junior, intermediate and senior). The competencies were grouped into five clusters: intellectual; future building; management; relationship; and personal.
 A comparison of the CES and *Essential Competencies for Program Evaluators* frameworks to the TBS framework suggests that the former two emphasize evaluator process skills more heavily. The CES framework has 53 of its 152 knowledge elements focused on the evaluation process and the *Essential Competencies* framework has 20 of its 61 competencies focused on systematic inquiry (similar to the evaluation process knowledge elements in the CES framework). By contrast, the TBS 2002 study, has 1 of the 14 competencies (the cognitive capacity competency in the Intellectual Competencies cluster) focused on the (evaluation process) knowledge and skills that are needed to be competent Federal evaluators. Although there is some overlap between the TBS 2002 study and the two more general evaluator competency frameworks, the former is, understandably, intended to identify knowledge, skills (as well as

5.4   How Useful is the *Essential Competencies for Program Evaluators* Framework?

If we look at the ECPE framework, how well does it square with the diversity of current and emerging evaluation theory and practice? How useful is it as a template for training and educating evaluators?

Smith (2003), in her summary of the views of her two panels of evaluators (M.F. Smith, 1994; M. F. Smith & Mark, 2001), suggests that in some ways, evaluation has become more diverse over time. The multiplication of evaluation approaches, the continued and very significant epistemological differences that undergird debates among evaluators, and the stance that evaluators should take with respect to activism versus independence/objectivity all bespeak of a "profession" that has not and perhaps cannot achieve unity among its members around basic methodological and values issues.

In addition, Smith (2003) points out that the nature of evaluation work has changed significantly in the past 15 years. Beginning with the passage of the Government Performance Review Act (GPRA) in the United States in 1993, jurisdictions at all levels of the public sector in North America, Europe, Australia and New Zealand have embraced performance measurement[11] as a principal way of addressing growing demands for public accountability. In some jurisdictions (McDavid, 2001), in a five year time span (1995-2000) performance measurement replaced program evaluation as the principal means of assessing program efficiency and effectiveness.

Program evaluators have been ambivalent about the burgeoning of performance measurement as a movement (Mark, 2001). Perrin (1998) and Feller (2002) focus on the limitations of performance measurement and offer trenchant critiques of the movement. Although there are advocates (Bernstein, 1999; Wholey, 2001), the evaluation profession by and large has not made an effort to capture this new line of business (McDavid & Huse, forthcoming). Instead, the accounting profession has been active in promoting their own profession as being well-positioned to make performance measurement a key part of public sector and increasingly, non-profit organizational accountability (Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants, 2006b). Internal auditors have also been active in laying claim to performance measurement as a part of their practice (Epstein, Grifel, & Morgan, 2004).

If we look at the competency list that the ECPE study has produced, its generic nature does not facilitate identifying particular subfields of evaluation practice. What is clear is that the focus is on program evaluation and by implication, on episodic engagements for evaluation professionals. Rist and Stame (2005) and Mayne and Rist (forthcoming) point

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attitudes, values, style and personality traits) that make for successful Federal evaluator, and not identify competencies that make for a successful evaluator generally.

[11] Performance measurement is the process of designing and implementing qualitative and quantitative measures of program or organizational results, including outputs and outcomes (McDavid and Hawthorn, 2006).

out that a significant trend in evaluation is a movement away from set-piece evaluation engagements to streams of evaluative information that play a key part in knowledge management strategies in organizations. This shift means that performance measurement and performance management systems will continue to be a central part of evaluation – likely growing in importance over time (Mayne and Rist, forthcoming).

Performance measurement and its connections with performance management[12] need to become explicit parts of evaluation and we need to ensure that the competencies that are arrayed for evaluators include those that take into account the knowledge and skills that are required to design, implement, maintain, revise and even integrate performance measurement systems into different scales of public sector and non-profit organizations. McDavid and Hawthorn (2006) suggest that core performance measurement knowledge and skills can be seen as an outgrowth of program evaluation knowledge and skills – program evaluators are well-positioned to make performance measurement a part of their practice if they are prepared to understand and work with the organizational cultural and political processes that are entailed in successfully developing and implementing performance measurement systems. As well, program evaluators, because they understand assessing program effectiveness, are in a position to position performance measurement systems so that the roles and expectations for them are realistic.

Although there is evidence that the internal audit profession is positioning itself to claim performance measurement as part of its practice, Gussman (2005) in his report to the Centre for Excellence in Evaluation, reinforces the distinction between program evaluation and internal audit in the Federal government. His point is that the two approaches can be complementary with respect to improving accountability:

> Evaluation is distinct from Internal Audit through its focus on tracking actual performance to support objective assessments of results achieved. Internal Audit, on the other hand, supports decision making by providing assurance on an agency's risk management strategy and management control framework. Both functions serve a purpose in monitoring and improving management and service delivery. Both are important along the accountability continuum. (p. 14)

5.5   Which Evaluator Competencies are Most Essential?

Translating the competencies into curricula for training and education purposes is a significant challenge. The ECPE project has begun that task, by outlining a professional development workshop (Ghere et al., 2006) that is intended to present the competency framework to evaluators, invite them to work with it, and in doing so, become more aware of their own education and training needs. A key part of the challenge of translating the competencies into workshops, courses and programs is deciding what to

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[12] Performance management is program or organizational management that uses program evaluation and performance measurement information to make operational and strategic decisions. (McDavid and Hawthorn, 2006).

emphasize among the array of knowledge, skills and dispositions that are included in the framework.

In the Canadian context, Aucoin (2005), in his discussion of the roles that program evaluation plays in Federal government decision-making, makes a strong case for program evaluation being a key contributor to assessing the effectiveness of programs. He argues that in a system that emphasizes results-based management, there is no substitute for program evaluation, given its core focus on program effectiveness.

> Results-based management, except insofar as it fully incorporates program evaluation, is no substitute for program evaluation, however useful it may be for management control and improvement. Performance measurement regimes do not seek to ascertain or assess program effectiveness. Rather they seek to determine the extent to which departments achieve results or outcomes. They measure achievements against targets. They do not attempt to explain or account for the performance in question, let alone the effectiveness of their program. (p. 11)

Although program evaluation clearly is capable of doing more than assessing program effectiveness, as has been pointed out by the Zorzi, McGuire and Perrin (2002) in their study for the CES, that role is in the core of what distinguishes program evaluation from other, competing, professions, including internal audit. Being able to design and execute competent effectiveness evaluations continues to be a key part of what evaluators do.

Prospective curricula for evaluators need to feature the knowledge and skills that focus on assessing the effectiveness of programs. Thus, in addition to generic competencies that prepare evaluators to manage projects, communicate effectively, navigate the organizational environments in which they do their work, and understand their own limitations and needs for additional knowledge, skills and opportunities to learn through practice, it is critical that they be well-educated and trained to understand and work with the evaluation design and execution issues entailed in determining what differences, if any, a program has made to stakeholders both within and beyond its boundaries.

Gussman (2005) also emphasizes the importance of assessing program effectiveness as the core business of program evaluators. Doing so entails understanding evaluation techniques (experimental and quasi-experimental research designs) that have become controversial in the US context, in part because they have become associated with US Federal government policies (Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy, 2002). Even if these designs cannot be applied in all situations, understanding and being well-trained in their logic and uses, is an essential part of becoming a competent program evaluator (McDavid & Hawthorn, 2006).

Finally, an essential component of any training or education program for evaluators, particularly persons who have not practiced in this field, in a range of opportunities to apply the knowledge and skills learned in formal settings. McDavid and Hawthorn (2006) point out that developing a capacity to practice as a professional evaluator entails

applying tools and techniques in ways that encourage building the tacit knowledge that is essential to becoming a competent practitioner. Opportunities to solve practical evaluation problems both within formal learning settings and in the field are a part of this process, as are case studies, simulations, course projects, work term placements and practica.

5.6 Validating Professional Competencies: Experience from the Psychology Profession

Stevahn, King, Ghere and Minnema (2005a) acknowledge that more validation of the ECPE framework is needed. Although each profession has unique features that limit the extent to which lessons learned elsewhere can be successfully applied, it is worthwhile summarizing an example of the process that a similar profession has undertaken to work with and validate competencies.

Psychology, like evaluation, has a wide range of practice settings, demanding knowledge, skills and dispositions that are appropriate for those situations. Like evaluation, psychology has a strong theoretical/academic component that continues to interact with the professional practice of psychologists. Unlike psychology, evaluation has been characterized as a trans-discipline (Scriven, 2001), melding together approaches that have disciplinary roots, but have been adapted to fit the needs of the evaluation profession – the diversity within the field of evaluation may exceed the diversity with psychology.

In psychology, there has been a 20 year process to define and reach a consensus on the competencies that are required for professional practice (Kaslow et al., 2004). That process has included: identifying competency domains, competencies that are important in each domain, and overarching competencies for the profession as a whole; publishing articles and books that discuss competencies, as well as discussing the professionalization process in psychology; identifying training curricula for practice domains; and most recently, convening an international conference, the purpose of which was to try to achieve agreement on competencies for the psychology profession. (Kaslow et al., 2004).

