



Foreign Qualification Recognition

Funding Guidelines

Population Growth Division

2014-15



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Background

Immigration of skilled and trained professionals plays a vital role in sustaining and improving the Canadian labour force. To ensure that newcomers and Canadians trained abroad can thrive in our country and reach their full labour potential, the *Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications* was launched on November 30, 2009.

The *Framework's* vision is, "*a fair and competitive labour market environment where immigrants have the opportunity to fully use their education, skills and work experience for their benefit and for Canada's collective prosperity.*" To achieve this, the provinces and territories have agreed on a public commitment to take action on the issues surrounding foreign qualification recognition.

The Population Growth Division was entrusted with the implementation of the *Framework's* vision in New Brunswick. A central component of this initiative is to partner with the community and to involve all relevant stakeholders in providing on-the-ground programming such as occupation-specific language classes, cultural diversity training for employers and other initiatives that will support the implementation of the *Framework* in the province.

These guidelines are intended to help organizations apply for funding to develop tools and deliver programs that will help achieve the *Framework's* vision. It is divided into the following sections: objectives; funding priorities; eligibility criteria; the application process; and roles and responsibilities.

Deadline for applications for funding

The 2014-15 Foreign Qualification Recognition Funding is to cover the period, **April 2014 to March 2015**.

The Population Growth Division will consider proposals on an on-going basis.

We strongly encourage you to contact the Population Growth Division about your proposed project or program before developing an application. You may do this by calling 506-453-3981 and ask to speak with a program officer in the Settlement and Multiculturalism Branch, Foreign Qualification Recognition team.

Please allow sufficient time in advance of the deadline:

- to discuss your project idea with a program officer;
- to develop your proposal; and,
- to complete and submit the application form.

In addition, please allow sufficient time in advance of the proposed start date to allow for assessment of your proposal.





When developing your proposal, these are some things you may want to think about:

- What gaps exist in foreign qualification recognition services in your community?
- How many immigrants have arrived in the last year? How many are expected in the coming year?
- What are the countries of origin that you expect immigrants coming to your community to be from?
- Who are the partners or stakeholders with whom you are working, and what roles do they play?
- What is the role of volunteers, and what role do you expect them to play with your proposed program or project?
- What exactly is it that you would like to do?
- How will this project help immigrants achieve their full labour market potential?
- Why do you think funding is required from the provincial government?
- Will this program or project further the fulfilment of the vision of the *Framework*?

- What do you see as the role and responsibility of your group in this proposed program or project?
- How will the community benefit from the proposed program or project?
- How will local employers benefit from the proposed program or project?
- How will new immigrants benefit from the proposed program or project?
- How will you evaluate the success of your program or project?¹

To encourage transparency, your organization is encouraged to adopt Conflict of Interest Guidelines. An example can be found in Appendix A.

¹ These questions are modeled on the Community Capacity Building Fund Proposal Template developed by the Saskatchewan Department of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour.

Objectives

The funding process will be guided by the following objectives:

- *Fulfilment of the vision and one or more of the goals outlined in the Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications (www.hrsdc.gc.ca)*
- *Mutual benefits to immigrants and their communities:* Successful proposals will demonstrate mutual benefits for immigrants and the communities in which they live, in the areas of settlement, integration and retention;
- *Fairness and transparency:* These guidelines are intended to give all eligible organizations an equal opportunity to obtain funding;
- *Balance:* Proposals are sought that will benefit urban and rural areas as well as francophone and anglophone communities; and
- *Clear accountability:* Accountability measures will ensure that public dollars are invested wisely and results are achieved.

Funding priorities

Priority will be awarded to programs or projects that will:

- create and maintain preparation and pre-arrival support to ensure that “*as early as possible in the immigration process, immigrants will have access to reliable and accurate information and assessment services*”;
- develop and support assessment methods and best practices to ensure that “*methods used for assessing foreign qualifications will be reasonable and objective, and regulatory authorities will share information regarding the approaches they use with their regulatory counterparts in other jurisdictions*”;
- ensure that “*recognition-related decisions will be clearly and comprehensively communicated in a timely fashion*”;
- facilitate the awareness and access “*to bridge-to-licensure and registration opportunities so that they may upgrade their qualifications as required for entry-to-practice*”; and/or
- facilitate workforce participation by ensuring that “*immigrants and employers are able to access required support in order to bridge immigrants successfully into the workforce in a timely fashion*.”

