



*Stepping Forward...*

## *The Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners*

**The Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners (S&Gs) provide descriptions of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are essential to be an effective service provider. The S&Gs are a valuable resource for career development practice, professional development, human resource development, program development, and curriculum design. The following materials are available to guide and support you as you apply the S&Gs to your professional development and/or your work setting:**

- **The Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners on CD-ROM-** a complete electronic version of the S&Gs.
- **The Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners (S&Gs)-** A Quick Overview- introduces the major components of the S&Gs and describes how they are organized.
- **Applying the Standards and Guidelines: A Practical Guide-** provides examples of how to use the S&Gs in diverse ways, including training, self-assessment, human resource development, quality assurance and the advancement of professional associations.
- **Taking Charge: On-line Interactive Self-Assessment and Professional Development Planning Tools-** walks you through identifying and documenting the S&Gs competencies that you possess, developing a professional development learning plan and tracking your progress over time. To discover the tools, visit <http://car-dev-car.savie.ca>.
- **Blueprint for Life/Work Designs-** outlines the competencies that your clients need to effectively manage their own career development. The S&Gs and the Blueprint complement each other. The S&Gs provide the "input"-what you do to help your clients learn to self-manage; the Blueprint states the "outcomes"-what your clients learn and take with them to apply throughout their careers. To learn more about the Blueprint, visit [www.blueprint4life.ca](http://www.blueprint4life.ca).
- **[www.career-dev-guidelines.org](http://www.career-dev-guidelines.org)**- provides access to historical and current materials and updates on all aspects of the S&Gs initiative.
- **Promising Practices-** summarizes and gives contact information on a number of actual field tests where the S&Gs were applied in both traditional and innovative ways.
- **The Reflective Practitioner: Applying Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) to Professional Growth and Recognition-** introduces applying a PLAR process with the S&Gs for self-discovery, self-management of professional development and/or preparing for external evaluation.

To obtain copies of any of the documents listed above,  
visit [www.career-dev-guidelines.org](http://www.career-dev-guidelines.org) email [information@ccdf.ca](mailto:information@ccdf.ca)  
or write to Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners  
P.O. Box 67007, Ottawa, Ontario K2A 4E4

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Canada

## The Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners



## *Applying the Standards and Guidelines: A Practical Guide*

# APPLYING the S&Gs

*Applying the Standards and Guidelines: A Practical Guide* has been prepared to give concrete examples of applications of the Standards and Guidelines (S&Gs) that suit different settings and professional development needs. Its purpose is to provide some step-by-step instructions for a variety of applications. It should not be viewed as providing rules for practice, but rather as containing some helpful hints and suggestions.

### PRINCIPLES

*The guide is a resource, not a recipe book.* The guide provides examples of applications that will continue to be expanded, adapted and revised to highlight practical and creative lessons from the field.

*The approach to implementation is flexible and adaptable.* Different situations, needs and contexts require different approaches and solutions.

*The range of applications is vast!* The guide outlines some ideas for applying the S&Gs, but there is much room for creativity and innovation. The scope of applications has yet to be fully explored.

### CONTENTS

*In this guide you will find:*

- An introduction to the S&Gs
- A list of potential benefits of the S&Gs
- An explanation of the framework of the S&Gs
- Five step-by-step examples of the S&Gs applied to:
  - 1) Training
  - 2) Self-assessment
  - 3) Human resource development
  - 4) Quality assurance
  - 5) The advancement of professional associations
- A snapshot of different creative applications implemented by organizations from across Canada during 2001-2002



Throughout the country, members of the career development community have been involved in using the S&Gs to suit their professional needs in ways that are practical and creative.

- A national non-profit organization held forums throughout the country with front-line career development practitioners working with youth to formulate quality indicators for the S&Gs competencies that relate to their practice.
- The career development chapter of a national professional association held forums on the Diversity competencies within the S&Gs. The forums gave participants the opportunity to explore how to respond to diversity in the workplace. This resulted in recommendations for revisions to the S&Gs to make the specific Diversity competencies clearer and more useful.
- A provincial government agency developed a comprehensive computerized system for the assessment and recording of staff competencies. Staff members have access to the system from their own computers so that they can update their records as their knowledge and skills develop.
- A private career development agency incorporated the S&Gs into their student practicum program by having students read the S&Gs and then reflect on their skills and knowledge through group discussions, daily journal entries, guided self-assessments and observation and feedback.