The Competencies Conference was held in 2002 and was intended to, "…[gain] greater agreement about domains and levels of competence by bringing together representatives from diverse education, training, practice, public-interest, research, credentialing, and regulatory constituency groups." (Kaslow et al., 2004, p. 701) The process that led up to and included the three day conference can be summarized as follows:

1. Previous meetings and publications had identified 8 distinct competency domains based on the roles that psychologists perform. These domains, became the basis for organizing the conference;
2. A conference steering committee of 10 persons, representing a range of education, training and practice communities (including a diversity of workplace settings and locations) were selected to organize the conference;

3. The steering committee prepared and implemented an online survey of the profession (n = 364), asking respondents to rate existing (agreed upon) competencies as *core* (required for all practice domains), *specific* (important to some domains and not others), and *not needed to be a professional psychologist*;
4. The conference delegates (n=126) were selected in three ways – by conference sponsoring organizations, at large (selected by the steering committee, based on curriculum vitae and letters of interest), and by their acknowledged expertise in competency domains;
5. The steering committee identified conference work groups based on the eight core competency domains (scientific foundations of psychology and research; ethical, legal, public policy/advocacy; supervision; psychological assessment; individual and cultural diversity; intervention; consultation and interdisciplinary relationships; and professional development). Two other work groups (assessment of competence and specialties) were also created;
6. Eight influential papers on professional competence were sent as pre-reading to all conference delegates;
7. The first day of the conference consisted of plenary sessions devoted to an overview of the development of competencies in psychology, the extent to which there is agreement on competencies, and assessing professional competence.
8. The second day focused on the work groups – looking at the competencies in each domain, seeking agreement where possible, noting disagreements, and suggesting new competencies;
9. The third day consisted of reporting back the plenary session and integrating the work across the groups, including seeking ways of resolving disagreements that had emerged in the working groups; and
10. Returning to the working groups to process the information that had emerged in the integrative session of the conference.

The conference did not achieve a consensus on competencies (particularly some of the specific competencies in the 8 domains) but there was general agreement that the 8 domains were core to the profession. There was general agreement that competencies consist of knowledge, skills and attitudes, the latter being the most difficult to assess. There was general agreement on the importance of training and education, including the integration of theory and practice at all levels of inculcating competencies. Finally, there was general agreement that the assessment process needed to be coupled with training opportunities, and that individual practitioner assessments needed to be both formative and summative.

Given that psychologists have been working on competencies for two decades, it is clear that the process of moving from identifying competencies to developing ways of training to those competencies, and testing for them in practitioners, is contentious. For evaluators, the process of systematically identifying competencies has been underway for five years, and although there appears to be agreement on the ECPE framework, moving

it beyond what Gussman (2005) has called, "…the 'agreement' level…" (p. 19) will involve more than enforcing adherence to these competencies by current and prospective evaluators.

6.   The Risks, Challenges, and Benefits of Credentialing Evaluators

Recently, there has been increased consideration, by both the federal government and the Canadian Evaluation Society, of the historical and current state of evaluation in the public service, and potential next steps in the professionalization of evaluation. Several Canadian articles and reports have addressed potential strategies, and the challenges, of moving the evaluation profession forward (see, for example, Aucoin, 2005; Cousins & Aubry, 2006; Gussman, 2005; Long & Kishchuk, 1997). Additionally, in 1999 the *American Journal of Evaluation* devoted an issue to covering the work of a task force, led by Leonard Bickman, which addressed the issue of certification of evaluators. In 2003 the *International Handbook on Educational Evaluation* (Kellaghan & Stufflebeam, 2003) devoted a chapter to the professionalization of evaluation (Worthen, 2003).

In April of this year, the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat published a comprehensive discussion paper, authored by Cousins and Aubry (2006), which addresses possible "strategies and options for government to foster advanced professional development for evaluators in the interests of enhancing quality assurance in the evaluation function" (p. 1).

A key focus of the paper was the potential for improving evaluator quality through partnerships between universities and the Treasury Board Secretariat's (TBS) Centre for Excellence in Evaluation (CEE). The paper includes a literature review on the professionalization of evaluation, surveys of university-based evaluation training programs and centres of excellence, and a series of actionable options intended "to allow a cost-effective way to build evaluation capacity within the federal government through partnerships with universities" (Cousins and Aubry, 2006, p. 6).

Rather than entirely recapping the past ten years of arguments for and against the establishment of a credentialing system for evaluators, arguments which have been ongoing in both the United States and Canada, this section of the literature review will pull from the recent evaluation literature information related to the *challenges, risks and benefits of establishing a credentialing system* and the *risks of not developing a credentialing system*. (Note that there can be gradations within the designations. For example, www.evaluatorsinstitute.com has three course-based certificates).

For those interested in further information on the central articles over the past few years, the Gussman (2005) report and the Cousins and Aubry (2006) paper provide thorough reviews of most of the articles.

6.1 Challenges of Establishing a Credentialing System:

❖ There is not an agreed-upon definition of evaluation (Sawin, 2000; M. F. Smith, 1999; Worthen, 1999), and "even on the difference between evaluation and research" there is not agreement (Stevahn et al., 2005b, p. 116).

❖ There is not an international governing body for evaluation, and there is no set of international standards (Gussman, 2005, p.19 (online version)).

❖ It is more difficult for evaluation practice to agree on a common set of standards than it is for the internal audit practice, due to the "many variants possible for both purpose and conduct" (Gussman, 2005, p. 5 (online version)).

❖ Evaluators come from a great variety of backgrounds, and conduct many different kinds of evaluation. "It would be a major drawback if an accreditation or certification approach would limit, directly or indirectly, the many different pathways by which individuals currently become evaluators and the range of approaches that can be taken by evaluation" (Perrin, 2005, p. 182). He notes that most often a team, rather than an individual, conducts an evaluation.

❖ Altschuld (2005) makes the same point when he argues for credentialing rather than certification, and concludes: "Trying to certify via testing in such circumstances [cross-disciplinary educational backgrounds] would be tenuous at best" (p. 166).

❖ Even if a credentialing system is established, because by definition it would be voluntary, there might be a lack of uptake by the evaluation community (Altschuld, 2005).

❖ In the *White Paper on Professional Credentialing in Health Informatics*, Parker-Taillon, (2005b) brings up a challenge that applies to the credentialing of information systems professions, which may also apply to evaluation; the need to maintain the currency of the credentialing system in a field where there is a rapidly changing knowledge base. Credentialing is a dynamic process.

❖ Finally, setting up a credentialing system can be an expensive and time-consuming endeavour, though it is less expensive than a full certification system. The *White Paper on Certification for Information and Referral Specialists in Aging* (National Association of State Units on Aging, 2000), though most applicable to certification, provides the following insights:

> Surveys indicate many organizations have been disappointed in the expectation of making money. However, according to research from the National Certification Commission (NCC), the average annual membership dues of the professional associations that certify is about twice as high as that of non-certifying organizations. Most certification programs either are underwritten by the umbrella organization or, at a

minimum, break even. Application fees and charges for study materials
and training help offset costs. (p. 8)

6.2   Risks of Credentialing

❖ There is a risk of disaffecting current, experienced evaluators who do not wish to
participate in a grandparenting program.

❖ In the transition period, perhaps eight to ten years, some grand-parented evaluators
may receive the credential yet not merit the status (Altschuld, 2005; Gussman, 2005).

❖ There is the potential for difficulty, for the professional body, of covering the costs of
administering, maintaining, and revising the credentialing procedure (Altschuld,
2005). Gussman (2005) mentions in his paper that the US General Accounting Office
(GAO) did develop an extensive credentialing process for auditors and evaluators, it
"has since been abandoned due to the high cost of maintaining the program" (p. 15,
online version)[13]. As well, Perrin (2005) suggests a risk of a static rather than
dynamic set of competencies, resulting in "certification skills required for yesterday
rather than for tomorrow" (p. 184)[14], due to the difficulties in continually updating the
system. Worthen (1999), discussing the resources needed to begin to develop,
incrementally, a certification system, provides a caution that would, to a lesser extent,
also apply to developing a credentialing system:

> Few efforts as ambitious as launching a certification system are likely to
> succeed without some sort of fiscal support. Applicant fees would
> eventually have to raise sufficient funds to operate and maintain the
> certification effort, if it is to be viable. Still, it seems totally unrealistic to
> expect such fees to support the expensive and time-consuming up-front
> costs of defining the domain and planning and designing the procedures
> and instruments that will be needed. Without financial support of these
> activities, they will likely be pulled together hastily by persons too busy to
> give their best effort, lacking even the resources for workgroups to meet
> together as needed to hammer out essential agreements and to iron out all
> the kinks inevitable in any such undertaking. (p. 551-552)

❖ Costs of evaluations may go up due to costs of credentialing (Altschuld, 2005).

❖ There is a potential for loss of diversity in the pool of evaluators, due to biases of the
group that determines the competency requirements and other credentialing
procedures (Altschuld, 2005; Perrin, 2005).

❖ This report considers *credentialing* as a process that would not generally involve
examination beyond those that may occur in university courses. However, *if* there was
an examination aside from the university exams, as part of a certification system,

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[13] Cousins and Aubry (2006), however, note that the GAO's Training Institute "has now been evolved to
the Center for Learning" (p. 29).
[14] See also, Rist and Stame's (2005) *From Studies to Streams: Managing Evaluation Systems*.

there is the possibility that an applicant who does not pass the test will sue, potentially causing significant costs to the professional body. The risk is seen as greater for certifying and licensure than for credentialing (Altschuld, 2005; Worthen, 1999). Gussman (2005) suggests that in a system of licensure, "[i]t would take only one court challenge from an individual denied official status to derail the process (p. 13, online version).

❖ There may be unintended consequences of evaluation. As Perrin (2005) suggests:

> For example, even if a particular training program is exemplary in nature, this does not mean that every participant in it will necessarily be fully competent. Yet participants, and potential employers/contractors, may erroneously equate the two. (p. 180)

❖ If there is an increased emphasis on the practice and application of evaluation, rather than theory, the "research base of the field with its excellent journals" could be seriously threatened (Altschuld, 2005, p. 164).

6.3   Risks of *Not* Credentialing

❖ Without a credentialing system, the current situation will continue, where anyone can call themselves an evaluator and there is no quality control. "Because of this, incompetent evaluators, charlatans, and crooks may well pass as seasoned professionals" (Stevahn et al., 2005a, p. 45). As well, some long-time evaluators may not feel compelled to keep up with the evolution of evaluation practice (Gussman, 2005).