Please note that prior government support does not guarantee future support for the same or a similar program.

The Population Growth Division will not guarantee deficit funding of an organization resulting from programs or services delivered to immigrants.



Eligibility criteria

Eligible applicants

Stakeholder applications must meet the following eligibility criteria to be considered for funding:

- the community or region will be receiving a substantial number of immigrants within the next year, has already received a substantial number, or has identified immigration as a key growth strategy;
- is incorporated as a non-profit corporation OR has a written agreement with an appropriately incorporated organization to handle the administration of the funds;
- satisfy the Population Growth Division that the applicant can receive, handle and account for public funding in a fair and transparent manner;
- the organization is in accordance with Population Growth Division's mandate;
- must comply with both provincial and federal legislation, including those on labour, human rights legislation and privacy;
- have developed, or adopted, standard conflict of interest guidelines (see Appendix A for sample guidelines);
- funding priority will be given to regulatory agencies that regulate the 16 priority occupations; however, other provincial regulatory agencies or other relevant stakeholders may also apply for funding for which foreign qualification needs have been identified;
- funding will be considered when it is demonstrated that there are no other settlement services available other than that provided by employers or that those in place do not meet the unique needs of the newcomer immigrants.

Ineligible applicants

Ineligible applicants for this funding:

- individuals;
- businesses, companies or private organizations; and,
- funding bodies (organizations whose sole mandate is to award grants or funding).

In the event that no applicant under the eligibility criteria can undertake a project needed to realize the vision of the *Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Credentials*, the Population Growth Division may consider private businesses, companies or private organizations.

Eligible funding activities

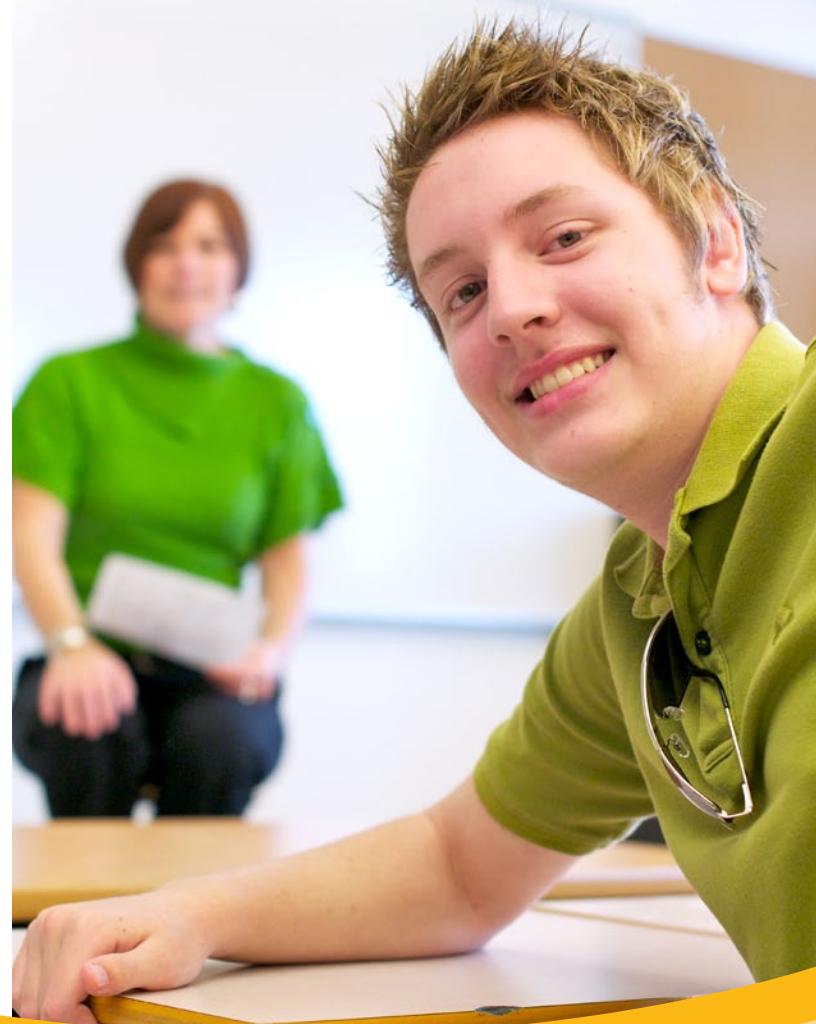
Eligible funding activities would be activities that will help achieve the Framework's vision of, "*a fair and competitive labour market environment where immigrants have the opportunity to fully use their education, skills and work experience for their benefit and for Canada's collective prosperity*."

