

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 all 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 forces. The Solicitor General (or equivalent) establishes training centers. In some jurisdictions, the training centers accredit third-party training. Often, changes to training programs come as a result of failures, litigation, and public inquiries. (This is reality, but it is not ideal.)

- 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 and keep security professionals safe and effective.

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 may be 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 focus on each competency, and recertification requirements
- *instructor qualifications*: the required and recommended qualifications of instructors

Application

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

For example, the training framework will list the competencies required by loss prevention security professionals. Every organization 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 organization then submits the course(s) for accreditation.

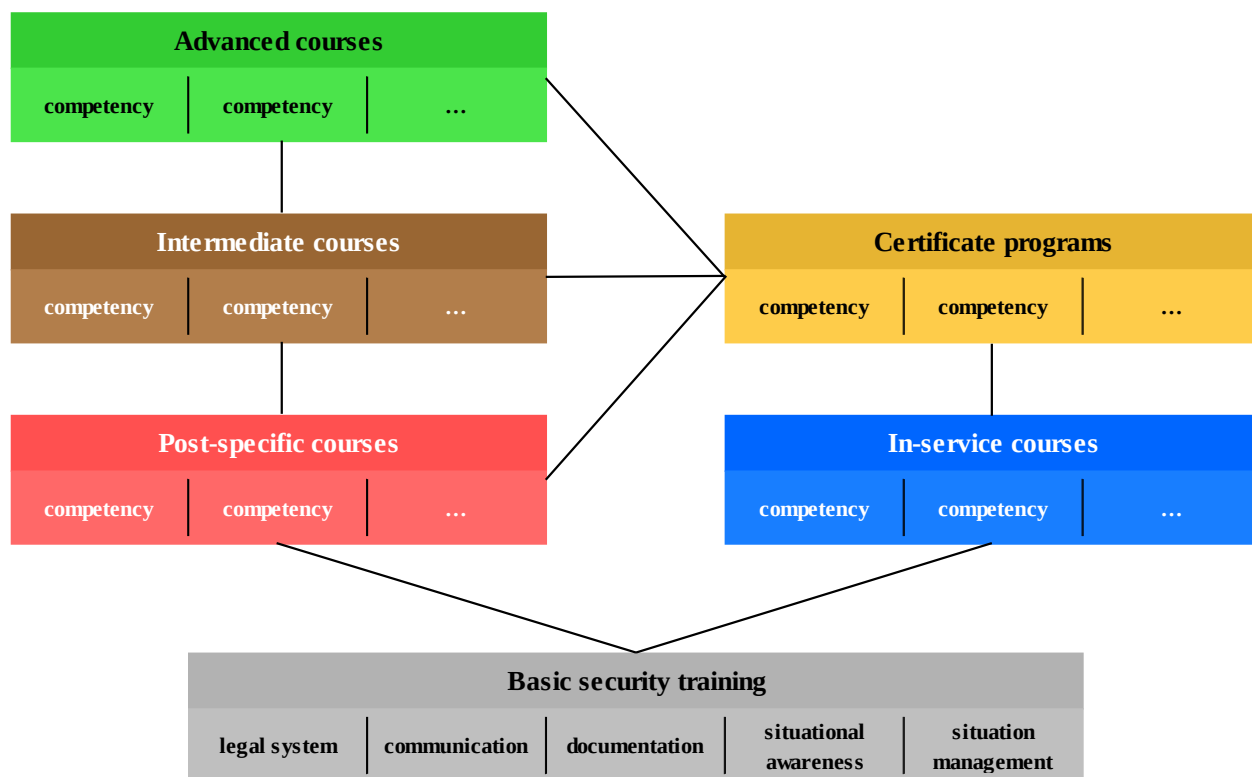
Living document

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

Training framework for the security industry

A preliminary training framework for the security industry is presented below. Training starts with basic security training (BST), which includes foundational competencies that all security professionals need to be safe and effective in their roles and responsibilities. The other sections on the framework are training categories and the links between them. The courses and competencies still need to be determined.

