CASP Canadian Association of Security Professionals

Accreditation of security training

Training is the foundation of professional practice.

A ***training framework*** is a comprehensive and structured overview of the knowledge and skills (competencies) required for a given position, and the learning progression for a person to move from novice to practitioner.

Accreditation is an independent, third-party evaluation of conformity to a training framework. The accrediting body is comprised of members of the industry — those with profound knowledge of the competencies required for members to be safe and effective.

In *regulated professions*, the accrediting body is also the regulating body, and sometimes oversees training. This body establishes the training framework, controls registration, and monitors conduct of the professionals: law society, teacher's association, college of physicians and surgeons, etc.

In *academic and vocational programs*, most disciplines have professional associations that set the training framework and accredit training: Chemical Society of Canada, National Association of Schools of Music, Canadian Standards Association (trades), etc.

For *police*, the provincial Police Services Act establishes training standards for police officers. The Solicitor General (or equivalent) establishes training centers. The training programs are developed based on industry best practices. Changes to best practices and training programs come as a result of failures, litigation, and public inquiries.

- police recruits train for 10 to 12 months, require specialized training for specific posts, and are regularly required to recertify their qualifications

For *security*, six provinces have training standards for basic security training (BST); four provinces have no training requirements whatsoever. No jurisdiction has training standards beyond BST.

- security candidates train for between *zero* and *one week*. There are no additional training or recertification requirements.

Security professionals are increasingly being assigned roles that were previously the purview of the police: patrolling high-risk areas, walking beats, enforcing bylaws, issuing parking and transit tickets, trespassing individuals, responding to alarms, etc. Additionally, there is anecdotal evidence that society is becoming less tolerant, and quicker to violence. From 2000 to 2019, *one* security professional was killed while on duty. From 2020 to 2025, *seven* security professionals have been killed. Regarding injuries, WCB data shows that, for every worker assaulted, five security professionals are assaulted, and ten police officers are assaulted.

A training framework and accredited training are critically needed to professionalize the security industry, which keeps security professionals safe and effective.

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Training framework

A training framework is a comprehensive and structured overview of the knowledge and skills (competencies) required for a given position, and the learning progression for a person to move from novice to practitioner. The process for developing a training framework involves

1. a working group of industry representatives is created
2. extensive consultations with industry determine the competencies required, and assigns the competencies as general knowledge or for specific roles
3. the competencies are organized into a framework that establishes a progression from novice to practitioner
4. testing and feedback tweak the competencies and framework to be consistent with industry needs

For example, the K-12 school program is a training framework. For grades K-6, all learning is the same, although there are branches for learners with special needs. For grades 7-12, there is branching that prepares learners to go into trades, post-secondary, or pursue employment. Institutions that teach trade programs and post-secondary programs will create training frameworks for each program.

A training framework consists of

- *needs assessment*: the required knowledge and skills (competencies)
- *learning objectives*: measurable expectations that learners must achieve
- *instructional modalities*: preferred and optional instructional modalities
- *instructional strategies*: preferred and optional instructional strategies
- *assessment strategies*: preferred and optional assessment strategies
- *timeline*: the amount of time to spend on each competency, and recertification requirements
- *instructor qualifications*: the required and recommended qualifications of instructors

Application

A training framework establishes minimum competencies for every role in the industry. Training providers then develop courses and programs that meet or exceed these standards.

For example, the training framework will list the competencies required by loss prevention security professionals. Every provider wanting to teach loss prevention will create one or more courses that, together, encompass the training framework requirements for loss prevention security professionals.

The training provider then submits the course(s) for accreditation.

Living document

The training framework is a living document. It should be reviewed every few years, and revised based on changing best practices, new roles, and changing employment expectations.

