How to Use the Competency-Based Learning and Development Maps

What is the Purpose of the Learning and Development Maps?

- Promote a learning culture and continuous improvement within agencies
- Provide objective skill and behaviour-based competencies to identify key learning and development opportunities within an agency
- Encourage Chairs and appointees to engage in discussion about competencies and to develop individual learning and development plans
- Identify excellence of individual members and share skills through training, coaching or mentoring where opportunities exist within the agency
- Identify appointees who are ready for new opportunities or who wish to use their skills in a different way
- Coordinate learning and development in an efficient and coherent way, both within the agency and on a sector-wide basis
- Promote and protect the agency’s integrity and reputation for excellence and the public’s confidence in the agency

What are the Learning and Development Maps?

1) <u>Board Questionnaire</u> (for Operational Service and Operational Enterprise agencies or Regulatory agencies with a governing board)
    - For Operational Service and Operational Enterprise boards, or other governing boards, to analyze how well they function as a whole and to lay out an action plan for improvement, where necessary
    - To collect individual appointees’ opinions for collective discussion and development of an action plan applicable to the Board as a whole

2) <u>Individual Learning and Development Maps</u> (individual-specific analysis)
    - One map each for Chairs, Vice-Chairs and Members to identify learning and development related to the position-specific core competencies
    - The core competencies with specific elements describe effective performance in a position against which individual skill sets can be analyzed and discussed
    - When completed, creates an individual learning and development plan

Suggestions for Implementation

> The governance tools are stepping-stones to good governance. It makes sense to adapt and use some of them before others.

> Typically, before implementing the competency-based learning and development maps, agencies have first developed position descriptions, core-competencies and a code of conduct, and appointees are familiar with their content.

> Similarly, the learning and development maps may best be implemented in stages from a simpler to a more advanced use of tools.

> For example, because an operational board or a governing board functions as an inter-dependant team, it may start out with a questionnaire that analyzes the board as a whole and then progress to individual learning and development maps. However, because of the individual nature of the work of appointees to adjudicative and regulatory agencies (without a governing board), they might wish to start with the individual learning maps.

> How the learning and development tools are implemented may also vary depending on the agency's priorities and needs.

Adapting the Learning and Development Maps

> Any significant adaptations made to position descriptions or core competencies should be repeated in the learning and development maps.

> Once appointees are familiar with the core competencies, individual learning and development maps may be shortened by deleting the competency elements.

> The board questionnaire may be shortened by using only some of the general questions identified for each of the competencies and deleting the remainder of the questions.

Roll-up to an Agency Appointee Learning and Development Map

> Once individual information has been collected for appointees, consider putting the salient information in one place to identify any patterns that might apply across a spectrum of appointees.

> See sample below:

Key Learning Needs / Development Opportunities Analysis for Member Appointees

Competency	Member 1	Member 2	Member 3	Member 4
Professional Awareness is the depth and breadth of the knowledge, skill and experience particular to the position. It involves knowledge of laws, practices, processes, professional skills, stakeholders and the culture specific to the agency environment.	*[Include individual appointee learning needs or development opportunities identified by individual plans or other analysis.]*			

Note:

> Competencies vary depending on the position

> Include the title and definition for each competency for a position

> Names of individual members may be inserted

This method may be used by agency Chairs or governance committees to summarize learning needs and development opportunities for appointees by position at an agency. It will help set priorities and plan initiatives that support learning and development as well as track the actual results achieved.

Then consider rolling the information up into an agency plan, along these lines in the sample below.

Agency Learning and Development Plan - For All Appointees

Competency-Based Learning and Development Priorities for [year / time period]	Learning and Development Activities Action Plan	Appointees Participating	Timeframe and Cost	Results Achieved and Evaluation

For examples of learning and development activities see the individual maps.

DESIGNING A PROCESS

The following is designed to assist Chairs and other appointees understand how to adapt the learning and development maps and what to consider in applying a process to use these tools effectively.

Setting up a Successful Competency-Based Learning and Development Process:

> Educate appointees about the benefits of continuous learning and sharing of knowledge and skills within the agency

> Make a commitment to excellence through learning and development

> Include appointees in the design and operation of the process

> Be clear about what the process will and won't be used for

> Define and communicate an objective, fair and transparent process

> Provide training for those involved in the process (e.g. mentoring, coaching)

> Ensure that agency-specific sensitivities are addressed in the process

> Determine best sources for learning and development. Share training resources within the agency sector

> Learn from and share the experience of other similar agencies

> Get feedback on the process and modify as necessary

> Modify the tools to be agency-specific

Benefits

Chairs

As agency heads, Chairs have the responsibility to support the development of agency appointees by providing oversight and advice, and discussing and encouraging professional development of and among appointees.

Other Appointees

Appointees have an obligation to understand the requirements of the position they hold, stay current in the field, engage in ongoing professional development, and when requested to do so by the Chair or the Chair's designate, share skills by training or mentoring others.

Ministries

Ministries play an important role in managing the accountability and governance requirements of agencies.

Application

The agency, usually led by the Chair or a governance committee, determines how the tools will be applied. Depending on the time, expertise, resources, culture of the agency and number of appointees, the process can be designed to be as formal or informal as necessary.

Process Considerations

1) Define and Communicate the Process

> Who should be involved in process design? (e.g. Chair, agency governance committee, Vice-Chairs, CEO).

> How formal or informal does the process need to be?

> What are the roles and responsibilities of those involved?

> When and how often should a learning and development needs analysis be done?

> How will priorities be assigned to learning and development needs?

The key to an effective process may be answered by the structure, composition and needs of an agency such as:

> Appointees' needs (e.g. new appointees, length of service, evolving needs for different skills or changes to agency mandate, etc.).

> Agency work processes – In agencies where there is frequent interaction and contact among appointees and Chairs the process may be less formal.

> Agency type and culture – Is there sensitive context that requires special attention?

> Number of full-time and part-time appointees – Where there is a greater number of part-time appointees or appointees who work in a regional area, it may be necessary to adopt a more structured process.

> Capacity – Design a process that balances desired outcomes with the time and effort required by Chairs and appointees.

2) Collection of Information

Possible contributors of information include:

> Appointee

> Peer

> Chair

> Governance committee

> Board as a whole

> A combination of these

Options for collection of information include:

> Circulation of document (e.g. hard copy or secure e-mail, collection by specified date)
> Face-to-face with some or all, on a regular cycle or priority basis
> Assign a mentor or coach to lead (e.g. Vice-Chair or senior appointee, governance committee)
> Use a third party to collect and summarize information

3) Retention of Information and Access

Consider:

- Purpose of retention, if any
- The custodian (corporate or individual)
- The location
- The length of retention
- Who needs the information

When completed, the documents will contain personal information pertaining to the development of individuals, which should be treated confidentially.

4) Evaluate and Revisit Plans and Process as Necessary

- New appointees
- Changes in statute, mandate, professional standards, government directives, etc.
- As defined by a specific agency process