Foreign Qualification Recognition Funding

The Foreign Qualification Recognition Funding initiative is designed to help regulatory and immigrant-serving agencies expand their service capacity and build a strong infrastructure in the following areas:

- **Pre-arrival support:** This includes the development of information materials, programs and tools such as information guides and websites that will contain relevant information in regard to the foreign qualification recognition process. Initiatives are to accomplish one or more of the following benchmarks:
 - immigrants are able to make contact with key stakeholders, including the appropriate regulatory authority, prior to their arrival in Canada;
 - immigrants are adequately informed of and prepared for the assessment requirements for registration in their chosen field;
 - improved availability and quality of assessment preparation and other early intervention support tools, including occupation specific self-assessment tools and reference and exam preparation materials.
- **Assessment:** This includes the development and evaluation of foreign qualifications assessment methods that are reasonable and objective. Initiatives are to accomplish one or more of the following benchmarks:

- assessment processes and requirements are easily understood and widely accessible to immigrants;
 - assessment processes and methods used for determining the recognition of foreign qualifications are fair, sufficient and as timely and cost-effective as possible;
 - assessment methods consider foreign skills, experience and education relevant to working in a given occupation in Canada;
 - assessment opportunities are increasingly available prior to an individual's arrival in Canada;
 - information regarding assessment approaches and tools is available online, and opportunities exist for practitioners and other affected stakeholders to share best practices regarding assessments.
- **Recognition:** This includes projects that will help the clear communication of recognition-related decisions in a timely fashion. More specifically, initiatives will accomplish one or more of the following benchmarks:
- criteria for decision-making concerning recognition are transparent and easily understood;
 - immigrants are adequately informed about reasons for the decision, including the identification of additional requirements for licensure and registration, as well as avenues for internal review and appeals;
 - outcomes of recognition decisions pertaining to foreign qualifications are mutually recognized across provinces and territories in accordance with Chapter Seven of the Agreement on Internal Trade.
- **Bridge-to-licensure:** This includes projects that will raise the awareness of internationally trained professionals of bridge-to-licensure and registration opportunities so that they may upgrade their qualifications as required for entry-to-practice. Initiatives are to accomplish one or more of the following benchmarks:
- immigrants have access to information regarding the availability of training that responds to the identified gaps in qualifications;
 - immigrants have access to information regarding career alternatives, where skills upgrading is not a viable option;
 - immigrants are able to acquire relevant pieces of upgrading with minimal repetition of previously acquired training, where appropriate.
- **Workforce integration:** This includes the development of and access to programs that will help immigrants and employers obtain required supports to help immigrants succeed in entering the workforce in a timely fashion. Initiatives are to accomplish one or more of the following benchmarks:
- labour market and career guidance information is available to immigrants early and throughout the immigration process;



- supports are available for labour market integration, such as language upgrading, career advice, study preparation, mentorships and internships and bridging programs;
- tools and resources are available to employers that will enhance their ability to integrate and retain immigrants, including cultural competency training, workplace receptivity and workplace retention practices.

Eligible clients

Foreign Qualification Recognition funding can support programs and services for the following clients with knowledge, skills, work experience, or education gained outside Canada:

- potential immigrants to New Brunswick;
- permanent residents of Canada;
- Canadians with post-secondary education attained outside of Canada;
- protected persons as defined in Section 95 of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*;
- foreign nationals temporarily residing in New Brunswick who have been nominated (received Certificate of Nomination) under the New Brunswick Provincial Nominee Program and their dependents; and,
- in some cases, international students or temporary foreign workers.

International students and temporary foreign workers are valuable assets to the province and are potential provincial nominee applicants or future permanent residents. Therefore, the Population Growth Division may consider activities to help these individuals integrate and/or become successful provincial nominee applicants.