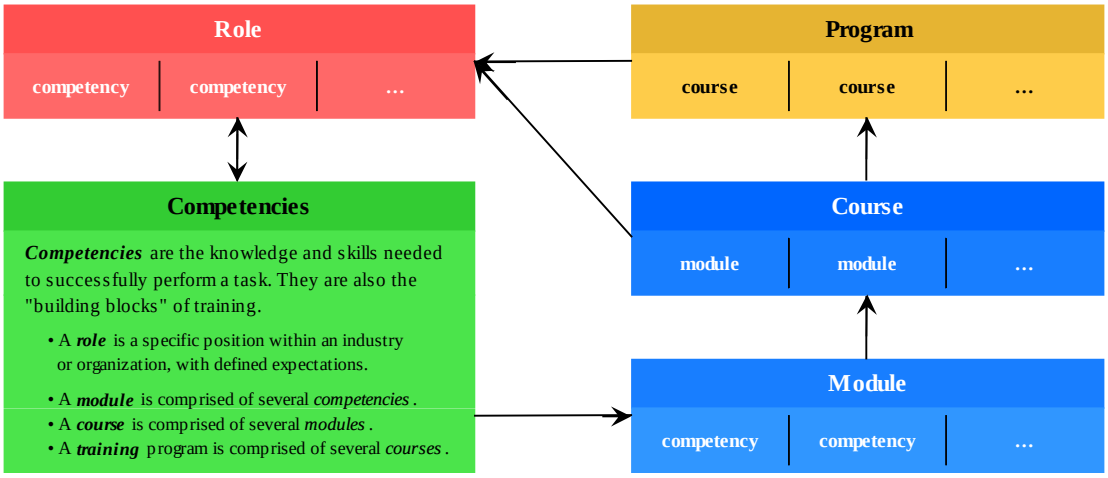
Training framework for the security industry

The figure shows that the role establishes the competencies needed for a security professional to effectively function in that role. The training provider organizes the required competencies into what they perceive as logical *modules* for presenting the knowledge and skills to learners. The modules are then organized into one or more courses.

- For some roles, there are sufficiently few competencies that only one course is required.
- For other roles, there are many competencies that could be organized into several courses. Those courses form a *program* that prepares a learner for that role.

A training framework defines only the competencies, not the courses. The training provider organizes the competencies how they wish, ensuring their course(s) include all the competencies.

For example, **CA SP** consulted with industry and drafted the National Basic Security Training standards. Shown here is **CA SP**'s organization of the competencies into modules for a single course. Another training provider might have a different organization, different modules, and multiple courses. This is fine, provided they teach all the competencies.



course:	Basic security training					
modules:	security industry	legal system	communication	documentation	situational awareness	situation management
competencies	prof. responsibilities	legal system	verbal comm.	notebook use	observing environ.	classifying situations
	governing legislation	the Charter	nonverbal comm.	note-taking	information retention	situation priorities
	emergency services	Human Rights	behavior assessment	statements	describing people	response planning
		Criminal Code	adaptive comm.	interviewing	describing vehicles	specific responses
		criminal offences	de-escalation	report writing	threat assessment	scene security
		arrest authorities	conflict management		personal safety	evidence preservation

Accreditation standards

Accreditation is an independent, third-party evaluation of conformity to a training framework.

When a training provider applies for accreditation, the accrediting body reviews the provider and the training. The training provider is assessed in the following areas:

- governance (10 %)
- learner support services (10 %)
- instructor qualifications (15 %)

Each course and program is assessed in the following areas:

- instructional material and organization (25 %)
- instructional environment and strategies (20 %)
- assessment methodology (20 %)

Governance

The governance structure establishes the training provider's legitimacy and accountability. There must be administrative oversight, but not interference with training.

Undue interference can occur in organizations that have multiple priorities, and see training as an expense to be managed to satisfy other priorities. This is explained with an example:

> *Some security companies provide in-house training to their security professionals. A client wanted all security professionals to have a communication course. The company gave each security professional a completion certificate for the course, and told them to take the course when they had time.*

This is an extreme example. **CA SP** has repeatedly been informed of courses that were significantly shorter than the stated time, that superficially covered the topic, that presented outdated information, and that had low assessment standards. These practices are antithetical to professionalization.