### Career development practitioners: Stewards of the S&Gs

**Career development practitioners are strongly encouraged to continue to experiment with applications of the S&Gs, to share the results of their efforts, and to report on promising and innovative practices. The S&Gs originated in a consultative process with practitioners from across Canada. Their ultimate success will continue to be driven by the experiences of practitioners in the field.**



### Why use the S&Gs for professional associations?

- To give members a set of shared principles for policy and practice
- To enhance the sense of identification with the profession and the association
- To create a specialization in career development
- To create an accreditation process for agencies involved in career development

### example of an application

A professional association uses the Code of Ethics in the S&Gs to develop a pre-conference workshop on "ethical practices".

**Step 1:** The association organizes a meeting of members to incorporate the Code of Ethics from the S&Gs into its current guidelines. Members are invited to submit actual case studies that provide examples of how an ethical dilemma is resolved.

**Step 2:** A one-day interactive workshop is organized to test the material. Experienced practitioners are asked to facilitate the workshop. At the end, revisions are made to the case study material.

**Step 3:** The end product is a workbook for new members, which includes a section on ethics, the case studies, and a list of references for practitioners who can either facilitate workshops or serve as mentors.

# Professional associations

The S&Gs, developed in collaboration with career development professionals throughout Canada, provide detailed descriptions of the knowledge, skills and attitudes that effective service providers need.

The S&Gs are a resource for:

- **professional practice**, answering questions such as "What knowledge, skills and attitudes are recommended in order to be considered by the profession as a competent, qualified practitioner?"
- **professional development**, answering questions such as "What skills do I need to develop as a practitioner? How do I compare with my colleagues?"
- **human resource development**, answering questions such as "What topics should be included in this year's training plan? What competencies should be screened for when hiring new employees?"
- **developing educational and training programs**, answering questions such as "Which competencies do students need to acquire in this course or program to be recognized by their profession?"
- **program development and evaluation**, answering questions such as "What criteria should be used to assess the quality of this program?"
- **creative applications**, exploring questions such as "How can the S&Gs be used in supervision? How can the S&Gs help community agencies work more collaboratively?"

### Underlying Assumptions of the S&Gs

- The S&Gs are a voluntary code of practice
- The S&Gs are based on what practitioners do, not on their level of formal education
- There is a set of basic competencies needed to practice career development
- The S&Gs respect and embrace the diversity within the field
- Multiple uses of the S&Gs, both traditional and innovative, are possible



Career development services have become increasingly important as individuals prepare for and manage careers in an economy that is continuously and rapidly changing. Use of the S&Gs offers a number of potential benefits for career development practitioners and the clients they serve. These include:

### • Enhancing the quality of services

For organizations, the S&Gs can be used to establish objectives to improve and/or broaden the delivery of services.

*An organization decides that its outreach to other organizations that support career development is not as strong as it could be. It uses the Community Capacity-Building competencies as a basis for establishing an action plan to strengthen and expand its capacity to work more collaboratively.*

For clients, the S&Gs can be used to assess the quality of services and select ones that are appropriate for them.

*A professional association decides to develop a brochure for its members to distribute to clients. The brochure describes the range of available career development services and the basic standards of service they should expect to receive.*

### • Recognizing career development as a distinct and specialized discipline

The S&Gs set career development apart as a specialized discipline that helps citizens manage and make the most of their learning and work opportunities throughout their lives. They highlight the unique competencies of career practitioners. They place career development on an equal footing with other helping professions that are guided by standards. Increased recognition of the discipline also facilitates access to funding for career development research.

### • Advocating for quality career development services

The S&Gs provide a framework for policy-makers and funding agencies to understand the scope and contribution of career development. They can be used to lobby for the availability of, and entitlement to, career services.

*A regional coalition of service providers identifies large numbers of redundant high-tech workers who need to consider alternative fields, including private consulting. The S&Gs are used to show funding agencies the types of services required to address the needs identified.*

### • Supporting progress and consistency in educational programs in career development

The S&Gs can serve as a framework for developing degree, diploma, certificate and/or institute programs in career development. They can also help students assess programs and select ones that qualify them to meet the S&Gs.

### • Promoting accountability in service delivery

The Code of Ethics contained within the S&Gs can serve as a tool for consumers to protect themselves against discrimination and misconduct. The Code of Ethics sets minimum standards for professional conduct, which, if made public, can strengthen consumer confidence in services and in the profession.

For example: For competency S5.1.1, "liaise with clients, employers and professionals", one of the answers to "why is this competency important?" is "to create employment opportunities for clients". They explore what service indicators would tell them that their services were indeed creating employment opportunities for clients.

**Step 2:** In concluding their discussion about service indicators, they agree to use two different types of evidence for the example above. For the goal of "to create employment opportunities for clients", they agree to the following evidence :

*"The bank of employment opportunities for clients is current, thoroughly documented and monitored"*

*"The database contains a breadth of opportunities for clients who share different levels of skill, education and experience"*

**Step 3:** To take into account the variability in service delivery, they agree on a 4-point scale to review the database and the evidence. The scale ranges from "all items of evidence are met" to "no items are met". For this, they devise an "evidence gathering template".

