



Update (Spring 2018) - “Centralization and Capacity Building Project” Canadian Alliance of Audiology and Speech Language Regulators (CAASPR)

Over the past three months, significant progress has been made towards realizing many of the main deliverables of the CAASPR “Centralization and Capacity Building Project”. We are very pleased to provide updates regarding development of entry-to-practice competency profiles, examination blueprints and selection of a vendor to deliver a national exam for both Audiology (AUD) and Speech-Language Pathology (SLP).

Entry-to-Practice Competency Profiles

On April 29, 2018, the CAASPR Board of Directors met in Edmonton to review and finalize the Competency Profiles for AUD and SLP in Canada. Each Competency Profile is comprised of seven headings referred to as “Roles”: Expert, Communicator, Collaborator, Advocate, Scholar, Manager and Professional. Listed under each role are Essential Competencies and Sub-Competencies for entry-to-practice in audiology and speech-language pathology. Collectively the document describes the skills, knowledge and abilities required of registrants to practice safely, ethically and effectively.

The Competency Profiles were passed with unanimous support by the Board. This represents a major achievement for the professions; for the first time national evidence-based entry-to-practice standards have been established and agreed upon by all eight participating regulatory bodies. Great thanks is given to the 20 subject matter experts drawn from across the country who contributed tirelessly to this initiative and to Directions Evidence and Policy Research Group and Jennifer Cupit, the consultants who led this group through a rigorous process to achieve the final product.

Examination Blueprints

Now finalized, the Entry-to-Practice Competency Profiles will serve as the basis for Examination Blueprints. These documents will describe the structure of the national examinations and set out the specific weightings/frequencies of competency categories to be tested.

Yardstick, an industry leader in the development of high-stakes assessment tools, has been contracted to carry out this important piece of work. Finalized Exam Blueprints will be presented to the CAASPR Board for approval and implementation in November, 2018.

National Examinations

CAASPR is especially proud of an agreement recently signed with Speech-Language and Audiology Canada (SAC) to deliver entry-to-practice examinations (based on the CAASPR Examination Blueprints) for both professions. Exams will be in pen-and-paper, multiple choice format and offered twice annually in both official languages across Canada. A first administration of the new, currently-named “Canadian Entry to Practice (CETP) Examination”, is expected in the fall of 2020.

Audiology and speech-language pathology will join the ranks of other regulated health care professions in Canada that require successful completion of a national entry-to-practice examination as a non-exemptible condition of licensure. Reflecting on this agreement, CAASPR Chair Josée Levasseur notes, “The introduction of national regulator-sponsored exams is a great achievement for public safety. Partnering with SAC, with thirty years of experience in the delivery of high-quality certification exams for our professions, made them a logical and responsible choice in this regard.”

CAASPR and individual regulatory colleges will be providing additional information over the coming months on how the CETP Examination will effect current and future registration requirements.

Upcoming Activities

In June 2018, CAASPR will be releasing two requests for proposals (RFPs). 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 educated applicants can access licensure information and submit an application and supporting documents online. This portal will 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.

Finally, in late-2018, CAASPR will be seeking the services of a Mentorship Consultant. This individual will develop a model program based on best practices identified internally within the profession and externally via an environmental scan of other, similar professions in Canada. Measurable outcomes expected from mentees will be tied directly to the newly created competency profiles. Individual regulators may choose to adopt (or not adopt) the system locally depending on their own specific needs.