

II. THE CENTRE FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Our Services

The Centre for Professional Development (formerly the Professional School of the Canadian Foreign Service Institute) provides the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) with a full range of training and performance improvement services which include performance analysis, training design, delivery and evaluation, training project management, organizational development and individual training services.

Using state-of-the-art performance improvement, training and project management techniques, the Centre provides a setting where professional learning supporting all DFAIT business lines is organized in close partnership with DFAIT sectoral managers and experts. The Centre does not have a faculty. It relies on private sector training experts and on DFAIT subject matter experts and trainers to deliver competitive, high quality learning services to its clients.

Our Environment

The Centre for Professional Development found itself at the centre of an unprecedented number of processes put in train by DFAIT in response to international trends and to government-wide initiatives for reform of the Public Sector through the strengthening of its policy capacity, the modernization of the service delivery function and the building of a vibrant national Public Sector adapted to future needs.

The Human Resource Strategy, the Trade Commissioner Service's Performance Measurement Initiative (PMI), the introduction of a new Integrated Management System (IMS), the renewal of the SIGNET infrastructure and software suites (SRP) are all instruments of change which will have a significant impact on how we do our work in the future.

These processes of change have substantial implications for organizational development, change management and training. They are forcing significant increases in strategic investments in training and development to ensure that the DFAIT workforce is capable of delivering on commitments.

Meeting such challenges is all the more demanding in that. Several years of downsizing have resulted in low recruitment, a need to modify program delivery at home and abroad, transformation of work processes induced by rapid technological progress and a greater reliance on locally engaged staff to promote Canadian interests abroad and to provide quality services to Canadians. This requires new skills sets in an environment where learning is a continuous process.

Supporting DFAIT Business

The Centre assumed new responsibilities for the management of the training function in DFAIT resulting from new directions from Executive Committee and the need to eliminate the fragmentation, to rationalize and to integrate the professional training effort in DFAIT while ensuring that bureaus continue to play an active role in the training process. 1997/98 was an important transition year during which training such as Trade, SIGNET, Human Rights, Media Relations previously delivered through other training centres was integrated under the Centre's management.

The Centre assumed the responsibility for the delivery of the third year programme of the TCS training initiative. The main project undertaken was an Investment Development course for Asia-Pacific posts delivered in February 1998.

CFSP also developed several new courses such as the "Competitive Intelligence" course and learning tools such as the Intranet guide for trade officers at Headquarters and abroad. Building on the success of the "Public Advocacy" course, we delivered the new "Influence Strategies and Economic Reporting" course to political/economic relations, and public affairs and trade officers in the USA.

In the area of International Security and Cooperation and Public Diplomacy, the Centre took over the responsibility for Human Rights training and began exploring the possibility of building on the success of that course to develop a new training package which would include International Humanitarian Law. The Centre also prepared with Environmental Services Division a work plan to develop training in support of the Sustainable Development Strategy. It provided training to liaison officers for the Ottawa Conference on the Global ban of landmines. The integration of media relations training into the curriculum has laid the foundation for the development of additional training in support of the communications function. The foundations were laid for the design and delivery in Europe of a major Public Advocacy training programme based on the highly successful programme delivered in the US in 1996.

"The Asia-Pacific investment training programme provided an excellent opportunity to a large number of Canada based and locally engaged staff trade officers to be exposed to investment development and retention techniques."

Mel MacDonald, Tokyo