❖ In a related vein, program directors who seek to hire an evaluator have no way of assuring that someone calling himself or herself an evaluator is actually qualified for the task (Cousins & Aubry, 2006; Stevahn et al., 2005a).

❖ There is a perception within the evaluation community that benefits of program evaluation may, without evaluator certification, have less currency than the perceived benefits of internal audit or work of management consultants (Perrin, 2005). Gussman (2005) notes: "Some observers fear that inaction [on establishing professional standards for evaluators] could lead to the eventual imposition of certified auditors in supervisory roles over evaluations studies" (p. 6 of online version).

❖ The field will continue to have difficulty differentiating itself from other professions such as internal audit, and may be left behind as internal audit practice already has internationally-recognized standards and an international certification process through the Institute for Internal Auditors (Cousins & Aubry, 2006; Gussman, 2005).

❖ Universities or other organizations providing professional development lack guidance on what sort of curricula to offer (Stevahn et al., 2005a).

❖ The field will continue to be problem-oriented, rather than building a theory-based foundation (Stevahn et al., 2005a).

6.4   Benefits of Credentialing

❖ Credentialing is an incremental step towards the next, more challenging, step in professionalization - certification (Altschuld, 1999; Bickman, 1999; Worthen, 1999).

❖ It provides guidance for professional development of evaluators (Altschuld, 2005; Ghere et al., 2006; Stevahn et al., 2005a), and encourages continuous professional learning (Gussman, 2005).

❖ It establishes the competencies that evaluators have to offer, and better delineates evaluation practice from related ones such as internal audit and management consulting (Altschuld, 2005; Gussman, 2005).

❖ It "[m]ay prevent incursion of others into what we do as evaluators" (Altschuld, 2005, p. 512)

❖ It encourages universities to establish full-blown evaluation programs that would be part of a credentialing system (Gussman, 2005).

❖ In the long run, credentialing should lead to higher evaluation standards (Altschuld, 2005).

6.5   Evaltalk

Evaltalk (2006) is the online discussion board sponsored by the American Evaluation Association. The archives of the listserve are searchable, and for this project the archives were searched for postings that contained words such as "credentialing", "certification" "licensure", and "professional bodies", from 1999 to the present. While there were many postings that addressed these issues, they essentially echoed the above-noted areas of concern with the risks of credentialing or certifying evaluators, with a particular emphasis on the difficulties in defining evaluation while also appreciating its diversity.

6.6   Grandparenting

"Grandparenting" refers to a system, introduced at the beginning of a credentialing or certification program and generally time-limited, whereby an experienced practitioner can be granted the credential based on his or her professional experience rather than going through the steps of the credentialing process. The grandparenting system can involve establishing standards for minimum training and years of experience, establishing unique procedures for applying for the credential, marketing the credential, and setting up a board to handle the applications and the appeals (Altschuld, 1999).

Cousins and Aubry (2006), Gussman (2005), and Altschuld (1999) expressed concerns that a grandparenting system is subject to false positives and false negatives, in terms of the competencies of those being accepted as "grandparented" and thus receiving the credential. They also note, however, that a credentialing system does not have the same legal hurdles as a certification system as far as testing and defending the competency levels of individuals. Gussman (2005) suggests that "if the CES [Canadian Evaluation Society] were to charge an annual fee (perhaps $200-300) above its typical membership fees, a fund could be built up to subsidize training for interested individuals wishing to enhance their evaluation skills in particular areas" (p. 17)

7.   Reports and Journal Articles on Credentialing and Certification in Other Fields

Several recent reports and academic articles examine, for various disciplines, the drive towards credentialing or certification. These studies provide illustrations of steps, challenges, benefits, and pitfalls of implementing a credentialing or certification system.

7.1   Internal Audit

One particularly relevant article, given that this review includes the Certified Internal Audit (CIA) designation as one of the more detailed cases later on, is one that looks at the development of the internal audit profession: *Genesis of a profession: Towards professional status for internal auditing* (O'Regan, 2001). The article "reviews the success of the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) in enhancing the professional status of both the discipline of internal auditing and the IIA itself" (p. 215) over the past half-century.

The author suggests that the IIA has succeeded in establishing the "paraphernalia of a formal professional framework" (p. 215), but that there are still several challenges that hinder the professionalization of internal auditors.

The archetypal attributes of a profession that the author lists as having been successfully established by the IIA are:

◆   the IIA itself, dedicated to enhancing the theory and practice of the discipline;[15]
◆   a defined body of examined and certified knowledge [certification];
◆   a sophisticated literature (including serials and periodicals);[16]
◆   research activities;

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[15] O'Regan lists the IIA's international reach, its Research Foundation, its publications, and the administration of its certification programs as cornerstones of the IIA's "sophisticated organisational structure" (p. 218).

[16] The IIA has serial journal and magazine publications, research activities, guides for specialist fields within internal auditing, and discussions of developments in corporate governance. As well, there are mainstream books being published on internal auditing.

- ♦ written standards;[17] and
- ♦ a public service ethos embodied in a Code of Ethics (p. 215), and ongoing discussions of ethical considerations in its serial publications.

O'Regan considers examinations and certification as important components of the institutional framework that establishes a profession's theoretical basis. A strong literature base and research activities are also important to the framework.[18]

In his discussion, O'Regan argues that it has not been the IIA's efforts alone that have enhanced the professional status of internal auditing. He credits "corporate governance developments" such as the UK's Turnbull Report, which endorsed internal auditing and provided guidance for implementation of "internal control requirements of the 1998 *Combined Code of the Committee on Corporate Governance*" (O'Regan, 2001, p. 220), as also having helped enhanced the status of the internal audit profession.

There are, however, some obstacles he sees as still remaining for internal auditors, including:

- ♦ an ill-defined internal auditing symbolism (p. 215);
- ♦ the definition of a credible theoretical basis for auditing (p. 218)
- ♦ doubts over an appropriate professional title (p. 215); and
- ♦ the absence of exclusivity within the jurisdiction of internal auditing (p. 215).

O'Regan says that the latter obstacle is the most serious one facing the IIA. Unlike lawyers, doctors, or public accountants, "[i]n the absence of monopolistic or quasi-monopolistic rights the IIA finds itself obliged to compete with alternative sources of authority on internal auditing" (p. 215). The IIA, he notes, has been the "principal driving force behind the increasing professionalisation of internal auditing" (p. 217). Yet, while the IIA's certification program might be seen as a step in the right direction, exclusivity for the CIA designation has not been achieved. It has been ten years since Sawyer and Vinten (1996) wrote that the certification program:

> moved internal auditing up another rung on the ladder that reached for professionalism, because one of the attributes of a profession is a credible and exacting course of study and provision for the examination and certification of candidates. (p. 28, cited in O'Regan, 2001)

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[17] By "written standards" O'Regan is referring to the IIA's *Standards and Guidelines for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing*, which covers "areas such as independence, scope of work and management of an internal audit department" (p. 220) and the IIA's *Code of Ethics*.

[18] However, certification can function as an obstacle to entry as well as a tool for public protection. He argues:

> Examinations and certification can restrict access to a body of professional knowledge, reinforcing its exclusivity and elitism. As Power has claimed, 'formal examination systems…arguably function more as barriers to entry [to a profession] than as education' (Power, 1997 p. 37, in O'Regan, 2001)

Because chartered accountancy institutes compete with the IIA in offering certification that can be seen by employers and by potential auditors as alternatives to CIA certification, the prestige of the CIA program is undermined. Other competitors are the Big Five auditing firms[19], "in-house corporate internal auditing manuals", and even "non-qualified individuals" (p. 222). Although the *Standards and Guidelines for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing* are well-regarded, compliance in most jurisdictions is voluntary, unlike compliance with standards in the external auditing profession.

O'Regan doubts that the IIA can, for the foreseeable future, achieve monopolistic or quasi-monopolistic status as a profession. He provides some suggestions for the future of the IIA:

- ♦ Strengthen its links with other prestigious accountancy organizations;
- ♦ Continue to address some of its weaknesses, such as its lack of historical symbolism and culture, lack of theoretical foundation, and inconsistent use of the term "internal auditor";
- ♦ Strengthen its ethical foundation, to maintain its independence from allying itself with "ethically dubious" practices adopted by management;
- ♦ Build upon its respected and authoritative body of books and periodicals

Interestingly, O'Regan also offers a strategy to *not* "press ahead with a classical professional 'project'" (p. 224), but instead pursue professional prestige without having monopolistic control, because "[t]raditional professional institutions increasingly appear antiquated in a post-modern world characterised by portfolio careers and multi-disciplinary activities" (p. 224).

7.2   A Look at Sociology

Though slightly dated, Perlstadt's (1998) article *Accreditation of Sociology Programs: A Bridge to a Broader Audience* is illustrative as an examination of a multi-faceted discipline, similar to evaluation, attempting to strengthen its jurisdiction and establish a broader audience. He argues that a "lack of agreed-upon central core of knowledge and consensus on how to apply that knowledge to the service of society" (p. 195) partially explain the reason that sociology lacks stature and identity as a profession outside of academia, and that other professions often claim some of the jurisdiction that should be part of the profession of sociology.

A key point of the article is that if sociology does not more forcefully establish its area of practice, other related professions that already have, or are in the process of developing,

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[19] The Big Five, O'Regan notes, even have "patented internal auditing methodologies and risk assessment tools" (p. 222).

certification or credentialing programs will be expanding their audiences at the expense of the sociology profession. It is an age-old argument (Abbott, 1988), and certainly one that applies to the evaluation profession as well.

