

Pan-Canadian Strategic Advisory Panel for the Recognition of Prior Learning

TERMS OF REFERENCE

RECOGNIZING PRIOR LEARNING AFFECTS EVERY CANADIAN

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a key part of a successful knowledge economy, where continuous learning is essential. RPL is about placing value on all¹ learning because it contributes to the social and economic well-being of individuals and communities. RPL is a reliable process that enables Canadians to be active citizens leading productive lives.

Over the past 30 years, the RPL movement in Canada has resulted in a wealth of information, exemplary practice and positive outcomes. Despite its demonstrated quality, effectiveness and benefits, RPL activity varies widely across Canadian jurisdictions, and many individuals and agencies that could benefit from RPL are not aware of its potential.

The Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment (CAPLA) is dedicated to advancing RPL in Canada. Since 1994, CAPLA has brought together adult learners, practitioners, businesses, academics, regulatory bodies, sector councils, government and non-government agencies, to promote the advancement of learning recognition. CAPLA has identified a need for a coordinated pan-Canadian effort to create a vision for RPL in Canada, while respecting jurisdictional needs.

The Strategic Advisory Panel for RPL brings together stakeholders from across Canada to collaborate on an effective and systemic approach to recognize all learning.

GOAL

The Strategic Advisory Panel for RPL supports collaboration, provides a forum for dialogue, and coordinates activities to strengthen the effective recognition of all learning for Canadians.

OBJECTIVES

Explore evidence based opportunities for joint initiatives that;

- Increase awareness of the value and benefits of RPL to stakeholders, target audiences, and end users across Canada.
- Support the development and dissemination of Pan Canadian Guiding Principles on Quality Assurance in RPL.
- Identify strategies to address and mitigate barriers related to RPL.

TASKS

1. Recommend standardized terminology within a conceptual framework for recognizing learning;

¹ The learning may be formal, informal, non-formal, or experiential. The context of the learning is not key to the process as the focus is on the learning.

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2. Identify existing accessible RPL tools, resources, structures, and services and make them available to users;
3. Advise on ways of restructuring CAPLA's online resources to make them more practical and user-friendly;
4. Identify gaps in resources and recommend strategies to address these gaps;
5. Participate, collaborate and coordinate with stakeholders across Canada to further the work of CAPLA and others in the development of quality assurance guiding principles of RPL;
6. Engage in discussion around identifying barriers and challenges to RPL and identify strategies to mitigate including:
 - Lack of understanding and acceptance
 - Portability/Mobility
 - Accessibility
 - Cost
7. Explore ideas for partnerships on emerging RPL priorities;
8. Pool and /or seek resources to address Panel priorities; and,
9. Liaise with other pan-Canadian, national or international organizations with an interest in advancing RPL in Canada, such as:
 - Alliance of Credential Evaluation Services of Canada;
 - Association of Canadian Community Colleges;
 - CAPLA Committees and Working Groups;
 - Citizenship and Immigration Canada;
 - The Canadian Council on Learning;
 - The Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC);
 - The Conference Board of Canada;
 - The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC);
 - The Forum of Labour Market Ministers (FLMM);
 - Human Resources and Skills Development Canada;
 - Provincial Networks;
 - Sector Councils.

MEMBERSHIP

The overarching goal for Panel membership is to be inclusive, while taking into account issues of practicality. Panel members will therefore be drawn from all 13 jurisdictions, the Government of Canada, key national organizations and appropriate non-governmental groups. Requests from other groups/individuals will be considered for membership from time to time.

1. Provinces, Territories and the Government of Canada

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Each province and territory will ensure appropriate representation on the Panel. A letter of invitation to participate will be sent to the office of the appropriate Deputy Minister or his/her designate in each province and territory. The Government of Canada will be invited to participate through such departments as HRSDC and CIC.

2. Key National Organizations

A letter of invitation will be sent to the following key national organizations with an interest in RPL:

- The Alliance of Sector Councils
- The Association of Canadian Community Colleges
- Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada
- The Alliance of Credential Evaluation Services of Canada
- The Canadian Council on Learning
- The Canadian Lifelong Learning Network
- The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada
- Canadian Coalition of Community-Based Employability Training
- Centre for Workplace Skills

The above organizational members will ensure the transfer of Panel information to and from their organizations.

Other national and international groups with an interest in RPL issues will be kept apprised of Panel activities where appropriate. Such organizations include the Conference Board of Canada, CICIC, FLMM, the Prior Learning International Research Centre at Thompson Rivers University and the CAPLA Working Groups.

3. Non-Governmental Groups

A letter of invitation will be sent to regional non-governmental groups who have a particular interest in RPL such as the Halifax PLA Centre; provincial/territorial networks such as the Manitoba PLA Network and the BC PLA Network.

4. Individuals with interest

The Panel may want to include other key individuals such as consultants who have a long history of work in the field of RPL in Canada.

5. Panel membership will be open to the CAPLA Executive Director and Board of Directors who are able to participate by virtue of:

- their development of the Strategic Advisory Panel initiative;
- their practitioner voice; and,
- their location in most of Canada's 13 jurisdictions.

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ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Panel oversees the implementation of strategic Goals, Objectives and Tasks, with the support of CAPLA.

Decisions of the Panel are made by consensus, taking into consideration the views of the Panel members. Areas of dissention are noted.

The Panel will select a co-chair at the face to face meeting for a term of at least one year which can be renewed to a maximum of two years. Every effort will be made to rotate the Panel co-chair among all participating jurisdictions.

CAPLA will determine a process to name a co-chair.

The co-chairs will be responsible for:

- Coordinating the scheduling and developing the agenda for each Panel meeting;
- Ensuring Panel members are informed of Panel business;
- Arranging for one face to face meeting of the Panel annually;
- Facilitating an annual strategic planning session of the Panel that includes:
 - A review of the Terms of Reference; and,
 - The development of a Workplan that outlines priorities for action, outcomes, timeframes and assignment of responsibility.
- Establishing adhoc committees as needed to carry out tasks.

Jurisdictions should consider the following criteria when identifying designated representative(s).

Prospective Panel members should demonstrate a commitment to:

- Work collaboratively to realize the Panel's Goals and Objectives;
- Explore innovative sources and uses of resources;
- Be available and willing to undertake or advise on activities related to achieving the desired outcomes of the Panel; and/ or,
- Give time to help build the organization as well as money to help underwrite some expenses.

Prospective Panel members should value:

- Direct, transparent communication;
- Collaboration, inclusiveness, coherence, objectivity;
- Efficiency, making maximum use of resources and structures;
- Proactive, thoughtful and considerate participation which encourages the expression of differences of opinion; and,
- The integrity of the Panel and the legitimate jurisdictional roles and responsibilities of all Panel members.