

CANADIAN ALLIANCE OF AUDIOLOGY AND SPEECH LANGUAGE REGULATORS REPORT TO NBASLPA 2018 AGM

CAASPR is the national alliance of audiology and speech-language pathology regulatory bodies. Please see the separate handout on the role of regulators vs professional associations.

CENTRALIZATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT

In October 2016, CAASPR was awarded a \$1.3 million grant from Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) to centralize certain components of the application process for registration of audiologists and speech-language pathologists in Canada. Our professions have lagged behind most other health occupations in Canada who already have a centralized process and a national regulatory examination.

Work on the project must be completed by fall of 2019 so this has been and continues to be a very busy time for the various CAASPR committees formed to oversee and participate in the work required.

BENEFITS OF THE CENTRALIZATION PROJECT

The Centralization project will provide the following benefits:

- Improved access to licensing information for applicants;
- Streamlined national process for assessment of applicants;
- Enhanced public safety through greater harmonization of assessment and admissions standards;
- Improved labour mobility for audiologists and SLPs; and
- Fewer instances of “jurisdiction shopping”.

Centralization of application processing will be especially valuable to smaller jurisdictions who have limited human resources to ensure fair and rigorous evaluation of applicants, particularly those from other countries where education systems are very different from Canada.

COMPONENTS OF THE CENTRALIZATION PROJECT

1. Competency Profiles for audiology and speech-language pathology

CAASPR completed the National Competency Profiles for both professions earlier this year and these were shared with all NBASLPA members in July. This accomplishment represents the first time that our professions have approved a set of national competencies agreed to by regulators, professional associations and universities and validated by over 1600 members of the professions across Canada.

The competency profiles will form the foundation of the national exams and other tools to assist regulators in their role of protection of the public.

2. Language Proficiency

All Canadian audiology and SLP regulators, with the exception of New Brunswick, have had language proficiency requirements for internationally-educated applicants for some time. There was variability in those requirements, however, and work has been completed on a national language proficiency standard. This standard provides exemptions for applicants who have completed their university program in one of Canada's official languages and defines acceptable tests and scores for those who have not.

3. Entry-to-Practice Exams:

In March 2018, CAASPR completed negotiations and signed a contract with SAC to have them develop and administer the new entry-to-practice examinations for AUD and SLP. As of fall 2020, all audiologists and SLPs applying for registration in one of the regulated provinces in Canada (except Quebec), will be required to complete the regulatory exam. Individuals who are already registered at that time will not be required to write the exam.

A consultant in psychometrics is currently working with the CAASPR Blueprint Steering Committee and focus groups from both professions to develop blueprints for the new exams based on the National Competency Profiles. The blueprints will be completed in October and SAC will then begin the process of mapping existing and new exam questions to the blueprints.

The exams will be available in English and French and at a number of sites across Canada and internationally, as are the current SAC Certification Examinations.

4. CAASPR Website Portal

A major component of the Centralization project will be the creation of a new CAASPR website and portal that will provide:

- Information on becoming licensed in Canada;
- A pre-arrival, self-assessment tool that will help potential applicants, especially those trained in other countries, to determine if they have everything necessary to apply; and
- A portal for electronic submission of applications and supporting documentation.

All applications will be submitted through the CAASPR portal. Graduates of accredited Canadian university programs will automatically be eligible to write the national regulatory exam.

Internationally-educated applicants will require credential assessment to determine if their training is equivalent to a Canadian Master's degree and if they meet language proficiency requirements. If these requirements are met, they will become eligible to take the national exam.

If applicants pass the exam, their information and evaluation results will be forwarded to the requested jurisdiction where final checks (e.g. background check) will be completed and a determination regarding registration will be made.

5. Business Plan

As part of the project, CAASPR has engaged a business consultant to research financial requirements to ensure sustainability of the national alliance after the conclusion of the ESDC funding. The consultant has made recommendations related to: revenue sources, application/assessment fees, resource requirements and core expenses; and will assist CAASPR in developing a sustainable business plan for the future.

6. Mentorship Program Model

Some regulated jurisdictions in Canada require a mentorship period where all new members are supervised by a more experienced member. Part of the ESDC project will involve research of the existing mentorship programs in Canada and development of a program model based on the national competency profiles.

Provincial regulators may choose to adopt the model depending on their individual needs.

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