Eligible costs

Eligible costs under Foreign Qualification Recognition Funding include:

- **Salaries:** Salaries of staff involved in direct delivery of the program or project. Contract positions may be included under this heading.
- **Benefits:** Benefits of salaried person(s) delivering the program or project. Mandatory Employment-Related Costs (MERCs) are payments that the employer is required by law to make in relation to employees (for more information, contact the Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour: www.gnb.ca/labour)
- **Supplies and resources:** Office supplies related to delivering the program (writing tools, paper products, electronic storage media [CDs and DVDs, for example], filing materials, postage, etc.), as well as educational or promotional material, other printed materials, audio-visual resources and software used directly in delivering the program/project.
- **Facilities and equipment:** Office rent during portion of office use devoted to project, heat and electricity during office hours devoted to project; rent for meeting rooms or event space, equipment rental, photocopier rental, and telephone, fax and Internet account for direct program delivery. Rent cannot be charged for space belonging to members of the board of the organization. Computer hardware costs up to \$1,000 are eligible. For verification on eligibility of items and costs, please refer to a program officer at the Population Growth Division.
- **Travel:** Travel within the province for staff and volunteers directly delivering the program or project.
- **Other:** Includes items that do not fit in other categories, such as registration fees for a workshop conference related to the project, or other miscellaneous expenses.

- **Administration:** Up to 15 per cent of the total program budget can be in the category of administration costs. These costs include:
 - **Salary:** Salaries of staff providing oversight or supervision to project staff for the hours spent directly supervising the project as well as the benefits of those staff members (MERCS). Salaries of staff providing administrative support to the program or project. Organizations can include contract administrative positions under this heading.
 - **Benefits:** Benefits of staff outlined above who are providing supervisory or administrative support to the program or project for the hours devoted to the project.
 - **Other:** Bank charges, liability or other insurance, annual audit, bookkeeping, etc.

Ineligible costs

The following are ineligible costs and activities:

- capital costs including vehicle purchases or construction or renovation of buildings, monuments, etc.
- travel outside New Brunswick except in special circumstances pre-authorized and approved by the Population Growth Division;
- financial losses/deficits incurred by the organization;
- wage subsidies, training allowances or tuition payments; and
- lobbying/advocacy activities of the organization.



Application process

Funding application review

Proposals will be initially assessed to ensure that they meet the eligibility criteria for applicants, clients and activities. If they do not, they will be screened out. Proposals that meet the criteria will then be further evaluated according to the criteria below:

Project evaluation criteria

When considering applications for specific projects under Foreign Qualification Recognition funding, the Population Growth Division will evaluate project proposals on the basis of the following criteria:

- description of the need for the project. (**2 points**);
- explanation of how the project meets the stated need. (**4 points**);
- identification of whether the project's impact will be local, regional or provincial, with explanation. (**2 points**);
- clear explanation of how the project objectives or capacity-building goals advance or assist with implementing one or more of the *Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications* goals/objectives. (**6 points**);
- a list of clear project objectives and expected outcomes demonstrating how the project will produce measurable results that contribute to achieving the Population Growth Division's objectives in the areas of Foreign Qualification Recognition. (**4 points**);
- an explanation of how both immigrants and communities will have mutual benefits from the implementation of proposed programming or capacity development. (**2 points**);
- description of how this project or the development of this capacity will encourage newcomers to participate in the social and economic life of their new communities. (**2 points**);
- description of community participation and role of partners in the project, demonstrating how the communities most affected by the issue are involved throughout the key phases of development, planning, implementation and evaluation of the project. (**2 points**);

- description and profile of applicant organization demonstrating clear evidence that the applicant has the capacity, expertise and skills to undertake and complete the proposed project successfully. (**2 points**);
- ability of applicant organization to raise complementary funds toward the project. To that end, the applicant organization must submit a complete balanced provisional budget of expenditures and revenues, including the grants/contributions from all partners and public and private funders for the project as well as the other possible funding sources. (**4 points**);
- evaluation plan, preferably based on a results-based management model. (**4 points**); and
- completeness of application. (**2 points**).

Note: Only projects scoring at least 24 points (maximum 36 points possible) may receive a grant.

Final decisions are made by the Population Growth Division and will be communicated to applicants in writing. Decisions will be dependent on amount of funding available.

