



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

I) Overview

Canadian Alliance of Audiology and Speech Language Regulators (CAASPR) was recently awarded funding from Employment and Social Development Canada’s (ESDC) Foreign Credential Recognition program. The overriding purpose of the “Centralization and Capacity Building Project” 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. Likely benefits stemming from the Project include:

- Improved access to licensing information for IE applicants;
- A streamlined “national” process for assessment of IE applicants;
- Enhanced public safety through greater harmonization in assessment and admissions processes and standards;
- Improved labour mobility;
- Fewer instances of “jurisdiction shopping” based on the above outcomes.

II) Membership

CAASPR is comprised of regulatory bodies that have been established and mandated by provincial governments to regulate the practice of audiology and speech-language pathology and govern registrants in the respective jurisdictions.

CAASPR’s mandate is to address common regulatory issues on a national level to advance the practice and regulation of audiology and speech-language pathology in Canada. CAASPR facilitates the sharing of information and building of consensus on regulatory issues to assist member regulators in fulfilling their mandate of protecting the public interest.

At present, CAASPR consists of 8 regulatory bodies (members) listed below. Where possible the involvement and cooperation of Speech-Language and Audiology Canada (SAC) will be sought to involve the profession in jurisdictions where AUD and SLP practice is not regulated.

- Alberta College of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists
- College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Manitoba
- College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Newfoundland and Labrador
- College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario
- College of Speech and Hearing Health Professionals of British Columbia
- New Brunswick Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists
- Ordre des orthophonistes et audiologistes du Québec
- Saskatchewan Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists

III) Project Deliverables

The Centralization and Capacity Building Project is comprised of a number of complimentary and interrelated deliverables described below.

Competency Profiles: The linchpin of the Project is the development of a set of professional competencies for both AUD and SLP professions. Competencies will be developed under the guidance of a team of 20 subject matter experts drawn from across the country. Once drafted, the competencies will be validated and finalized via a national survey of all practicing AUD and SLP practitioners. A list of performance indicators will then be established to inform and harmonize assessment tools also created in a later phase of the Project.

Entry-to-Practice Exams: The vast majority of health occupations in Canada require individuals to pass a regulator-sponsored exam(s) prior to becoming registered as independent practitioners. The Project aims to implement a written, competency-based, entry-to-practice exam for both AUD and SLP professions. Graduates of accredited Canadian SLP and AUD programs (outside of Quebec) as well as internationally educated applicants deemed to have “substantially equivalent” education will have to pass the newly developed exam as a pre-requisite of licensure.

Language Proficiency: Significant research, including a language benchmarking report commissioned from the Canadian Centre for Language Benchmarks (CCLB) has already been undertaken to establish common language proficiency policies for the profession. A language expert will be engaged to review, update and collate previous research and provide: a list of accepted tests (English and French) and scores based on that benchmark, and a policy related to which applicants will be required to prove language proficiency.

CAASPR Website Portal: Project funding has been allocated for the creation of a new, fit-for-purpose portal aimed at providing internationally educated applicants information on becoming licensed in Canada and a means of submitting their application and supporting documentation electronically. The portal will also include 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.

Centralized Assessment Process: Applications from internationally educated SLPs/AUDs submitted through the CAASPR portal will be evaluated for “substantial equivalency” by a roster of trained assessors located across the country. Their recommendations will be reviewed by a National Assessment Panel comprised of representatives from each regulated jurisdiction. Depending on the comparability of their education and experience relative to Canadian standards, applicants will either be allowed to challenge the National Entry-to-Practice Exam or given a remediation plan on how to fill identified gaps.

A Business Plan: In order to remain a viable organization, long-term CAASPR will need to implement a sustainable business plan once Project funding lapses. A business consultant will be retained to carry out associated research and analysis. The consultant will proffer a number of recommendations related

to revenue sources, application/assessment fees, resource requirements and core expenses. CAASPR will use this information to implement a permanent operational structure in 2019.

Mentorship Programs: A number of regulated jurisdictions in Canada require that individuals participate in a mentorship program prior to becoming registered or shortly after receiving their licence. A mentorship expert 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 updated competency profiles and performance indicators. Individual regulators may choose to adopt (or not adopt) the system locally depending on their own specific needs.

*All public-facing tools, information and materials will be available in both English and French.

IIII) Timelines

The Project which was officially launched on October 24, 2016 is scheduled to run for 36 months until September of 2019. The chart below sets out the anticipated timing associated with the deliverables described above.

ACTIVITY			CAASPR - "Centralization and Capacity-Building Project for Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists"																																						
			START # mos.			2017												2018												2019											
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36			
Development of Competency Profiles	1	11	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█																											
Development of Performance Indicators	8	8																																							
Environmental Scans (Website/Portal, Assessment)	6	6																																							
Selection of an Exam Vendor	10	6																																							
Development of Competency-Based Exam	12	25																																							
IT Architect - Needs Assessment/Specifications	11	4																																							
Website/Portal Development	15	15																																							
Establishment of Language Proficiency Policies	5	10																																							
Development of Pre-Arrival Resource	12	11																																							
Business Plan Development	14	4																																							
Report from Mentorship Expert	27	7																																							
Assessment Consultant - Operationalize AEF	18	13																																							
Pilot of Centralized AEF Assessment	31	6																																							