Learner support services

Not all processes are intuitive. Training providers must provide assistance with all aspects of the learning process, from admissions and registration, to explaining the instructional and assessment procedures, to handling complaints and appeals. Some learners may have accessibility and accommodation requirements, that training providers are legally required to provide.

A record of accessing learner support services guides the development and improvement of all aspects of training.

Instructor qualifications

Effective instruction requires instructors have formal training in effective instruction, with a minimum training duration (usually between 24 and 40 hours). As instructional strategies are general, instructional training does not have to be from the field. For example, a person trained to teach first aid (usually a 32 hour train-the-trainer course) can apply those instructional skills to teaching other subjects.

What is critical is that instructors are subject-matter experts in the competencies they are teaching. It is not sufficient for a person to have experience in one area of security, and have them teach other areas. For example, mobile patrol vs loss prevention vs event security — each is a unique area that requires a specialist to effectively teach the course.

In-person and *online synchronous* courses require the instructor be a subject-matter expert. They need this level of knowledge to be able to dynamically present material from different perspectives and dynamically engage with learners.

Online asynchronous (self-paced) courses require a subject-matter expert and an instructional designer. In this course, there is no live interaction between the instructor and learner. The focus when developing an asynchronous course is to anticipate and proactively answer learner questions. It is best to develop an online asynchronous course after the subject-matter expert has taught the course in-person or online synchronous several times.

The instructional designer is tasked with creating an interesting, engaging, and interactive online course that ensures learners complete all modules and assessments.

Training review

Novice instructors should co-teach at least their first three times teaching, with greater responsibility each time until they are the sole instructor by the end of the second course. (The number of co-teaching sessions could increase, depending on the abilities of the novice instructor.) For the final course, the novice instructor is teaching by themself, with the other instructor monitoring.

Formal reviews occur when an instructor trainer attends an instructor's class. The instructor trainer assesses the instructors use of the instructional material, instructional strategies, and assessment procedures, in the context of instructional best practices. Ideally, formal reviews occur with the instructor trainer as a learner in the class, and the other learners not informed of the review. This creates as normal a classroom environment as possible.

Training providers are encouraged to develop a culture whereby instructors are comfortable visiting each other's classes. These *informal visits* spark conversations on instruction that benefit all parties.

Instructional material and organization

A *program outline* or *curriculum* lists the courses required to achieve the required competencies, and in many cases, the order courses should be taken.

Each *course outline* contains a comprehensive learning plan for that course. While the training framework contains high-level factors, each course outline presents detailed information on the factors, and serves as a guide for learners.* A course outline presents

- *learning objectives*: measurable expectations that learners are expected to achieve (from the competencies)
- *learning resources*: textbooks, workbooks, published articles, websites, instructional slides, handouts, etc., that the learner uses to effectively learn the competencies
- *content*: the material that builds the required competencies, and the presentation order
- *timeline*: the amount of time to complete each competency, module, assessment, and course
- *instructional modalities*: the instructional modality(ies) used to teach the course
- *instructional strategies*: the instructional strategies used to teach the modules and course
- *assessment strategies*: the assessment strategies used to assess retention

A training provider must show that their instructional material meets or exceeds the training framework and accreditation requirements, and that the instructional organization is logical and conducive to learning.

Instructional environment and strategies

The instructional environment must be conducive to learning. This is assessed on a course-by-course basis, and ensures an appropriate training modality, safe training environment, and appropriate training resources.

- *training modalities* could be in-person, online synchronous, online asynchronous, or hybrid
- *training environments* could be a classroom, virtual classroom, learning management system, gymnasium, workplace, public environment, etc.
- *training resources* could include a classroom with tables and chairs, data projector, computer, internet access, training mats, handcuffs, actors to play scenario roles, etc.