**Step 4:** Finally, the staff members discuss and agree on procedures, such as when and how often to collect and score information on quality, as well as the reporting mechanisms. The program is implemented for a month as a pilot project. Staff members agree to meet again in a month to see how well the process has worked in ensuring quality and accountability and if it can be improved or expanded.

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### Why use the S&Gs for quality assurance?

- To demonstrate effectiveness of services, especially valuable in a time of increasing competitiveness
- To develop a service model to establish and monitor standards of service delivery
- To broaden services by introducing new or more defined competencies into the job descriptions of staff
- To improve links within the local community to enhance partnerships and community involvement

### example of an application

An agency uses the S&Gs to develop and monitor standards of service delivery for Work Development competencies.

**Step 1:** A career service decides to develop a quality assurance framework for the delivery of Work Development services to clients. The staff involved meet as a group to study the sections that explain "why is this competency important?" for each of the competencies in Work Development.

The Work Development specialization includes four competencies:

- S5.1.1 Liaise with clients, employers and professionals
- S5.1.2 Facilitate work and work-related opportunities
- S5.1.3 Prepare clients to respond to the labour market
- S5.1.4 Support clients with work maintenance

They study the information for each of the competencies to see how they can come up with statements or service indicators that would reflect an adequate standard of service for that competency.

Quality  
assur

### Competency Clusters

1

The S&Gs spell out the competencies that you, as a career development practitioner, need in order to offer the highest quality of services to your clients. These competencies represent the composite of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that Canadian practitioners have identified as important for effective practice. All career development competencies can be categorized into two Competency Clusters: Core Competencies and Areas of Specialization.

**Core Competencies** are general competencies that all career development practitioners should have, regardless of their work setting. There are four Core Competency areas:

- Professional behaviour
- Interpersonal competence
- Career development knowledge
- Needs assessment and referral

**Areas of Specialization** are advanced competencies needed to provide specific career development services that clients may require. They complement and add value to the skills, knowledge and attitudes of practitioners beyond the minimum requirements. There are six Areas of Specialization:

- Assessment
- Facilitated individual and group learning
- Career counselling
- Information and resource management
- Work development
- Community capacity-building

### Code of Ethics

2

The Code of Ethics is the foundation on which all of the competencies rest. The Code of Ethics provides a practical guide for professional behaviour and practice that includes a decision-making model to help you make thoughtful decisions when you come across ethical dilemmas.

### Glossary of terms

3

The glossary defines a number of career development terms that you would not find in a dictionary. The glossary is a tool to support a common professional vocabulary within the career development community.



The S&Gs are arranged into 4 levels - Clusters, Areas, Functions and Competencies. The following diagram illustrates how to read the S&Gs:

**Clusters**

The S&Gs are divided into 2 major Clusters

Core Competencies (C)  
Areas of Specialization (S)

**Areas**

Each of the 2 Clusters is broken down into Areas of competency that career development practitioners need

C: 4 Areas  
S: 6 Areas

**Functions**

Functions describe, more precisely, what is actually done in each Area

Each Area has several Functions and each Function has many Competencies

**Competencies**

These are the "heart" of the S&Gs. They spell out what you need to know and do - the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to be effective in each function. This is the practical and applied level of the S&Gs. Different competencies are needed depending on both the client group served and the type of work setting.

**Why use the S&Gs for human resource development?**

- To harmonize the skills of individuals with the organization
- To enhance the capacities of staff and promote retention
- To develop performance appraisal standards
- To recognize staff who demonstrate outstanding performance

**example of an application**

An employment service uses the S&Gs to develop professional development objectives for the organization.

**Step 1:** The director of a large employment service introduces the S&Gs during a monthly staff meeting. Staff members agree to use the S&Gs Specializations as a tool to create a development plan. They decide that their Client Assessment Services, the assessment tools they use and their own skills have not been updated for some time. They develop a grid using the competencies in Assessment and each practitioner agrees to conduct a self-assessment and submit it to the human resource manager.

Two supervisors agree to produce and circulate an inventory of assessment tools currently in use. The inventory is to include technical information. They also decide to re-introduce a client feedback form to gather information on clients' impressions of the quality of their assessment interviews.

**Step 2:** The human resource manager aggregates the results of the practitioner and client surveys. The assessment inventory report is circulated to all staff.

**Step 3:** The director and human resource manager review the results and set preliminary objectives for service improvements and staff professional development. They also establish a budget for additional assessment tools.