Contribution agreements

A contribution agreement will be sent to organizations that received approval for their proposal. The Contribution Agreement outlines the terms and conditions that must be met by both parties. For awards of \$10,000 or less, an information letter outlining conditions of funding will be issued.

Payment schedule

- Funding of \$10,000 or less will be issued as a single payment to the organization.
- Funding exceeding \$10,000 may be issued in one payment or may, at the discretion of the Population Growth Division, be issued in two instalments: 75 per cent and 25 per cent.

An interim report and final report will be required of all funding recipients. These reports will include information on the progress toward the expected objectives, outputs, outcomes and evaluations, including cash flow statements and any other relevant financial information. This is an essential accountability element in the funding process.

Roles and responsibilities

All partners in the funding process share responsibility for results.

Role of the Population Growth Division

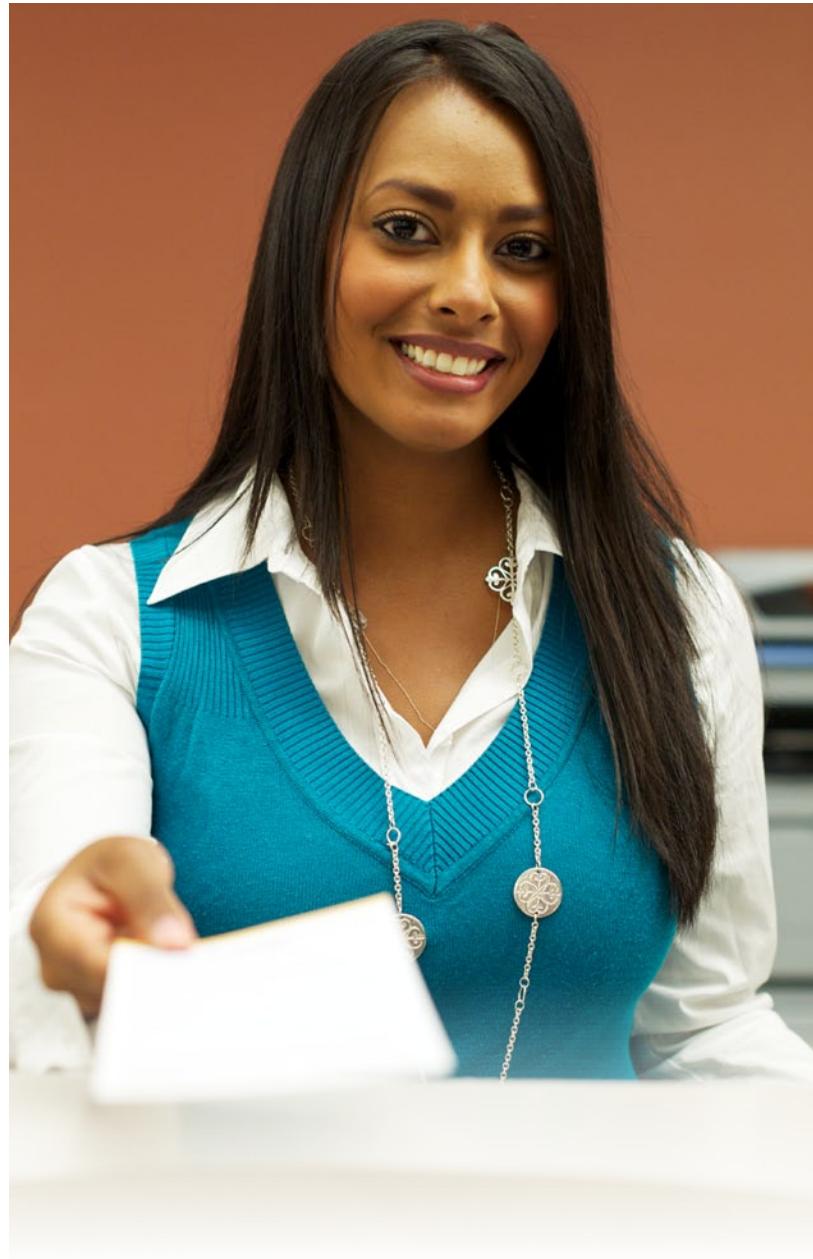
The Population Growth Division will:

- develop and clearly communicate the criteria for proposal submission and project approval;
- oversee a fair and transparent proposal assessment and evaluation process;
- make and communicate decisions in a timely manner;
- distribute funding as per the terms of the contribution agreement;
- monitor and evaluate programs and services; and
- co-ordinate, where possible, joint proposals or projects to avoid duplication and to maximize benefits by leveraging funding available from all partners.