Perlstadt comments "Some jurisdictions of interest to sociological practitioners and clinicians are already claimed or dominated by professions such as social work" (p. 199), an argument that could also apply to evaluation. Perlstadt later adds:

> Emerging jurisdictions, such as evaluation, attract practitioners trained in a variety of disciplines and methodologies. Both marital therapy and evaluation include practitioner associations that are multi-disciplinary in nature. Eventually, these practitioner associations may attempt to establish graduate-level training programs independent of the disciplines and forge a more unified identity. (p. 199)

In a related issue where there may be parallels with evaluation as a profession, perhaps more so in the United States than in Canada, the author suggests that the American Sociological Association (ASA) may have been unsuccessful in professionalizing sociology partly because of gaps between its practical application and its academic approach to professionalization. He elaborates on the differences between discipline-oriented and practice-oriented professional approaches to credentialing, and the potential divisions between the two when deciding the balance of theory versus practical ability, and how they are to be taught and assessed.

Examining the "collapse of the ASA certification program", he concludes "something is needed to strengthen undergraduate and perhaps master's level training for technical and supervisory positions that use basic sociological knowledge and methods" (p. 204). Although he does not distinguish between the terms *credentialing* and *certifying*, he essentially recommends individual credentialing through accredited programs, similar to other fields of social work:

> Graduates from these programs are expected to have acquired a common set of knowledge and skills, become familiar with professional ethics and practice, and had a supervised internship or practicum. (p. 204)

Credentialing for sociology has apparently been a controversial issue for sociologists in the United States, but Perlstadt maintains that credentialing for specific sub-sets of sociology, in concert with accreditation of university programs offering the programs, is a viable strategic approach. He notes, however, that a previous attempt at creating a credentialing program, begun by the American Sociology Association in the early 1980's[20], failed over the next ten years "after only 65 individuals had sought and been granted certification" (p. 201).

Echoing O'Regan's (2001) suggestion that internal auditors strengthen their links to other accountancy organizations, Perlstadt's (1998) key point is that the success of sociology as

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[20] The ASA offered certification programs for six areas: Social Psychology, Demography, Social Policy and Evaluation, Medical Sociology, Organizational Analysis, and Law and Social Control.

a profession "may well rest on its ability to build bridges to different audiences in academia, government, and the private employment sector" (p. 195). However, Perlstadt has a concern that also relates to O'Regan's suggestion that the independent professionalism of internal auditors might have been tainted by a too-close association with the cut-backs related to New Public Management: when policy, evaluation, and survey research organizations or practice organizations direct the training of practitioners (through setting the curriculum or influencing the academic programs), the teachings, while pragmatic, may serve to distance the practitioner from the ethical foundations and/or the original knowledge base of his or her discipline. One approach, Perlstadt suggests, is for continuing dialogue between academics and practitioners.

Another problem for sociology is that because the discipline does not have a credentialing system, practitioners who wish to further their training may be drawn to competing disciplines that *do* offer a credential. Again, a situation that is mirrored in the case of internal auditors.

7.3 How the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) Developed an Applied Knowledge Assessment Tool

The efforts of the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) to develop an Applied Knowledge Assessment (AKA) tool as part of the development of a credentialing system for local government managers provides an excellent example of the extensive consultations that seem to be required for a favourable reception to the knowledge assessment component of a credentialing system.

Streib (2005) briefly reviews the requirements to become an ICMA credentialed manager (see *Table 4:Summary of Comparative Designations* table, later in this report, for these requirements) but the focus of the article *Quantifying the Knowledge of Public Management Professionals: Developing an Assessment Tool for Local Government Managers* is the process taken to develop the AKA.

The ICMA voluntary credentialing system was established in 2003, but development of the AKA component began in 1992. First, there was a 2-year "Dialogue on the Profession" that included 33 ICMA meetings across the United States, and two mail-in surveys (Streib, 2005).

One of the foundational "breakthroughs" of these meetings, aside from the modification of the ICMA Code of Ethics to include commitment to continuing professional development, was "a listing of the competencies needed by local [government] managers" (Streib, 2005, p. 420). From there, in 1997 the ICMA began collaborating with Georgia State University faculty to develop the AKA. While volunteer ICMA members drove the process, "[l]eadership decisions were made by the ICMA Executive Board and the ICMA University Board of Regents" (p. 422). It was an intensive process; the three-year development timeline is replicated below, from the Streib paper (p. 422):

1997	Winter	ICMA and Georgia State University sign contract; ICMA and Georgia State University begin collaborating on instrument specifications;
1998	Spring	Item development workshops with 200 local government managers;
1999	Spring Summer Fall	Final item selection at local meeting venues; Conference calls to edit and select final item pools and items; Item validation at ICMA Conference;
2000	Winter Spring	Instrument norms are established; Instrument and reporting formats are finalized; Applied Knowledge Assessment goes to print;
2004	Spring	1,603 participants to date.

The Streib article provides very detailed information on the composition of the team that developed the AKA items, the steps taken during the process, the amount of time each of the steps took, the conduct and location of the workshops, the selection of managers for the workshops, and many other details of the multi-faceted process for generating, refining, and validating[21] the items in the pool. The final stages involved statistical analysis and the development of a scoring process "consistent with methods recommended by the National Council on Measurement in Education and the American Council on Education" (Streib, 2005, p. 427).

Because the article includes extensive details of the instrument development process, it could be a valuable tool to a team working on the credentialing of a similar profession, including program evaluation. In addition, the member survey[22] and the resulting concept paper that formed a key part of the voluntary credentialing development process are available online:

Member Survey on Developing a Voluntary Credentialing Program (International City/County Management Association, 2001b)
Members Respond to Survey on Development of Voluntary Credentialing Program (International City/County Management Association, 2001c)
Concept Paper on the Development of a Voluntary Credentialing Program (International City/County Management Association, 2001a)

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[21] Streib (2005) notes that it is not uncommon for there to be validity concerns with generalist knowledge assessments; in response, the ICMA also requires credentialed managers to undergo a performance-based 360 assessment.

[22] 6,818 questionnaires were mailed out, with a response rate of 31% (2,107 respondents). Sections of the survey were: *"What will voluntary credentialing do?"* (2 questions); *"Who will be eligible to apply for the credential?"* (2 questions); *"How will members earn the credential?"* (Several questions addressing education, experience, continuing professional development, and the applied knowledge assessment); *"How will members maintain the credential?"* (3 questions); *"Who will administer the program?"* (2 questions); *"What will the credential be called?"* (6 options); *"Would you apply for the voluntary credential?"* (1 question, on a scale of 1 to 5); *and, finally, "A few questions about yourself"* (5 demographic questions). (International City/County Management Association, 2001a).

The program so far is considered reasonably successful; approximately 25 percent of ICMA members who are city managers have taken the AKA. Over 1600 participants have completed the assessment, and 69 percent are "the top administrator in a city or county" (p. 427). However, one of the drawbacks of the AKA, in Streib's opinion, is that although it "purports to measure the knowledge and judgment of local government managers, a passing score is not required for certification, and this is a potential lightning rod for those seeking to question the professional status of local government managers" (p. 430).

In concluding, Streib stresses the importance of managerial involvement in the development of the credentialing process:

> The ICMA credentialing process may also be a breakthrough of a sort in the professionalization of the public service. From the academic side, there was little evidence of progress after decades of ongoing debates, but practitioners may be better able to identify and assess the knowledge that they use on a daily basis. (p. 430).

In addressing the issue of academic and practitioner collaboration, he reiterates a theme that occurs in other literature on professionalization:

> Although the AKA was developed in partnership with a university, it remains unclear how the ICMA can build a real nexus between the academic and practitioner communities. Efforts are underway, of course, but past attempts have established few genuine partnerships. (p. 430)

7.4 The Credentialing/Certification Project of Canada's Health Informatics Association (COACH)

Because Canada's Health Informatics Association (COACH) has had an extensive project on credentialing ongoing since at least 2004, details on their project are provided here, as an illustrative example of the process. (The papers often commingle the terms *credentialing* and *certification*). In a 2003 survey of members, 53% expressed an interest in pursuing certification. In addition, the organization recently identified two key issues facing health informatics:

1. Lack of clear identity/definition of the HI profession.
2. Lack of an appropriate supply of competent professionals to ensure delivery and management of quality health information systems in Canada. (COACH, 2006a, p. 1)

They more specifically note that as a relatively young profession, they lack some foundational components such as "code of ethics, role definition, and description of the core competencies of the profession" (COACH, 2006a, p. 1). As well, another challenge that health informatics faces in setting up a credentialing process is that many of their technologists and health industry professionals are already credentialed in a field related to their main competencies (for example, computer science, nursing, medicine, or pharmacy).

COACH commissioned a *White Paper on Professional Credentialing in Health Informatics* (Parker-Taillon, 2005b) in early 2005 to "inform and educate about the issues involved in professional credentialing" (p. 3). The paper also included information on the process of certification. For comparison, the report examined five existing credentialing and certification programs in the health field[23], discussed key issues around professional credentialing, and suggested next steps. Later, the organization commissioned another report: *Next Steps Towards Professional Credentialing in Health Informatics*, followed by the *Green Paper Consultation*.

The *White Paper* found that for the existing five systems examined, the eligibility requirements are as follows (modified from the *White Paper's* table "Requirements for Certification in Selected Programs", p. 8.):

<div align="center">

Table 3: Requirements for Selected Health Informatics Programs

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Credentialing/Certification ⟶ Requirements Organization ↓	Credential Review[24]	Examination	Learning Assignment	Maintenance of Competence Activities	Evaluation Form
Canadian College of Health Services Executives (CCHSE)	Yes (education & experience)	Yes (two hours)	Yes (self-directed)	Yes	Yes
Canadian Health Information Management Association (CHIMA)	Yes (must be graduate of Canadian College of Health Record Administrators)	Yes (one full day)	No	No	No
Canadian Information Processing Society (CIPS)	Yes (education & experience)	No (peer review of credentials)	No	Yes	No
Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS)	Yes (education & experience)	Yes (two hours)	No	Yes	No
United Kingdom Council for Health Informatics Professionals (UKCHIP)	Yes (education & experience)	No (peer review of credentials)	No	Yes	No

Parker-Taillon's (2005b) *White Paper* noted that these examples provided "at least three options in terms of possible business/governance models":

♦ "Committee Model": Involves the establishment of a committee of the existing membership organization to oversee the certification

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[23] While the paper described these as certification programs, some of them, using our definitions, would be called credentialing programs. There was also one proposed certification program included in the study.

