



Terms of Reference

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1.0 PREAMBLE

The Standards Council for Canadian Career Development (hereinafter “Standards Council”) evolved from the National Certification Advisory Committee (NCAC). The focus of the Council is to bring national expertise and perspective to the maintenance and refinement of the Competency Framework for Career Development Professionals, Code of Ethics, and the Certification Program, and to advance a shared vision for the professionalization of the Career Development sector. The Standards Council supports creative collaboration within the sector and, through sector consultations, informs the future direction of career certification tools and resources, with a view to sustaining and strengthening certification.

The vision for national certification delivery continues to evolve as we gain a deeper understanding of the program's requirements and needs. Building on previous initiatives and collective efforts across the sector, it is helpful to reflect on the key milestones that have shaped the evolution of this work to date.

From 2018 to 2021, the Canadian Career Development Foundation (CCDF) secured funding from ESDC for the Supporting Canadians to Navigate Learning and Work project to update the Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Professionals, created in 2001. Working with an established National Steering Committee and sector volunteers, thousands of volunteer hours resulted in:

- A new definition of Career Development Professional
- The Pan-Canadian Competency Framework for Career Development Professionals
- The National Competency Profile for Career Development Professionals
- The Code of Ethics for Career Development Professionals
- A draft national competency-based certification program, including a bank of multiple-choice exam questions, a draft approach to a structured interview, and a supplementary study guide

Project funding was not extended to finalize and launch national certification. CCDF engaged with the National Steering Committee and others to find potential partners and/or funding to move forward. Despite efforts, no other partners had come forward, and no other funds had been secured.

The Nova Scotia Career Development Association (NSCDA) came forward with an offer to administer certification nationally. NSCDA had been administering provincial certification since 2014, supported by funding from the Nova Scotia government. The National Steering Council was presented with the plan for NSCDA to deliver the RPL competency-based

certification program, and there was consensus that this was a positive direction. CCDF granted NSCDA limited rights to use the National Standard and to build from the draft assessment tools to finalize and administer the program. In November 2023, a formal License Agreement was signed by CCDF and NSCDA. This included the establishment of an Advisory body with the intent that it would incorporate and ultimately govern the administration of the national certification program in collaboration with NSCDA and CCDF. After two years of work, it became clear that the Committee members would face significant personal risk in governing national certification. A decision was made to adjust the role of the Committee, as noted above, and have NSCDA continue to deliver national certification with continued input from a board-appointed career certification committee.

The Standards Council recognizes the Nova Scotia Career Development Association [NSCDA] (hereinafter “Service Provider”) as the supported Service Provider for the National Certification Program. The Service Provider’s Board assumes legal and fiduciary responsibilities for the confirmation of the CCDF designation and concerns that may arise from the delivery of the National Career Development Certificate Program (hereinafter “Certificate Program”). The Service Provider shares communication and process plans with the Standards Council through the Career Certification Committee Representatives in advance of distribution to the CDP community, enabling meaningful input that promotes accessibility, reliability, consistency, and collaboration, while supporting the long-term sustainability of service delivery and interest holder engagement.

2.0 Purpose and Accountability

The Standards Council will support a forward-looking approach, ensuring the national framework keeps pace with the field's evolution. The Standards Council will consult with associations and key players in the sector to incorporate input with a national perspective that informs both adjustments to the Competency Framework and the Code of Ethics, and provides consultation on Career Certification. The Standards Council will work with CCDF and the Service Provider to conduct reviews and advise on current and future-state considerations to ensure the Competency Framework and Career Certification remain relevant to the sector. The Standards Council will represent various roles within the sector and act as stewards, encouraging creative collaborations to foster a sense of ownership and stewardship in implementing Career Certification.

2.1 The Standards Council

- 2.1.1 Provide professional guidance and a national voice to the Service Provider, through representation on the Certification Committee, to help ensure relevance and continued uptake of Career Certification.

- 2.1.2 Take a multidirectional approach to inform the work of the Standards Council from information obtained from the sector, the Service Provider, and CCDF.
- 2.1.3 Partner with key players to guide the evolution of the Competency Framework and Code of Ethics by providing the CCDF with advice on current gaps and future focus of the sector.
- 2.1.4 Consult with associations and key players to gather input on current and future changes and visions within and for the sector, to ensure relevance of the Competency Framework and Career Certification.
- 2.1.5 Identify urgent updates to the Competency Framework and what can be placed in the queue for scheduled updates.
- 2.1.6 Promote certification, professional development, and professional identity to the sector, including employers, educational institutions, trainers, CDPs, and the government.
- 2.1.7 Increase familiarity with the Competency Framework and Code of Ethics in the sector.
- 2.1.8 Champion creative collaboration with various working groups to create a catalyst for action, support each other's work, and strengthen the sector.
- 2.1.9 Connect with groups that are working on occupational titles/NOC adjustments.
- 2.1.10 Serve as a working Council that guides the development and implementation of national standards.