**Step 4:** The results and objectives are presented at a monthly staff meeting. The following first steps are agreed to:

- Establish a mentoring system for new staff using experienced practitioner volunteers
- Set aside a day for an external testing expert from the local university to provide an overview and evaluation of innovative assessment tools
- Continue the client survey for an additional month

There is consensus that this consultative process is helping build a spirit of collaboration, participation and respect within the organization.

*Human resource development*

### Why use the S&Gs in self-assessment?

- To reflect on your experience
- To develop new insights about your practice
- To acquire a clearer picture of your professional expertise
- To plan and promote your own professional development

### example of an application

A practitioner uses the S&Gs to design a professional development plan.

**Step 1:** The practitioner selects the Core Competencies and the specialization in Career Counselling, which are the competencies most central to her work.

**Step 2:** She uses an evaluation tool developed by the organization to assess her competencies in relationship to the Core Competencies, and secondly, in relationship to the competencies in Career Counselling.

In comparing her level of competency in Career Counselling with the criteria listed in the section "to demonstrate this competency, career development practitioners will strive to", she is able to determine the specific gaps in her expertise. From the results of the assessment, she feels confident that she meets the Core Competencies and will focus on developing her skills in Career Counselling.

**Step 3:** She presents the results of the assessment to her supervisor and, together, they agree on a carefully laid out plan for her to address the gaps in her training. The plan consists of a range of different activities, including plans for job shadowing, some professional reading, and attendance at conferences if the budget permits.

Self-  
assessment

The following is an example of how each competency in the S&Gs is presented:

#### **C2.3.1 Foster client self-reliance and self-management**



This statement is an example of a competency. A competency presented in bold indicates a "skill" that a practitioner should be able to demonstrate. A competency that is in plain text (not bolded) indicates the "knowledge" or "attitude" that a practitioner needs.

#### **Why is this competency important?**

- To promote clients' independence
- To increase clients' awareness of opportunities and options
- To work out steps needed to implement a decision so clients achieve goals...



This section explains why the competency is important.

#### **To demonstrate this competency, career development practitioners will strive to:**

- use a client-centred approach
- educate clients about clients' own roles, responsibilities and choices in the career development process
- generate options with clients and offer choices
- guide clients' acquisition of the necessary attitudes, knowledge and skills to enable them to:
  - practice self-appraisals and introspection
  - seek information, e.g., *identify resources, conduct information gathering interviews*
  - investigate information
  - evaluate options
  - select the most appropriate options
- help clients to establish and commit to action plans...



This section outlines the scope of the competency and suggests guidelines or performance criteria for how the competency is demonstrated.



Often examples (listed in *italics*) are given to clarify a main point.

#### **Notes**

- In some cases, it may be necessary for a career development practitioner to provide direction to a client when fostering self-reliance.



You will often find a note section at the end of the page. This section provides additional "good to know" information that helps to place the competency into context.



## Why use the S&Gs for training?

- To provide a “competency framework” for training
- To help narrow the gap between theory and practice in the classroom
- To give students and practitioners a thorough understanding of the field
- To guide program and curriculum development for practitioners

## example of an application

A college or university offering a program in career development has chosen to evaluate its curriculum to identify gaps and areas for improvement.

**Step 1:** Professors/instructors of the program review every competency in the S&Gs to decide which ones are most relevant to the program. They choose the Core Competencies and the specialization in Assessment.

**Step 2:** Professors/instructors develop an assessment tool, which lists all of the competencies in the S&Gs that are relevant.

Each instructor conducts an independent assessment of her/his course using the same tool. An example of the assessment tool is provided on the next page.

**Step 3:** Professors/instructors meet to compile and evaluate the results. They decide which competencies to improve on in each course and which new competencies to introduce that were not previously covered but are outlined in the S&Gs. Their analysis includes the following:

- Competencies that are “necessary” and are already covered in the course, with comments about how well they are covered and how they could be improved based on the S&Gs
- Competencies that are “necessary” and are not covered in the course, with comments about how they might be incorporated
- Competencies that are “highly desirable” and are not covered in the course, with comments on how they might also be incorporated

**Step 4:** The content of each course is adjusted to address more comprehensively competencies that are “necessary” and “highly desirable”, using the current curriculum and new competencies identified in the S&Gs.

## Course Assessment Grid

COMPETENCY	Is the competency covered in the course (yes/no)	Necessary	Highly Desirable	Somewhat Desirable	Not Necessary	Recommendation
<b>1. Core Competency:</b> Professional Behaviour						
1.1 Adhere to code of ethics	Yes	x				
1.2 Evaluate services	No		x			
1.3 Respect diversity	No	x				
<b>2. Specialization:</b> Assessment						
2.1 Assist the client in self-assessment	Yes	x				
2.2 Facilitate a group...	No			x		