[24] CHIMA and CIPS are also responsible for the accreditation of university programs, and CHIC is considering this role.

process, with the ultimate responsibility for the program resting with the governing body of the organization (i.e., HIMSS, CCHSE).

- ♦ "Arms-length-Model": Involves setting up an "arms-length" body (such as a College or Council) within the organization that has ultimate authority for the certification process (i.e., CHIMA, CIPS).
- ♦ "Stand-alone Model": Involves establishment of a new "stand-alone" body that is responsible for the certification process (i.e., UKCHIP).

Although there are other approaches, the key issue, according to the report, is the consideration of factors such as "objectives of the program; infrastructure and available resources (both human and financial); credibility of model; and roles and interests of various stakeholders in the field" (p. 16).

The *White Paper* identified key challenges related to developing a credentialing program[25], and recommended the following steps (p. 17):

- ♦ Initiate *informal discussions* with key stakeholders to discuss potential for collaboration.
- ♦ Develop a *follow-up* paper that builds on the findings of this paper and involves additional literature searching and consultation to present options, alternatives and recommendation.
- ♦ Conduct a *survey of COACH members* and a sample of non-members to explore the current level of interest in professional credentialing and willingness to pay (note this may be part of the consultation described in the previous step).
- ♦ Organize a facilitated *invitational meeting of key stakeholders* with an interest in the development of standards for HI [health informatics] in Canada (i.e. accreditation of education programs, code of ethics, professional credentialing) to discuss current status, interests, options and next steps.
- ♦ Develop a detailed *business plan* for a professional credentialing program.

The subsequent *Next Steps* paper (Parker-Taillon, 2005a) suggested the following steps to bring forward the credentialing process (followed by estimated cost):

- ♦ Organize stakeholder meeting ($10,000)
- ♦ Adopt code of ethics ($3,000)
- ♦ Develop competency profile ($50,000)

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[25] The challenges identified were (from page 15):

- ♦ *Confirming need and support* for a certification program within the field;
- ♦ Ensuring the program is *credible, current and relevant* for individuals with various backgrounds working in diverse settings;
- ♦ Ensuring that the program that is developed is *sustainable* financially over the long term;
- ♦ *Marketing* the program and convincing individuals and industry the credentialing is desirable;
- ♦ Establishing and maintaining *productive partnerships* with relevant stakeholders in the field such as educators, clients/employers, and vendors.

♦   Develop business plan for certification process ($20,000)
♦   Develop certification process based on outcome from above (TBD)
        (Parker-Taillon, 2005a, p. 7)

The association established a "Health Informatics Professions (HIP) Steering Committee (SC) to "oversee a strategy to evolve the practice of health informatics to the point that it increasingly assumes the characteristics of a 'profession'" (COACH, 2006c, p. 1). Part of the work of the HIP steering committee will be to address, in consultation with key stakeholders, the issues of competencies, unique knowledge base, standards of practice, code of ethics, and the credentialing mechanism.

Guiding principles:
The preferred option should:

♦   Involve a collaborative approach that engages key stakeholders
♦   Build on existing knowledge/resources
♦   Use a "best practices" approach
♦   Be transparent
♦   Be feasible and sustainable
♦   Be flexible to allow for future developments
        (COACH, 2006b, p. 2)

It was recommended that COACH consider two options: (1) set up a roster of health informatics professionals who have met specific educational and experience requirements, or (2) create a "Canadian version of the CPHIMS [*Certified Professional in Healthcare Information and Management Systems*] certification process", based on the certification process of the U.S.A.'s Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society. That certification process (http://www.himss.org/ASP/certification_cphims.asp) is contracted through Applied Measurement Professionals (AMP)[26]. It involves an educational eligibility component:

♦   Baccalaureate degree plus five (5) years of associated information and management systems experience, three (3) of those years in healthcare.
or
♦   Graduate degree plus three (3) years of associated information and management systems experience, two (2) of those years in healthcare.

As well, there is a 2-hour multiple-choice examination. Certification is valid for three years, at which time it is necessary to either have fulfilled continuing professional education requirements or to pass another examination. It is not necessary to be a *member* of HIMSS to become credentialed or to recertify, but costs are higher for non-members. Interestingly, for Canada and some other countries an international examination is offered for CPHIMS certification.

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[26] AMP is a private company, based in Kansas, which serves governments, private industry, and over 80 credentialing organizations by providing "psychometric consultation, testing and measurement, association management and publishing services that meet the highest professional and ethical standards" (Applied Measurement Professionals, 2006 website).

The credentialing standards for CPHIMS certification are governed by the CPHIMS Certification Committee,

> a HIMSS committee of individuals with subject-matter expertise in the content tested on the examination. This Committee is responsible for assuring that certification meets high standards required for the profession; and is charged with setting general standards for the program, developing examination specifications, constructing new editions of the examination and establishing passing standards for the examination. (HIMSS, 2006 website)

Table 4: Summary of Certification and Credentialing in Four Fields

	Internal Audit (O'Regan, 2001)	Sociology (Perlstadt, 1998)	Local Government Managers (Streib, 2005)	COACH (Parker-Taillon, 2005a, 2005b)
Stage of Development	Voluntary certification, and trying to move towards exclusivity	Still trying to move towards credentialing, but the discipline is fragmented. Had a credentialing system that failed after 10 years..	Voluntary credential; it is not necessary to pass the Applied Knowledge Assessment to receive the credential	Taking purposeful steps to develop a credentialing system, with extensive consultation
Professional Standards	*Standards of Practice* and *Code of Ethics.* Maintained by extensive organizational structure	American Sociological Association (ASA) has published a *Code of Ethics*, and works with the *Society for Applied Sociology* to maintain and review professional standards	The International City/County Management Association establish a (now modified) *Code of Ethics* in 1924. Professional standards are established: *Practices for Effective Local Government Managers*	Key components being addressed in current consultations: Lack of *Code of Ethics*, lack of role definition, lack of description of core competencies. May adopt International Medical Informatics Association *Code of Ethics for Health Information Professionals*
Training & Professional Development	University courses as pre-requisites, then further offerings from Institution of Internal Auditors (IIA)		Must have at least a bachelor's degree from accredited institution	
Professional Experience	Yes: 2 years		Yes: 7 years	
Levels of Certification	There are 3 "Specialty Certification Programs" that can be taken as part of the CIA		No	
Continuing Professional Education	Yes, 80 hours every 2 years		Yes: 40 hours per year	

	Internal Audit (O'Regan, 2001)	Sociology (Perlstadt, 1998)	Local Government Managers (Streib, 2005)	COACH (Parker-Taillon, 2005a, 2005b)
Evidence of Benefits	CIA designation has moved internal audit "up the ladder" due to strict demands of certification system	One key perceived benefit, aside from improving its status, is that practitioners would perhaps not be drawn to gain credentials from alternative disciplines	"Apart from the development of ICMA practices, the AKA instrument, and the credentialing process [by hundreds of ICMA volunteers, with help from faculty] there is also the ICMA University, an explosion of practitioner relevant publications, and a performance-based assessment instrument" (p. 430).	Survey showed that 53% are interested in pursuing certification. The *White Paper* lists the typical potential benefits for the individual, the profession, and the employers/clients
Concerns	Lack of theoretical basis; doubts about appropriate professional title; absence of exclusivity	Other competing professions, such as evaluation, are moving sociological areas.	"Maintaining the AKA will require ongoing commitment to develop;, disseminate, and assess new knowledge... it remains unclear how the ICMA can build a real nexus between the academic and practitioner communities" (p. 430). In addition, since a passing score on the AKA is not required for receiving the credential, the status of the local government managers may be questioned.	Challenges of concern include confirming the need and support for a credentialing program (within the field); ensuring program is credible, current and relevant for individuals with various backgrounds and working in diverse settings; the financial sustainability of the program; effective marketing of the program; establishing and maintaining partnerships with stakeholders. ((Parker-Taillon, 2005b, p. 15)

7.5   Summary of Certification Programs in Finance

This section is a brief look at two articles related to financial designations, *Certification Programs in Finance* (D. M. Smith & Mansinghka, 1999) and <u>*Setting the Standard for Passing Professional Certification Examinations*</u> (Johnson, Squires, & Whitney, 2002), chiefly because the Certified Government Financial Manager (CGFM) designation is included as one of the certification examples later in the report.

Smith and Mansinghka's (1999) paper summarizes 21 U.S. "non-compulsory" finance certification programs and, though slightly dated now, provides some interesting insights into the certification/credentialing process. They propose that certification programs "provide external validation of professional competence and can be used as a low-cost screening method for employment and job promotion" (p. 111). They note that financial certification programs have been created at an accelerating rate since the 1920's, and that as of 1999 the requirements of 21 key certifications had the following attributes:

- 12 of 21 did not require membership in the professional organization at any time (5 cases required ongoing membership, and one required membership only to obtain the designation);
- 13 of 21 required relevant professional experience;
- All but one of the 21 had an examination component, ranging from one to ten exams;
- About half of the programs held scheduled examinations, "some as infrequently as once per year" (p. 114);
- 16 of 21 used multiple choice format for at least part of the examination;
- 9 of 21 used examinations that involved essays, non-multiple-choice problems, or analysis of case studies;
- The most common minimum passing score was 70%, and all programs allowed re-takes of examinations, with varying waiting period requirements;
- Some programs had time limits for completion of the designation process, while others did not have such a limit;
- Total cost of certification ranged from $350 to $3000 USD;
- 16 of 21 required documentation of continuing professional education after having received certification, to maintain the designation.