The instructional strategies must effectively convey knowledge and skills to learners at the desired level. Common instructional strategies include lecture, questions, debates, team projects, scenarios, job shadowing, etc. A *Best practices** guide and numerous other resources detail many instructional and assessment strategies.

A training provider must show that their instructional environment and strategies are conducive to effective instruction and learning. Their application must identify benefits and limitations of the environment, plus strategies to address the limitations.

* Dr. Jensen created a *Best practices in course development* guide to help course developers and instructors create and teach courses following best practices. This guide is available from www.CASP.ca/publications

Assessment methodology

Assessment determines if the instruction effectively conveys concepts at the desired level. Common assessment strategies include quizzes, scenarios, capstone projects, presentations, exams, peer review, etc.

A training provider must show that their assessment strategies accurately and comprehensively assess learner understanding and abilities in relation to the competencies.

Weighting

The percentages refer to the weighting towards the overall accreditation score. A reasonable standard is that an organization must pass every accreditation area (passing grade = 70 %), and must receive an overall accreditation score of 80 %. This ensures training excellence, which is critical in a profession that is taking on police roles across Canada.

Living document

The accreditation standards is a living document. It should be reviewed every few years, and revised based on changing best practices, new roles, and changing employment expectations.

Accreditation process

First. A training provider prepares an accreditation package for the accrediting body. The accreditation package is on a prescribed form and contains the information and attestations required for each section: governance, learner support services, instructor qualifications, instructional material and organization, instructional environment and strategies, and assessment methodology.

An accreditation package for an entire training program can be over 100 pages, plus the instructional resources. An accreditation package for a single course is usually around 10 pages, plus the instructional resources.

Second. The accreditation package is sent to the accrediting body. An accreditation coordinator is assigned to oversee the accreditation process. The coordinator sends the individual sections to independent experts for review. In general, every section is reviewed by two or three experts. The review compares the submission with the training framework and accreditation standards.

To maintain anonymity of the expert reviewers, the coordinator is the liaison for questions between the provider and reviewers. (While double blind is preferred, it is often easy to identify the provider by, for example, their logos on instructional material.)

Third. The coordinator receives the expert reviews, prepares an interim deficiency report, and provides that to the training provider for them to rectify. The coordinator liaises between the provider and the expert reviewers until the concerns are addressed.

Fourth. The coordinator prepares an accreditation report that either accredits, partially accredits, or rejects the provider's training program.

- the first accreditation is valid for two years
- subsequent accreditations are valid for between two and five years, depending on the quality of the package and the reviewer's opinion

Once approved, the training provider can call their courses "accredited".

Accrediting security industry training

Current training is not sufficient for security professionals to be safe and effective.

Some people in the security industry have developed courses, but these courses are of varying quality because there is no training framework or accreditation standard. There is no accrediting body. Some courses are based on law enforcement courses, but law enforcement and security have different scopes. Shortening a law enforcement course may result in concept loss.

Dr. Roy Jensen is **CA SP**'s training director, and has 20 years of experience teaching at post-secondary institutions. Dr. Jensen has gone through the accreditation process for several degree programs, worked with the Center for Teaching and Learning to train instructors, and worked with law enforcement trainers to develop, revise, and get courses accredited with the provincial training academy.

CA SP is ideally positioned to lead the development of the training framework and accreditation standards for the security industry. First, **CA SP** is an independent organization, committed to professionalizing the security industry through training and advocacy. Second, **CA SP** has connections throughout the security industry, the private investigator industry, law enforcement, and with instructional designers. Third, **CA SP** accepts that this is an iterative process, and that it will take years to develop a quality training framework and quality accreditation standards.

Establishing a training framework and accreditation standards will result in security professionals that are appropriately trained for the challenging, dangerous, and litigious situations they are expected to engage in. This benefits everyone, from security professionals to the workers and customers they protect. Public safety is enhanced, and liability reduced.