3.0 Council Configuration

The Standards Council will consist of no fewer than five (5) and not more than thirteen (13) members. A Selection Sub-Committee will create a recruitment plan, selection process, and voting protocol to be approved by the Standards Council. For clarity, the maximum of thirteen (13) voting members will not include the Council Chair, Past Chair, Service Provider Representative, or CCDF Representative. Two (2) members of the Standards Council will serve on the Service Provider's Career Certification Committee and be elected to these positions by the Standards Council for a two-year term, renewable twice.

3.1 Standards Council Positions

- 3.1.1 **Standards Council Chair** (abstained from voting unless intended to break a tie vote between Council members)
- 3.1.2 **Standards Council Vice Chair/Treasurer** (voting) - Will support the work of the Chair, act in their absence, and manage Council finances. The intent is for the Vice Chair to serve as the next Chair to ensure Council continuity.
- 3.1.3 **Standards Council Secretary** (voting)
- 3.1.4 **Standards Council Past Chair** (non-voting)

- 3.1.5 **Standards Council Members** (voting) – Maximum of 13 voting members at any one time drawn from diverse perspectives, geographic regions, required skill sets, cultural identities, and sector roles.
- 3.1.6 **CCDF Representative** (non-voting) – CCDF will appoint a representative at its discretion.
- 3.1.7 **Service Provider Representative** (non-voting) – NSCDA will appoint a representative at its discretion.

Sub-Committees will be created as required to bring in expertise and engage individuals throughout the sector to increase involvement, interest, and sustainability for this work.

3.2 Replacement of Voting Members

3.2.1 In appointing Council Members, consideration shall be given to ensure representation of diverse perspectives, geographic regions, required skill sets, cultural identities, and sector roles.

3.2.2 New Members will be elected according to the process endorsed by the Standards Council and CCDF.

4. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Chair

Provides leadership to the Council. The Chair ensures that the requirements, duties, and outcomes assigned to the Standards Council are fulfilled within a reasonable and responsible timeframe. When necessary, the Council Chair can delegate responsibilities to voting members. The Chair administers and coordinates duties as determined by the Council. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

4.1.1 Prepare and circulate agendas.

4.1.2 Facilitate meetings.

4.1.3 Review the minutes before circulating to Council members for review.

4.1.4 Facilitate the execution of the strategic plans.

4.1.5 Forward recommended policies to the Service Provider.

4.1.6 Ensure all internal and external documentation meets legal requirements and the set standard of practice. (Terms of Reference, meeting minutes)

4.1.7 Call ad-hoc meetings at the request of a Council Member(s), CCDF Representative, or the Service Provider.

4.1.8 On-board new Council members and/or delegate this role.

4.2 Vice-Chair

Support the functions of the chair and perform the duties of the Chair in their absence or incapacity and carry out other duties assigned or specified by the Board.

- 4.2.1 Oversee the Council's financial records, statements, and reporting requirements each fiscal year from April 1 to March 31.
- 4.2.2 Maintain account records and monitor financial status.
- 4.2.3 Process payments and deposits.
- 4.2.4 Account for all CRA and corporate documents in cooperation with the Chair.
- 4.2.5 Support the work of the Chair with the intention of moving into a chair role following a two-year term.

4.3 Secretary

Perform administrative tasks as determined by the Standards Council. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- 4.3.1 Attend and record the minutes of meetings of the Standards Council.
- 4.3.2 Ensure the accurate entry of meeting proceedings.
- 4.3.3 Issue notices of meetings as required.
- 4.3.4 Maintain custody of all Standards Council records and store them on the agreed-upon accessible platform.

4.4 Past Chair

Provides continuity, context, and mentorship, supporting the new chair and council by offering historical insight, advisory guidance, and stability during leadership transitions.

4.5 Voting Members

The duties and responsibilities of all other voting members shall be determined by their specific mandates or based on the needs of the Standards Council. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- 4.5.1 Review, validate, and ratify decisions pertinent to substantive changes to the Competency Framework and/or Code of Ethics.
- 4.5.2 Strike ad-hoc Committees as necessary and invite sector representatives to stand on the ad-hoc committee as non-voting members.
- 4.5.3 Provide and prepare recommendations and professional advice as required.

4.5.4 Participate in monitoring activities and making recommendations to the CCDF and Service Provider through Career Certification designates.

4.5.5 Lead and/or participate in working groups as needed.

4.6 CCDF Representative (ex officio, non-voting)

Represent the interest and perspective of the CCDF as the “home” for the Competency Framework, National Profile, and the Code of Ethics. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

4.6.1 Facilitate bi-directional communication and dissemination of information between the Standards Council and CCDF.

4.6.2 Facilitate the updating of the Competency Framework, National Profile, and Code of Ethics on regularly scheduled updates.

4.7 Service Provider Representative; (ex-officio, non-voting member)

Represent the interest and perspective of the NSCDA as the Service Provider for Career Certification.

4.7.1 Facilitate bi-directional communication and dissemination of information between the Standards Council and NSCDA.

5. EXPECTATIONS OF VOTING MEMBERS

5.1 Attendance

5.1.1 Standards Council members are expected to attend quarterly meetings, unless otherwise scheduled, for approximately 1.5 hours in duration. Between quarterly meetings, sub-committee work may be required.

5.1.2 Inform the Standards Council Chair if they will be unable to attend a scheduled meeting.

5.1.3 Standards Council member(s) absent for more than two consecutive meetings in a row, regardless of year, may be asked to step down at the discretion of the Chair and/or Members.

5.2 Term

5.2.1 Terms for Standards Council members are for a two-year duration. During the inaugural period, special accommodation will be made to maintain continuity of decision-making and knowledge transfer. Additional extensions may be granted upon the Standards Council's approval.

5.2.2 New Standards Council members are voted upon during a Standards Council's meeting before the end of the fiscal year, and appointees will start their term at the beginning of the fiscal year.

6.0 CONDUCT OF MEETINGS

6.1 Routines and Expectations

6.1.1 Regular meetings will be held quarterly and will be facilitated by the Standards Council Chair.

6.1.2 Agendas will be created and circulated one week before the meeting date.

6.1.3 Standards Council members will submit agenda items two weeks before the Council meeting.

6.1.4 Additional meetings will be held on an as-needed basis at the call of the Standards Council Chair.

6.1.5 Sub-Committees will work on tasks as needed and will provide the Standards Council with recommendations.

6.1.6 Regular meeting minutes will be kept for the public record.

7.0 PRINCIPLES OF MEMBERSHIP

7.1 Capacity

7.1.1 The Standards Council will call on external experts as required to enhance learning, build capacity, and support informed decision-making.

7.2 Diversity

7.2.1 The Standards Council embraces the importance of diversity so that decisions shaping the Competency Framework and Code of Ethics respect and reflect the voices of the full sector and the lived/living realities of those we serve.

7.2.2 The Standards Council is commissioned to represent the best interests of the Career Development sector (not those of their own organization, Province/Territory, or personal interest).

7.2.3 The Standards Council commits to actively seeking input from a wide range of representatives to help inform the certification program.

7.3 Cohesion and Collaboration

7.3.1 The Standards Council strives to be of “one voice” on issues, ideas, or the recommendations it endorses. All members of the Standards Council recognize the importance of working collaboratively to reach an agreement on all key decisions.

7.3.2 The Standards Council will work collaboratively and transparently with the Service Provider, CCDF, and across working Councils to come to key decisions.

7.4 Accountability

7.4.1 The Standards Council commits to being accountable as active learners, asking questions, preparing thoroughly for all meetings, reading all materials they are asked to read, and following through on all commitments they make in their role as a Standards Council Member.

7.5 Confidentiality

7.5.1 The Standards Council operates in a spirit of trust and collaboration. To support open discussion, members agree to keep all discussions, documents, and information shared within the Standards Council confidential unless otherwise agreed.

7.5.2 Members are encouraged to share general insights and learnings while protecting the privacy of individuals and the integrity of Standards Council deliberations.

8.0 GUIDING ACCOUNTABILITIES OF MEMBERSHIP

The Standards Council is a critical body that informs the Competency Framework, Code of Ethics, and Career Certification, reflecting the realities, priorities, and desires of the Career Development sector. The following summarizes the key accountabilities assumed by the Standards Council:

8.1 Consult

8.1.1 The Standards Council is commissioned with the responsibility of representing the best interests of the sector as related to the Competency Framework, Code of Ethics, and Career Certification. Accordingly, they are called to consult with the sector on key issues, particularly those where there may be opposing views from Members.

8.2 Advise

8.2.1 The Standards Council provides advice and guidance on the current and future state of the Competency Framework, Code of Ethics, and implementation of Career Certification.

8.2.2 Decisions affecting the use of the standards are made by CCDF, as holder of the standards, with consideration of input from both the Standards Council and the Service Provider.

8.2.3 The Standards Council has no official vote on decisions affecting the CCDF or Service Provider and acts independently in an advisory role on shared goals.

8.3 Recommend

8.3.1 The Standards Council is invited to make recommendations on adjustments to the Competency Framework, Code of Ethics, and current and future focus of Career Certification.

8.4 Review

8.4.1 The Chair of the Standards Council initiates discussions annually with Standards Council Members to confirm that it is operating as intended.

8.4.2 The Terms of Reference will be reviewed every two years or as needed to ensure continued relevance and alignment with the Standards Council's strategic direction, competency standards, and sector expectations.