One final observation: Evaluators have considered the feasibility of partnerships with universities to provide certification programs for evaluation; the paper notes that the U.S. Treasury Management Association "maintains curricular partnerships with more than 20 U.S. educational institutions in support of its Certified Cash Manager (CCM) designation" (D. M. Smith & Mansinghka, 1999, p. 111).

The second financial paper, *Setting the Standard for Passing Professional Certification Examinations* (Johnson et al., 2002), discusses how minimum passing scores are set for the examination components of certification programs for three designations – Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA), Certified in Financial Management (CFM), and Certified Management Accountant (CFM). The study discusses various methods of setting the standards – details unnecessary to repeat in this literature review – but also offers the following salient points about the consistency of the standards over time:

> Determining the minimum level of competence required for certification is always a difficult task…One of the important benefits of certification programs is the perception that holders of the certification have demonstrated certain levels of competency. If there is a perception that the level of competency has eroded over time and that current candidates are held to a lower standard, then the value of the designation is diminished. Similarly, if current candidates are being held to higher standards than previous candidates, the program is also unfair. (p. 8)

7.6   The Government Social Research Unit and the University of London

One form of credentialing is exemplified by the University of London's Institute of Education collaboration with the Government Social Research Unit (GSRU) in offering a

[Masters degree in Policy Analysis and Evaluation](#). Cousins and Aubry (2006) discuss details of this university-based evaluation program in *[Roles for Government in Evaluation Quality Assurance: Discussion Paper](#)*. As yet, there do not seem to be journal articles that have examined this government-university partnership project.

8.   A More Detailed Look at Credentialing and Certification: Seven Canadian and American Cases

Below, relevant details from the certification/credentialing programs from six professions are explored, followed by a table that summarizes the key elements of their certification systems. The designations explored are: **Certified Management Consultant** (CMC); **Family Mediation Canada – Certified Family Relations Mediator** (FMC – Cert FRM); **Member of the Canadian Institute of Planners** (MCIP); **Certified Economic Developer** (Ec.D.); **Certified Internal Auditor** (CIA); and **Certified Government Financial Manager** (CGFM). One additional designation included in the table, discussed earlier in the *Issues in Credentialing in Other Fields* section, is the **International City/County Management Association Credentialed Manager** (ICMA-CM).

8.1   Certified Management Consultants

In Canada, the **[Canadian Association of Management Consultants](#) (CAMC)** oversees the international Certified Management Consultants (CMC) designation, through the Canadian council and provincial affiliate offices. The designation was originally established in the 1960's.

An undergraduate degree[27], or equivalent, is a necessary prerequisite to entering the certification process. An applicant must adhere to the Uniform Code of Professional Conduct and have two CMC sponsors as prerequisites to having his or her application considered, and if accepted must complete coursework and exams, a preparatory one-day seminar and four-hour written component, and a one- to three-hour oral exam on five "engagement summaries" based on the mandatory three years/1200 hours per year management consulting experiential component. Coursework is comprehensive and consistent across provinces. The "external components" of the coursework necessary for certification through the Institute of Certified Management Consultants of Alberta (ICMCA), for example, include:

- ♦   Equivalency in six functional areas:
  - o   Finance
  - o   Human Resources
  - o   Information Technology
  - o   Marketing
  - o   Operations
  - o   Strategic Planning

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[27] Gussman (2005) notes that most entrants have an MBA.

♦ One course in Principles of Project Management
♦ Two (total) courses in Interpersonal/Personal Skills
(Institute of Certified Management Consultants of Alberta (ICMCA), 2006, p. 1)

As well, the "internal" ICMCA components are:
♦ Essentials of Management Consulting course and exam
♦ Professional Conduct and Ethics: Best Practices and Professional Standards online course and exam.
(Institute of Certified Management Consultants of Alberta (ICMCA), 2006, p. 1)

To maintain the designation, a CMC must maintain membership "in the appropriate regional institute" and continue professional development (tracked by points).

The CMC designation system provides an example of complexities of provincial and federal governance of certification of professions. As mentioned earlier in this report, the designation is protected by legislation in most if not all provinces. Alberta, for example, maintains a Register of Registered Professional and Occupational Associations under the *Professional and Occupational Associations Registration Act, R.S.A. 2000* (2000). The *Act* is extensive, including details on:

♦ Application for registration
♦ Registration investigation
♦ Registration recommendation
♦ Registration approval
♦ Cancellation of registration
♦ Membership of the governing body of the association
♦ Governing body and officers
♦ Governing body regulations
♦ Governing body bylaws
♦ Registration Committee, Practice Review Committee
♦ Discipline Committee
♦ Complaint proceedings
♦ General provisions

The legislation enables the *Certified Management Consultants Regulation* (2005) which covers, in part, the Code of Ethics, the power and duties of the Registration Committee, the powers and duties of the Practice Review Committee, review of application, the use of the CMC title, and cancellation and suspension.

The CMC designation provides an example of how varying provincial legislation can exist even though there is a unifying national organization that establishes the bulk of the designation process. The CAMC bills itself as "The Single Voice of Management Consulting in Canada" (Canadian Association of Management Consultants, 2006a, p. 1). The competency profile, including the tasks, subtasks, and performance indicators for the

competencies, is available online (Canadian Association of Management Consultants, 2006b).

8.2   Family Mediators

Family Mediation Canada **(FMC)**, established in 1985, offers a national certification program for designation as a Certified Family Mediator. Provincial affiliates have virtually parallel processes for certification. There are three varieties of designations:

- ♦   Family Relations Mediator: FMC Cert FRM
- ♦   Family Financial Mediator: FMC Cert FFM
- ♦   Comprehensive Family Mediator: FMC Cert CFM

The preamble to its *Practice, Certification and Training Standards* notes:

> These practice guidelines and the process for certification are the result of Family Mediation Canada's (FMC's) continuing consultation and collaboration with provincial, territorial and international mediation associations, researchers and practitioners to establish uniform standards for family mediators that will apply across Canada. (p. 4, FMC, 2003)[28]

While "no formal degree is required as a prerequisite to mediation training" FMC does strongly recommend "a university degree or appropriate work experience and the Personal Attributes listed in section 4.7" (p. 25). Each of the designations does have a number of course- or session-related prerequisites, as well as mandatory submission of a role-play video or live demonstration video for skills assessment. Typically, inexperienced mediators must undergo a supervised practicum. Three letters of reference must be provided, and there is also a final written examination. It is recommended that applicants participate in certification preparation workshops, and it is possible to complete the certification within a few months. To receive the designation, an applicant must be a member of FMC, and must adhere to its Code of Professional Conduct. Certifications are transportable from province to province.

There is no 'grandparenting', and all applicants must show evidence of the required professional liability insurance.

For each of the certifications, 20 hours of continuing education each year is needed to maintain certification, as well as payment of the annual fee.

8.3   Planners

The **Canadian Institute of Planners** **(CIP)**, originating in 1919 but formalized with a new federated national/chapter structure with by-laws in the 1970's in Ottawa, provides certification through the recognition of specific university degrees in conjunction with specified mandatory years of planning experience and, in some cases, examinations.

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[28] The *Practice, Certification and Training Standards* are based on a 3-year consultation project with mediators, lawyers, judges and educators (Neilson and English, 2001).

Recognized provincial affiliates, such as the Ontario Professional Planners Institute, are considered equal partners, but their by-law must "be consistent with the objectives and purposes of the Institute" (Canadian Institute of Planners, 2004, p. 11), and membership and code of conduct standards are essentially the same. There are, however, some distinct licensing requirements in some provinces.

There are various classes of "corporate membership" of the Institute: Members, Fellows, Provisional members, or Student members. A Member of the Institute is permitted to use the title Member of the Canadian Institute of Planners (MCIP, or the French equivalent, MICU), and a Fellow is permitted to use the title FCIP (or the French equivalent, MAICU). A Member or a Fellow is issued a *certificate* by the Council of the Institute, and it is the property of the Institute. The Council may also issue a seal or stamp with the name of the Member or Fellow, to be used to "seal or stamp any official estimate, specification, report, drawing, document or plan made or issued by the Member or Fellow" (Canadian Institute of Planners, 2004, p. 7). It, too, is the property of the Institute, and, like the certificate, can be recalled.

Each member is bound by the Code of Professional Conduct; "enforceable through the disciplinary provisions of the national membership by-law or through the complementary Code of Practice and by-laws as may be adopted by the Institute's affiliates" (Canadian Institute of Planners, 2004, p. 20).

The Council maintains a standing committee known as the National Membership Committee, and one of its responsibilities is to "review and from time to time recommend to Council criteria for membership" (Canadian Institute of Planners, 2004, p. 9)[29]

The requirements for becoming certified as a corporate member[30] vary, depending on the educational degree that the potential member has been granted. The Council maintains a list of planning-related university degrees[31] recognized by the Institute. If an applicant has a been granted a *recognized* degree, and has applied for and been elected by an affiliate as a Provisional member, the next course of action is to complete "a minimum of two years of responsible professional planning experience which must be recorded in a log book" and then he or she must successfully complete an oral examination (Canadian Institute of Planners, 2004, p. 15).[32] However, the by-laws of the Institute allow for one type of exemption:

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[29] If a corporate member "moves from one place of residence to a place of residence within the jurisdiction of another affiliate or becomes a non-resident, the corporate member shall be entitled to a transfer of membership with equivalent recognition" (Canadian Institute of Planners, 2004 p. 6).

