



Update (Fall 2017) - “Centralization and Capacity Building Project” Canadian Alliance of Audiology and Speech Language Regulators (CAASPR)

Overview

In October 2016, the Canadian Alliance of Audiology and Speech Language Regulators (CAASPR) received funding from Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) in support of a three-year effort dubbed the “Centralization and Capacity Building Project”. The overriding purpose of this initiative is to begin the process of centralizing certain functions related to the assessment of internationally educated (IE) Audiologists (AUD) and Speech-Language Pathologists (SLP) under a single body in an effort to better standardize outcomes. Project updates, like this one will be distributed on a quarterly basis to keep stakeholder apprised of key developments.

Language Proficiency

One of the main deliverables of the ESDC funded project, is the development and implementation of a single, pan-Canadian language proficiency standard for internationally educated applicants. Significant research, led by Blais Consulting has been undertaken in support of this goal. The output of this work is a policy which allows applicants to prove language proficiency in a number of fair and defensible ways. Proficiency requirements and associated test cut scores are in line with the findings of the study of AUD and SLP practice conducted by the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks in 2014.

On November 6, 2017 the proposed language proficiency policy was reviewed and approved unanimously by the CAASPR Board of Directors. Over the next year, this standard will be adopted locally by participating regulatory colleges and will serve as the policy used by CAASPR when assessing internationally educated applicants as part of the new, centralized process expected to be operational in the second half of 2019.

Competency Profiles

Work on writing Sub-Competencies for both the AUD and SLP professions is well underway. These are descriptors of skills, knowledge and attributes that directly contribute to the acquisition of the Essential Competencies developed earlier this year. The process is being led by J. Cupit with input provided by 20 subject matter experts (10 AUD & 10 SLP) drawn from across the country.

A first draft of both Competency Profiles (i.e. both Essential and Sub-Competencies in a single document) will be completed by the end of January 2018. A set of final consultations with individual regulatory colleges and other stakeholder groups will be carried during the following months to confirm that the Competency Profiles accurately reflect the realities of current practice. The Competency Profiles are expected to be approved by the CAASPR Board in April, 2018 (see tentative timelines below).

Activity	Timing
Developmental Phase	August 2017 - January 2018
Consultation and Validation Phase	February - March 2018
Final Meeting for Review of Feedback by SMEs	End of March 2018
Approval by CAASPR Board	April 2018

The finalized Competency Profiles will serve to inform a number of assessment tools including a national entry-to-practice exam for both professions. To this end, CAASPR will be creating an Exam Blueprint based on the Essential and Sub-Competencies and the survey data collected as part of the validation exercise. External expertise will be sought to ensure that this process is robust and in line with industry best practices.

Upcoming Work

In February 2018, CAASPR will be releasing a Request for Proposal (RFP) to source a business consultant. The selected vendor will be responsible for creating a business plan for the organization aimed at ensuring long-term operational sustainability after project funding is completed in late 2019.

CAASPR will be issuing two RFPs in the Spring/Summer of 2018. The first will be to retain a consultant to operationalize the Academic Equivalency Framework (AEF) for use as part of the centralized assessment process. The AEF is the standard which provincial regulatory bodies currently use to determine the substantial equivalency of professional education obtained from non-accredited institutions. The selected AEF consultant will develop an assessment manual, application materials, and train the first roster of CAASPR assessors.

The second RFP will be aimed at sourcing an IT development firm to create an online portal where internationally educated applicants can access licensure information and submit an application and supporting documents online. This portal would include significant back-end functionality allowing for: the storing of applicant information and scanned documents, internal communications (between CAASPR administrators, regulatory college staff and credential assessors) and customized “dashboards” for all major user groups. The portal will also house a newly developed “pre-arrival” self-assessment tool that prospective applicants can access free of charge. This resource will give individuals a preliminary, low-stakes approximation of where they stand relative to Canadian entry-to-practice requirements and what educational gaps may have to be remediated prior to being eligible for licensure.