The training framework does not define courses, just competencies. A training organization would create courses that organize and teach the competencies in one or more courses. An organization does not need to provide the entire training program — they could provide one or a few courses. For example, some trainers teach only use of force. Other trainers may only teach courses that are needed for their niche of the security industry.



Accreditation standards

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

When a training organization applies for accreditation, the accrediting body reviews the organization's practices in relation to the training framework. To be accredited, an organization must show alignment of their governance, instructional environment, curriculum, instructional material, instructional and assessment strategies, and their instructors' qualifications and training.

Governance review

Organizational governance must not interfere with training.

This is a challenge in organizations that do not prioritize training, and may see training as an expense that can be trimmed to satisfy operational 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.

An organization must provide compelling evidence that their governance does not interfere with quality training.

Instructional environment review

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, 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.

An organization must provide compelling evidence that their instructional environment is conducive to learning. The report must identify benefits and limitations of the environment, plus strategies to address the limitations.

Curriculum review

The curriculum is an organization's comprehensive learning plan leading to a given credential.

A curriculum can be created by combining the individual course outlines (syllabi), and then showing how progression through the courses provides the learner with the required competencies for the credential. Using course outlines prevents duplicating information, since course outlines are also used at the course level.

Each course outline contains a comprehensive learning plan for that course. Recall that 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 must achieve
- *content*: the required competencies, divided and detailed in individual modules
- *timeline*: the amount of time to complete each module, assessment, and the 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

An organization must provide compelling evidence that their curriculum meets or exceeds the training framework and accreditation requirement.

Instructional material review

The course outline will list the required and optional instructional resources (textbooks, workbooks, published articles, website subscriptions, instructional slides, handouts, etc.) that the learner needs to complete the course. These resources will be compared with the content and learning objectives to ensure that the required competencies are presented to the learner.

Instructional and assessment strategies review

The course outline will list the instructional and assessment strategies, and the organization may be asked to explain why certain instructional and assessment strategies are being used. The goal is to ensure that the instructional strategies effectively convey concepts to learners at the desired level, and that the assessment strategies accurately assess the degree of concept conveyance.

- *common instructional strategies*: lecture, questions, debates, scenarios, job shadowing, etc.
- *common assessment strategies*: quizzes, peer review, scenarios, capstone projects, exams, etc.

The *Best practices** guide and numerous internet and book resources detail many diverse instructional strategies and assessment strategies.

* Dr. Jensen has 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

Instructor qualifications

The training framework includes the required and recommended qualifications of instructors for them to be qualified to teach courses. All instructors must have some formal training in effective instruction. As instructional strategies are general, the instructor-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.

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, 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. For the third course, the novice instructor is teaching by themselves, 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 and instructional strategies, in the context of instructional best practices. Ideally, formal reviews occur with the instructor trainer in the class as a student, and the other students not informed of the review. This creates as normal a classroom environment as possible.

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

Living document

The accreditation standards are a living document. They should be reviewed every few years, and revised based on new roles and changing employment expectations.

Accreditation process

First. A training organization 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, instructional environment, curriculum, instructional material, instructional and assessment strategies, and instructors' qualifications and training. The creation of these sections is usually assigned to the appropriate department, with the course designers and instructors preparing the bulk of the package.

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.

To maintain anonymity of the expert reviewers, the coordinator is the liaison for questions between the organization and expert reviewers. (While double blind is preferred, it is often easy to identify the organization 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 organization for them to rectify. The coordinator liaises between the organization and the expert reviewers until the concerns are addressed (or not).

Accreditation is usually by unanimous decision — all reviewers agree.

If a reviewer disagrees, either another reviewer is asked their opinion, or the accreditation package is voted on by the reviewers. The passing grade is typically 90 %.

Fourth. The coordinator prepares an accreditation report that either accredits, partially accredits, or rejects the organization'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 organization 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.