[30] Before becoming certified, but having been granted a university degree, a person would be elected by an affiliate to become a "Provisional Member", not yet having fulfilled the other requirements of becoming certified.

[31] Recognition is also based on the university with which the degree program is affiliated, and the graduation date of the potential member.

[32] A Provisional member with a recognized degree must apply for full membership within five years of attaining provisional status.

The Institute shall express its confidence in Canadian planning programs through granting graduates with recognized planning degrees an exemption from the Institute's written examination requirements. (p. 17)

The Membership Committee of Council liaises with affiliates regarding degree recognition, and programs are reviewed annually.[33]

If the applicant has completed what the Institute considers a *related* degree, it is necessary to subsequently complete a minimum of four years of "responsible professional planning experience", recorded in a log book, and successfully complete both a written examination (or fulfill a portfolio requirement) and an oral examination.

If the applicant has been granted what the Institute considers an *unrelated* degree, he or she must subsequently complete six years of "responsible professional planning experience" and successfully complete both a written examination (or fulfill a portfolio requirement) and an oral examination. [34]

The Institute's Council prescribes the written examination, the oral examination, and the standards for portfolios; it is the responsibility of the Council to establish that candidates have the knowledge and skills required by the Institute.

There are annual fees to maintain one's membership.

Noteworthy:
CIP's governance model emphasizes "cooperative partnerships with provincial and territorial Affiliate planning organizations, planning schools, planners and planning students" (Canadian Institute of Planners, 2005a, p. 2). National standards for membership, and continuous professional learning are contribute to the Institute's strategic goals. One of their current priority areas is to "develop and implement a national continuous professional learning program" (p. 3). A current goal related to communications and marketing is "CIP will establish/promote a 'brand' for the Institute and raise awareness of the planning profession by promoting the nature and relevancy, recognition, ethics and standards of professional planning practice" (p. 4).

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[33] The review criteria are quite specific, as expressed in the by-laws, and is a method of accreditation. For example, "the program offering the degree in planning shall be a recognizable administrative unit within the educational institution, in the direct charge of an individual whose substantive qualifications are in planning and who is officially designated by the educational institution as the responsible executive academic officer of the unit having authority on academic matters at least equivalent to that of a department chair", and "the course content must address, to the satisfaction of Council, skills as determined from time-to-time by Council" (Canadian Institute of Planners, 2004 p. 18). The Institute's website lists current recognized University Programs at http://www.cip-icu.ca/English/academic/cdn_uni.htm.

[34] Provisional members with a related or unrelated degree must apply for full membership within seven years of attaining provisional status. There are also specific provisions for applicants from other countries. As well, a Member in good standing for not less than 10 years may be elected to become a "Fellow of the Institute", which recognizes outstanding contribution.

The Institute has a Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) Committee, and is in the process of phasing in a national mandatory continuous learning program of 18 "Learning Units" per year for the maintenance of corporate membership (Canadian Institute of Planners, 2005b). Highlighting the continuing efforts needed to establish and maintain a professional credential, the Committee recently released the *CIP Membership Continuous Improvement Project: Improvements to Professional Standards are on the Horizon* (Canadian Institute of Planners, 2006):

> The National/Affiliate Membership Committee decided it was time to look at what it would take to be a "state of the art" professional association and, if necessary, "raise the bar" to strengthen the profession. A Membership Continuous Improvement Project was initiated with the support of the Institute and Affiliates. The project was a comprehensive review of membership issues, including a complete and thorough assessment of membership processes and standards at both the National and Affiliate levels. (p. 1)

The full consultant's report is available only to members, but the CIP website does reveal the key recommendations, including those reflecting changes to be made to the certification standards. Two of the 26 recommendations are that "a recognized four‑year university planning program will get the highest level of advanced standing in the professional program" (p. 2), and "Go from university recognition policy to a formal Canadian accreditation program with one service delivery point" (p. 3).

The CIP plan a consultation process to determine the next steps. If the recommendations are endorsed by the membership, the CIP expects

> at least seven Task Forces will be used to support implementation of recommendations and deal with related "how-to" activities. One or two of the Task Forces may be active for two years while the others will be in place for about a year. A call for volunteers will be issued to fill the Task Force positions. (Canadian Institute of Planners, 2006, p. 3)

It may be valuable to monitor the process and the progress of the efforts of the CIP to implement the recommendations.

8.4   Economic Developers

The **Economic Developers Association of Canada** (**EDAC**) "is Canada's national organization of Economic Developers pursuing excellence in the field since 1968" (EDAC, 2006a website). They provide Certified Economic Developer designation (Ec.D.) through a joint program with the University of Waterloo[35], an experiential component, and an examination. To achieve designation, a person must have a post-secondary diploma or degree, successfully complete the accredited Economic

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[35] The program was established in 1972 by EDAC and the University of Waterloo, and is also offered in French at the University of Sherbrooke. EDAC has an Accreditation Panel that establishes the standards for the courses.

Development curriculum (or equivalent)[36], demonstrate three years of relevant practical experience, successfully complete EDAC's oral and written exam, and have the approval of the EDAC Certification Panel.

There is also a Masters in Economic Development program in economic development at the University of Waterloo. Professional designation is not a legal requirement to practice as an economic developer.

EDAC, like the Canadian Institute of Planners, has provincial partners. In the case if EDAC, the partner organizations are in Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta, and British Columbia.

There is an annual fee to maintain membership with EDAC. Ongoing education is necessary to remain certified, and there are accredited courses available across Canada. There is a requirement of recertification every three years. The EDAC website contains the following:

> A university Diploma is available and requires a research essay and participation in two seminars after the Certificate level has been attained.

> Building upon the sound foundations of its Economic Development Program, the Association has expanded the mandate and activities of its Professional Development thrust. Certification of members, Regional Seminars and the upgrading of current courses and publications are being developed and emphasized. A Course Committee consisting of EDAC members and the University of Waterloo faculty are constantly developing, evaluating and upgrading course content to ensure that relevant and current content is offered. (EDAC, 2006b website)

8.5   Internal Auditors

Because the internal audit profession has significant similarities with the evaluation profession, this review will cover the Certified Internal Auditor designation process. The **Institute of Internal Auditors** **(IIA)**, established in 1941, is an international organization that governs the CIA designation, and individual countries can administer the Certified Internal Auditor (CIA) examinations through affiliate or chapter agreements. On its website, it advertises that it is "the only globally accepted certification for internal auditors".

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[36] The educational component is based on a point system that includes previous undergraduate or graduate degrees, completion of EDAC courses at the University of Waterloo or University of Sherbrooke, EDAC conferences, provincial conferences, and other EDAC accredited courses. There are various exceptions, and EDAC members with 10 or more years of experience in economic development are eligible to earn their Ec.D. designation though completion of Year II of the university program (and paper) and successful completion of the Ec.D. exam. (EDAC, 2006b website).

The Institute of Internal Auditors Administrative Directive No. 3 (2006c), which describes the eligibility requirements for Certified Internal Auditor designation, addresses the importance of uniformity of eligibility standards:

> A critical consideration in achieving worldwide recognition and acceptance of the Certified Internal Auditor designation is the ability to achieve maximum uniformity in certification eligibility requirements in the areas of examination, education, and experience….Accordingly, it is intended that the North American eligibility criteria should be used by national institutes/chapters as the standard for recommending individual country criteria. (p 2)

The eligibility requirements are:

Education
CIA candidates must hold a bachelor's degree or its educational equivalent from an accredited college-level institution. Certain international professional designations (such as Chartered Accountant) may be accepted as equivalent to a bachelor's degree. Professional work experience will not substitute for an appropriate degree. The IIA will only consider educational equivalency requests from candidates who have an appropriate international professional designation or from candidates who have completed more than 90 percent of the academic requirements needed for a degree at an accredited college-level institution. Applicants who do not possess a bachelor's degree and who are unsure whether their educational achievements or professional designations qualify as equivalents should submit related education/designation information (in English) with their application and include a cover letter requesting review by the Board of Regents. Information submitted should be sufficiently detailed to enable the Board of Regents to determine equivalency and must be submitted well in advance of the exam application deadline. The IIA will accept student candidates into the CIA program who (1) are enrolled as a senior in an undergraduate program or as a graduate student; (2) are full-time students as defined by the institution in which the student is enrolled (a minimum of 12 semester hours or its equivalent is required for undergraduate students and nine semester hours for graduate students); and (3) register for and take the CIA exam while enrolled in school.

Character Reference
CIA candidates must exhibit high moral and professional character and must submit a character reference form with their exam application.

Code of Ethics
CIAs and CIA candidates are expected to display exemplary professional behavior and judgment and must agree to abide by the Code of Ethics established by the IIA.

Professional Experience
Candidates are required to complete a minimum of two years of internal auditing experience or its equivalent. Acceptable equivalent experience includes experience in audit/assessment disciplines, external auditing, quality assurance, compliance, and internal control. A master's degree or work experience in related business professions (such as accounting, law, or finance) can be substituted for one year of the required two years professional internal auditing experience. Candidates may apply and sit for the CIA exam prior to satisfying the professional experience requirement, but will not be certified until all program requirements have been met.

Continuing Profession Education
Upon certification, CIAs will be required to maintain their knowledge and skills and stay abreast of improvements and current developments in internal audit standards, procedures, and techniques. CIAs must acquire 80 hours of Continuing Professional Education (CPE) every two years and report these hours in compliance with CPE reporting requirements[37]. In acknowledgement of the study time required to successfully complete the CIA exam, the CPE requirement is waived for the year the exam is passed and for the subsequent year. IIA members can report their CPE hours at no cost. Nonmembers incur a US $50 fee for CPE reporting.
(Institute of Internal Auditors, 2006b, p. 2)

Beyond the eligibility criteria, eligible applicants must pass four 3½-hour examinations The four parts of the exam are as follows:

Part I: The internal audit activity's role in governance, risk, and control
Part II: Conducting the internal audit engagement
Part III: Business analysis and information technology
Part IV: Business management skills[38]

(Institute of Internal Auditors, 2006b, p.3)

There are eleven IIA chapters in Canada through which a candidate can apply to begin the designation process. As well, the IIA has a "strategic alignment and accreditation" agreement with the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants (CICA) National Specialization Council, whereby the CIA program is included in CICA's "Specialist Certification Program" for chartered accountants (CAs) who are working as internal auditors (Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants, 2006a). The IIA considers the

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[37] Further details on reporting requirements and how the CEP hours are awarded are available in the Institute of Internal Auditors Administrative Directive No. 4: Continuing Professional Education Requirements (2006d).
[38] There are some educational equivalents (i.e., Certified Financial Consultant, Certified General Accountant, Certified Government Auditing Professional, Certified Management Accountant, and Chartered Accountant) which give an applicant an exemption, through "Professional Recognition Credit", from the fourth exam. Further details on the content of the exams is available at the IIA website: www.theiia/Certification.

Chartered Accountant designation as one of the equivalents to its educational pre-requisite of a bachelor's degree (Institute of Internal Auditors, 2006b).

The IIA also offers specialty certifications:

- Certification in Control Self-Assessment (CCSA);
- Certified Government Auditing Professional (CGAP)
- Certified Financial Services Auditor (CFSA)

Of particular relevance to public sector evaluators is the CGAP specialty certification "developed by and for public-sector Internal Auditing practitioners" which "emphasizes the Internal Auditor's role in strengthening accountability to the public and improving government services" (Gussman, 2005, p. 6 (online version)). The CGAP examination includes testing for awareness of the terminology and fundamentals of program evaluation, as well as testing for proficiency in performance measurement, quantitative methods, qualitative methods, research/data collection techniques, and analytical skills (Gussman, 2005).

Its Board of Regents (BOR) governs certification, including:

- Maintaining the quality and security of the exams.
- Defining the exam's Common Bodies of Knowledge.
- Developing and recommending educational, experience, character, and other requirements.
- Establishing the grading policy. (Institute of Internal Auditors, 2006a, p. 6)

8.6   Government Financial Managers

The Certified Government Financial Manager (CGFM) designation is one of two American examples in this set, and was established by the **Association of Government Accountants (AGA)** in 1994. The AGA itself was founded in 1950 and "supports the careers and professional development of government finance professionals working in federal, state and local governments as well as the private sector and academia" (Association of Government Accountants, 2006b, p. 1). Currently, seven states, or certain departments within them[39], formally recognize the CGFM, "the first certification broad enough to cover the whole field of government financial management – federal, state and local" (Association of Government Accountants, 2006c, p. 1).

The Institute of Internal Auditors recognizes the CGFM designation as one of the ones that allows for a waiver of part IV of the CIA examination. The certification process is as follows (Association of Government Accountants, 2006b):

The application form must be accompanied by an $85 (USD) fee and proof of a bachelor's degree that includes 24 hours of courses in financial management topics:

- Accounting
- Auditing

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[39] The states are: Idaho, Mississippi, Missouri, Maine, Tennessee, Virginia, and Washington.

- ♦ Budgeting
- ♦ Economics
- ♦ Finance
- ♦ Electronic Data Processing
- ♦ Information Resources Management
- ♦ Public Administration
- ♦ Other Financial Management Topics

Once processed by the AGA's Professional Certification Board, the applicant receives an "eligibility letter" with instructions on how to purchase the three CFGM examinations: *Governmental Environment* (including governmental structure, ethics, financing, and the interrelationships among the various government accounting functions) ; *Governmental Accounting, Financial Reporting and Budgeting*; and, *Government Financial Management and Control*. Exam writers are given two hours and fifteen minutes for each examination of approximately 100 multiple choice questions, and all three must be taken within three years of receiving the eligibility letter. As well, an applicant must submit a Work Verification Form to prove at least two years of "professional-level experience in the government financial management field".

Preparation for the examinations can be done in several ways:
- ♦ classroom course
- ♦ study guide
- ♦ applicant's own reading resources

Each examination costs $109 (USD), and the applicant receives either a pass or a fail for each course. If an exam is not passed the first time, there is a 30-day waiting period before the applicant can re-purchase the exam. Thereafter, there is a 90-day waiting period if an exam is failed. After all three exams have been passed, within the time limit, the applicant receives his or her certificate. (Association of Government Accountants, 2006b, p. 1-2). To maintain the certification, a CGFM must adhere to the AGA Code of Ethics, pay a renewal fee each year, and complete at least 80 hours of Continuing Professional Education (CPE) every two years, with at least 20 hours of CPE in the first year. AGA does random audits of documentation of training to check on compliance with the CPE training requirements.

The AGA recently released *AGA – Addressing Challenges in Government Financial Management: Executive Session White Paper* (Association of Government Accountants, 2006a), and the report exemplifies the marketing efforts that some may see as necessary to establish a professional niche. While it should be noted that the AGA also offers two other certifications – the Certificate of Excellence in Accountability Reporting (CEAR) and the Certificate of Excellence in Service Efforts and Accomplishments – the report's section on "Human Capital" shows the efforts made to market AGA membership and its designations:

> Task force members discussed the many ways to promote work for the government:

- Increasing awareness of AGA's new "Tomorrow's Professionals'" website and expanding it to include links to available internships.
- Developing a public relations strategy to creatively reach students. AGA may be able to tap the marketing and recruitment expertise of AGA's corporate partners in this effort.
- Promoting AGA involvement not only in Beta Alpha Psi, but in other accounting organizations and clubs, public administration programs and more. AGA task force members have committed to speaking to as many organizations as possible.
- Developing early-career mentoring opportunities.
- Encouraging college websites, such as the BAP site, to include links to AGA.
- Developing a database of accounting department chairs, and using it to build relationships with them and encourage them to promote government careers to their students.
- Using AGA's high school and college scholarship process to find out whether the applicants are interested in financial management internships; that information can then be passed on to human resources directors
(Association of Government Accountants, 2006a, p. 3)

Table 5: Summary of Comparative Designations

Professional Organization	Designation	University Training Component?	Experiential Component?	Written Exam?	Oral Exam?	Annual Fee?	Ongoing Learning?	Membership Necessary?
Canadian Association of Management Consultants	Certification: Certified Management Consultant (CMC)	Typically must have at least an undergraduate degree (or equivalent)40. Must also have two CMC sponsors	Yes: Three years @ 1200 hours a year, and five "engagements summaries" of consulting projects	Yes: Seminar and exam	Yes: An oral examination of knowledge based on the "engagement summaries"	Yes	Yes: Must maintain Continuing Professional Development (CPD) points	Yes (and must abide by the Uniform Code of Professional Conduct)
Family Mediation Canada	Certification: Certified Family Mediator (FMC Certified Family Mediator)	No, but in general will have at least an undergraduate degree	Yes: 30-hour practicum or equivalent	Yes	No, except when unable to complete written exam due to disability or medical condition	Yes	Yes: 30 hours per year	Yes (and adherence to Code of Professional Conduct)
Canadian Institute of Planners	Certification, or could be considered Credential: Member of the Canadian Institute of Planners (MCIP)	Yes: Ranges from "recognized" university degree to "unrelated" university degree	Yes: Depends upon type of university education	Yes, except for graduates of "recognized" universities	Yes, except for graduates of "recognized" universities	Yes	Mandatory learning program is being phased in	Yes (and must adhere to the Code of Professional Practice)
Economic Developers Association of Canada	Certification: Certified Economic Developer (Ec.D.)	Yes: 2-year program established in 1972 by EDAC and University of Waterloo (and Sherbrooke, QC, in French)	Yes: Three years of practical experience	Yes	Yes	Yes	Ongoing education is required: Recertification every three years	Yes (and must adhere to Code of Ethics)
Institute of Internal Auditors	Certification: Certified Internal Auditor (CIA, and 3 specialty designations)	Must have CA or CMA designation prior	Yes: Two years internal auditor work experience	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes: 80 hours every 2 years for practicing CIAs, 40 hours for non-practicing	Yes (and must abide by the Code of Ethics)
Association of Government Accountants	Certification: Certified Government Financial Manager (CGFM)	Bachelor's degree from an accredited university, including 24 hours of courses related to financial management	Yes: 2 years of professional-level government financial management experience	Yes: Three multiple choice examinations	No	Yes	Yes: 80 hours every two years, with at least 20 hours in the first year. Compliance is checked by random audits of documentation	No, but must abide by the AGA's Code of Ethics

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[40] The Canadian Association of Management Consultants (CAMC) has MOUs with three universities to provide educational preparation that qualifies graduates for "advanced standing" in the Association's program that leads to the CMC designation: St Mary's University, Sobey School of Business; Royal Roads University, School of Business; University of Ottawa, School of Management. Students approved for the advanced program are exempt from some of the CMC program requirements.

Professional Organization	Designation	University Training Component?	Experiential Component?	Written Exam?	Oral Exam?	Annual Fee?	Ongoing Learning?	Membership Necessary?
International City/County Management Association	Credential: ICMA Credentialed Manager (ICMA-CM)	Bachelor's degree from an accredited university	Yes: 7 years executive experience (if holding Masters degree in public administration or policy); 8 years (Other graduate degree); or 9 years (Baccalaureate)	Yes: The Applied Knowledge Assessment (BUT the AKA is for professional development purposes only, so there is not a passing requirement).	No	Yes	Yes: 40-hour annual professional development requirement, and 360-degree performance-based assessment once every 5 years	Yes (and must abide by ICMA Code of Ethics)

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