Role of the organization

Organizations submitting proposals are expected:

- to use and follow this guide in preparing proposals
- to submit all required information and forms;
- to meet project and reporting deadlines;
- to work actively with the Population Growth Division during the evaluation process and, if approved, after it to clarify or enhance proposals; and
- to be accountable for using the funding for its intended purpose, by providing required documentation such as interim reports and final reports.



Appendix A: Conflict of interest guidelines

Following are some of the items that organizations and agencies should consider regarding conflict of interest. They are welcome to adopt these guidelines or to develop their own.

- **Purpose:** These guidelines are to help immigration working groups address issues involving conflict of interest. The guidelines recognize that working group members are volunteers committed to see their communities succeed, and that there can be many perceived conflict of interest issues in communities. Perceived conflict of interest may create an appearance of impropriety that can undermine confidence in the ability of individual members, or of the working group as a whole, to act properly. Discussing conflict of interest issues upfront may protect the working group from potential time-consuming, difficult deliberations.
- **Definition:** Conflict of interest can be any situation in which an individual is in a position to exploit his or her participation in a group in some way for personal benefit.
- **General principles:** In carrying out their activities, working group members shall:
 - act with honesty and uphold ethical standards to honour and enhance public confidence in the working group's ability to act in the public interest and for the long term public good;
 - perform their activities in a manner that will bear the closest public scrutiny;
 - have a transparent decision-making process that includes recording how decisions are made and what they are;
 - disclose fully any personal or private interests that could put ethical practice at risk or that could result in an improper advantage as a result of a member's participation in the working group;
 - not solicit or accept gifts or any type of economic benefit from persons, groups or organizations having, or likely to have, dealings with the working group;

- Ensure assistance they provide to individuals or organizations will not result in preferential treatment to any individuals or organizations;
- not act, after they leave the working group, in such a manner as to take improper advantage of their previous position with the group.
- **Conflict of interest policies:** Working group members shall consider adopting the following policies:
 - members must not be involved in any business, commercial or financial transaction with the working group. If a member applies for employment or any other remunerative relationship with the group, the member must resign from the group;
 - members must promptly disclose to the working group any activities involving business, commercial or financial interests that may conflict with the interests of the working group or the duties of the individual member;
 - members shall not vote to approve any contract, grant, award, contribution, project or situation in which they have a business, commercial or financial interest;
 - members must not be compromised by an obligation owed to an individual or organization which may benefit commercially or financially from the individual's membership in the working group.
 - members must ensure that their actions do not commit the working group or its members to unreasonable financial or other liabilities.
- **Disclosure and decision-making procedures:** The working group shall consider adopting the following disclosure and decision-making procedures:
 - disclosure of a conflict of interest, whether real, potential or apparent, must take place as soon as the member becomes aware of the conflict;
 - a written notice to the working group shall be sufficient declaration of conflict of interest;

- in the event that the matter to be disclosed is of a confidential or sensitive nature that would cause undue prejudice through open disclosure, then such matters may be disclosed in confidence to the working group's chairperson. If, after receiving such disclosure, the chairperson determines that such matters are not of a confidential or sensitive nature or that the principles or interests of the working group would not be fulfilled without full and open disclosure, then the chairperson shall notify the disclosing individual of same and give such individual the opportunity to make such full disclosure. If the affected individual fails to make such disclosure, it shall then be considered a breach of working group policy;
 - the working group shall determine in each case whether a disclosed interest is acceptable and may continue.
- **Dissemination:** Members shall be informed of conflict of interest policies adopted by the working group and such policies shall be part of the public record, available for community members to review.
 - **Compliance:** Members shall use reasonable efforts to ensure that the activities of other individuals in the working group comply with conflict of interest policies adopted by the group.
 - **Consequences:** Failure to comply with conflict of interest policies adopted by the working group shall lead to removal from the working group.

Note: These guidelines are modeled on those developed by the Saskatchewan Department of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour.



Notes: