



**Study of
Training and Development**

**Line Manager Information
Related to
Promising Practices and Barriers to Training**



**Audit and Evaluation Division
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INTRODUCTION

The information presented here was gathered as part of a Study of Training and Development conducted by the Audit and Evaluation Division at Statistics Canada. Over 100 people were interviewed, mostly over the summer and autumn of 2000. These included managers and employees from seven different divisions; training professionals; recruit managers; and others.

This information is intended to be used by managers and training professionals at Statistics Canada as another helpful tool for managing the training and development function within their respective areas of responsibility. Information is presented in two sections: Promising Practices, and Barriers to Training. The section on Barriers to Training also contains solutions suggested by those interviewed.

PROMISING PRACTICES

The following information lists promising practices that support the effective management of training from corporate, divisional and trainers' perspectives. Many of these practices were in use by the managers, employees and trainers interviewed, while others have their genesis in corporate policies and guidelines for training and development. It should be noted that no assessment of the cost-effectiveness of these practices was undertaken.

Corporate

1. Statistics Canada Employee Opinion Survey

The Statistics Canada Employee Opinion Survey (EOS) was identified as an important stimulus to improving training and development. The EOS was regarded as useful in reinforcing the importance of the identification of training as an integrated element of the appraisal process. In some cases, the Survey has stimulated divisional follow-up surveys in order to better understand results and take the appropriate action. The EOS also offers useful benchmarks against which progress can be measured.

2. Timely Appraisal Information

Human Resources Development Division (HRDD) staff alert divisions in a timely manner of the start of the upcoming annual employee appraisal cycle. This includes highlighting due dates; identifying electronic sources of related information; and offering up-to-date management tools to make the work easier e.g. course calendars. The appraisal form contains a section on training that facilitates discussions between supervisors and employees.



3. Corporate Training and Development Documents

Documents describing corporate training and development policies, systems, frameworks, and responsibilities are posted on the ICN. This facilitates accessibility by all employees. Employees are encouraged to consult these documents as important sources of general and more specific information.

4. Training Co-ordinator Network

The network of training co-ordinators in divisions and branches has developed into a comprehensive way for HRDD, ITSD and others to keep employees informed about upcoming training courses and vacancies. In addition, HRDD has developed a list of suggested roles and activities for co-ordinators and training committees to provide guidance and facilitate greater consistency.

5. Course Calendars

Course calendars, descriptions and other information are available on the ICN and contain useful information to assist potential candidates and their managers in making decisions on course selections. Information on the identified target populations of courses is regarded as especially helpful.

6. Corporate Training and Development Committee

Overall management and strategic direction of training and development is provided through the Agency's Training and Development Committee which continually monitors the need for, and development of, training programs. This Committee is one of a number of management committees focussed on the Agency's human resource management issues; others include the Recruitment and Development Committee; the Employment Equity Committee; the Career Streams Committee; and the Human Resource Development Committee.

7. The Importance of Client Orientation

Some interviewees specifically highlighted the good quality of service they had received from ITSD training administration. The ITSD manager responsible for marketing courses indicated that she had achieved considerable success using a client-oriented approach towards course participants. This includes seeking their input on course content; and adapting courses to meet specific clients needs such as arranging for the timely and tailored delivery of informatics courses for individual divisions.



Divisional

8. Annual Employee Performance Review

The form used to support the annual review of employee performance contains a section for input on training. Employees and managers alike view the annual performance review process as the catalyst to initiating discussions about training needs. Promising practices include:

- Using a management tool such as Global-Orbit to identify training taken by divisional staff during the review year; where the approach is not at the divisional level, action can be taken by other levels of management such as a section chief;
- Discuss previous training plans e.g. were they executed, and if not, why not?
- Create an individual training and development plan for each employee (beyond the appraisal form);
- Take immediate action to complete and submit applications for training;
- Feed results into a divisional plan, so that management of training goes beyond discussions between the employee and the supervisor;
- Forward the plan to the Human Resources Development Division (HRDD); this can sometimes short-circuit the need for individual forms;
- Identify training courses that are related to divisional training frameworks; and
- Monitor the training plan over the coming year.

9. Development of a Divisional Training Policy and Framework

To guide the training of employees for their current jobs and to provide career path information, some divisions are developing (or are planning to develop) frameworks that set out the training courses appropriate to particular groups and levels. For these to be most effective, they will need to complement corporate efforts such as those underway by the Career Streams Committee.

10. Use of Individual Training Plans

A division-specific form for individual training plans is used in at least one division. This permits the inclusion of other relevant information in addition to the name of the course, such as the employee's short- or long-term career aspirations that will be supported by training; and the dates for which training is scheduled. Other divisions use the appraisal form as the individual training plan, or they retain copies of individual training application forms.

The creation and use of individual training plans establishes and formalizes goals; reinforces the importance of training; and facilitates its ongoing management beyond the annual appraisal interview and forms completion process. Further, where plans have an historical dimension, they provide employees with a helpful tool in preparing a work and training history for potential use e.g. in a CV or in the competitive process. These plans also assist employees and supervisors to have a more informed discussion at appraisal time.



11. Use of Divisional Training Plans

A plan at the divisional level allows for a more integrated approach to the management of training, a divisional assessment of access to training, and the discussion and exchange of training-related information. The plan can also highlight common training needs and possible group approaches to meeting them. When operational training is linked to divisional work plans well in advance of training, there is a better understanding by all of those involved of the larger context in which training decisions are being taken.

Some divisions make a direct link between their practice of encouraging training and their ability to attract and retain competent employees. The practice of using both individual and divisional training plans helps to ensure that *all* employees are included. This, in turn, encourages managers to foster a climate of continuous learning and career development for all employees. Care is required, however, in ensuring adequate protection of any confidential employee information contained in these plans.

12. Use of Global-Orbit

Some divisions use the Global sub-system on training, Global-Orbit, to help manage training. Provided that the information is up-to-date, it allows approved users to see the individual training history of employees as well as what training is being planned i.e. where a training application form has been approved and submitted. Where this system is in use, it meets some of management's training information needs; it may also enable divisional training plans to focus only on relevant information not recorded in Global. The more frequently that divisions use Global, the more they will have a direct interest in the quality of the information in it, working harder to make sure that it is up-to-date and accurate. This results in better quality training information at the corporate level.

13. Establishment of Training Priorities

Training decisions can be more easily explained when divisional training priorities have been established and effectively communicated to everyone. This activity is made even easier if a divisional training framework and plan also exist. Generally, divisions recognize the need for training to meet both operational and development needs, although some divisions place a stronger emphasis on operational training.

14. Skip-Level Interviews

Skip-level interviews help employees discuss future career development with their supervisor's supervisor. The following are active ways to encourage these:

- Skip-level manager extends a personal invitation to an employee;
- Skip-level manager arranges meetings; and
- At appraisal interviews, employees are invited on a one-to-one basis to request a skip-level meeting.



15. Use of Training Co-ordinators

Well-chosen training co-ordinators with sufficient experience can contribute a great deal to the management and co-ordination of training in a division or branch. Co-ordinators are well placed to implement best practices used by other divisions and branches. In other cases, co-ordinators can also head a divisional training committee and/or serve as members of a branch-level Committee.

Training co-ordinators can also help keep Global up-to-date. For example, there is no automatic feedback loop into Global for external courses such as those given by the Canadian Centre for Management Development. Training co-ordinators, however, are well positioned to make sure that such information is forwarded to HRDD.

16. Use of Training Committees

Training committees offer a way to develop training frameworks, share information, discuss effective uses of training, and other activities. In some cases, committee members reflect a variety of employee groups and levels. Divisional training co-ordinators sometimes sit as members of a training committee at the branch level. In turn, branch-level committees can link to corporate-level committees. This creates a network that is in touch with employees at the grassroots level and it allows training issues to be treated in a more integrated fashion.

17. Orientation Checklists

Some divisions use orientation checklists to help new employees learn about the division and also to ensure that their supervisors provide basic information. Several different examples of these checklists exist throughout the Agency.

18. Inclusion of Training Information as Part of Quarterly Financial Reviews

Knowing what training is planned, what is billed and what has been completed helps to better manage training, and the resources associated with providing training to employees. This information also facilitates other activities such as the preparation of training summaries for inclusion, as needed, in program reports.

19. Use of Klick—A Computer-Based Training Package

The use of Klick has increased across the Agency although employees use it in different ways. Some see Klick as an addition to existing training courses while others view it as a replacement. Klick widens the choice of learning methods for employees, and increases the ability of employees to take training at more convenient times. Since Klick can be used outside working hours, it encourages employees to take personal responsibility for their career development.



20. Communication

Solid, ongoing communication practices ensure that divisional training activities are familiar to all employees. They also ensure that training-related documents and other information are easily accessible and remain up-to-date.

21. Discussions about Employee Opinion Survey (EOS) Results

All divisions were asked to discuss EOS results. Some of the divisions interviewed reported that the training-related results from these surveys have been clarified through employee discussions and that ongoing steps were being taken to address the issues identified.

22. Training Organized by Divisions

Some divisions make special arrangements to have certain internal or external courses delivered to a group, when needed, as opposed to when they are scheduled in Statistics Canada course calendars. This allows for better timing e.g. around operational priorities, as well as better tailoring to meet particular divisional needs.

23. Workshops, Conferences, and Guest Speakers Organized by Divisions

This activity complements formal training courses and enables divisions to bring in experts upon occasion e.g. when international conferences are held at Statistics Canada. More modest efforts, such as divisional workshops, also increase access to training and sharing of information. “Brown-bag” lunchtime seminars presented by employees to their colleagues and professional development days can also foster learning in a fun and relaxed way. Similar events are held at the corporate level, such as the “Meet the Director” sessions and various lecture series.

Where this type of initiative is encouraged and reinforced by divisional management, it is another way to accomplish training and provide employees with a variety of learning opportunities beyond the structure of formal courses.

24. Management of Course Waiting Lists

Divisional training co-ordinators sometimes manage course waiting lists. This is made easier when there are individual or divisional training plans to monitor. However, even without these other tools, management of course waiting lists—including information on who is waiting for what courses and for how long—permits timely follow-up action. Once again, it results in better information in the system. If an employee no longer requires a course, this information needs to be communicated to HRDD and ITSD. Having this function carried out through a central co-ordinator increases the likelihood of timely notification, while minimizing potential late costs and facilitating participant substitutions.



25. Commitments to Enrol a Set number of Employees in Flagship Courses

Some divisions noted that they regularly make commitments e.g. to send one person annually to SSDC or one person to each BEST course. This assists course administrators, sends a positive message to divisional employees, and encourages the division to honour its commitment when operational constraints may make it tempting to do otherwise.

26. Timely, Accurate Information on Training Course Approvals and Forms Routing

Managers who emphasize clear and accurate completion of training forms, and who ensure prompt attention to training requests, facilitate access to training as well as encouraging solid training management practices. For example, training requests are sometimes made just before a course begins, following the advertisement of vacancies. In these cases, prompt decision-making and processing of appropriate forms is essential.

Trainers

27. Evaluation of Changes in Behaviour

In the context of longer courses, such as flagship courses, there is time to focus discussion on opportunities to change future behaviour, e.g. in some courses, there is an opportunity for participants to discuss what was well-learned or not so well-learned and to focus on how they might incorporate this learning into their work. Also, participants are encouraged to re-attend a specific lecture at a later date should they feel the need to do so.

28. Follow-up Evaluations

To gauge the longer-term effects of a course, follow-up evaluations some months after initial course delivery allow for the assessment of any changes in employee behaviour (performance) e.g. are employees using what they learned on the job and how well? A course for which formal follow-up evaluation has been conducted is the Survey Skills Development Course (SSDC). Also, the Data Interpretation Workshop has had two follow-up surveys conducted by the course manager to measure usefulness and to suggest additional changes.

29. Marketing

Some trainers have a well-developed, client-service oriented, approach to identifying their courses' target clientele as well as maintaining an ongoing relationship with these clients after course delivery. This enables them to continue to meet their clients' future needs. Some examples include:

- developing new courses with input from client contacts;
- providing the latest information to course participants;



- attend meetings of relevance to clients and letting them know what is new;
- treating clients as individuals and offering one-on-one assistance when required; and
- making personal contact with managers to promote the course.

These training professionals attribute their success to their service-oriented approach.

30. Continuous Skills Improvement

Full-time trainers emphasize the importance of continuous skills' improvement not only for themselves but also for part-time or occasional trainers who may not deliver as varied courses with as much frequency.

BARRIERS TO TRAINING AND SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

Employees and managers from seven different divisions, as well as training professionals, were interviewed and asked to identify any barriers to training and possible solutions to address these barriers. Many reported that for the most part, training was accessible, although some barriers were identified. These included operational constraints, poor planning, more limited access to training by junior staff, and personal reasons that might prevent an individual from taking advantage of training. Interviewees offered many solutions such as a more comprehensive approach to planning; further development of career paths information and associated training plans; shorter and more modular courses; and more client-oriented approaches to the administration of training.

The barriers and suggested solutions identified during interviews are described below. For each barrier, the perceptions and opinions of those interviewed are presented, followed by substantiating evidence (where possible) and suggested solutions. Barriers are organized by type: seven are of particular interest to managers; three relate to employees; and eight are course-related.

Management Issues

1. Employees Are Too Busy with Operational Priorities

“The days aren’t long enough” was a refrain heard frequently. People have too much to do to fit training into their schedules, especially longer courses. Everyone recognizes that the work comes first, so people screen themselves out of training. If they do not, “desks will be piled high,” or they will need to return at lunch or after training to do work. Under these circumstances, training becomes less attractive. When production cycles are short, the problem is exacerbated since “down times” are much shorter. The presence of recruits who require training also puts more strain on the other team members. Where operational factors demand a postponement of training, training managers feel the consequences, especially in flagship courses.



Stakeholder-suggested solutions

- Improve divisional planning.
- The new Recruitment and Development Division is expected to improve the scheduling of recruits' training.
- Plan developmental training to correspond with the long-term work cycle. There are some areas where the cycle is well-known and certain years are better than others to accomplish developmental training. The Project to Improve Provincial Economic Statistics (PIPES) and Census are two good examples of such areas. This strategy is already in use, but it does imply a longer range training plan and subsequent monitoring.
- Arrange for training to complement the production cycle. This has been done successfully by some divisions.
- Identify the problem to more senior divisional managers.
- Continue to work while on training as the preferred option when no training is the alternative. Many individuals also felt the best option was to take the training course and leave the work behind.
- Free up time through efficiencies in production. While past budget cuts have eliminated most opportunities, in certain programs, this may still be viable.
- Have shorter (even more modular) courses that can be better slotted into production cycles.

2. Some Employees Need More Support from Managers

Opportunities exist for some supervisors and managers to be more supportive of employee training needs. This includes demonstrating greater understanding of the value of formal training; using the appraisal process to discuss training; encouraging developmental training even though a team member may leave; and balancing the needs of the corporation, divisions and individuals concerning training.

Stakeholder-suggested solutions

- Have more senior managers monitor training levels and training decisions.
- Increase visibility of managerial accountability for training decisions.
- Schedule recruits' training early.
- Encourage good planning by managers to get their people to appropriate courses.
- Conduct appraisals.

3. Strengthening Planning for Training

Some managers do not adequately plan their area's work far enough ahead or monitor what has been planned within the context of employee training plans. Consequently, fitting a previously arranged course into an employee's schedule becomes problematic as the course date approaches. This can result in employees having to be sent for training at inappropriate times or in a cancellation of training with little or no notice to course organizers. Course managers and administrators confirmed that last minute cancellations were not uncommon.



Managers and employees view appraisal forms as a starting point for training-related planning. Some weaknesses were identified in the lack of attention paid to making the appraisal process meaningful, and this results in lost opportunities to plan properly for training.

Stakeholder-suggested solutions

- Develop an annual sectional or divisional training plan by individual and monitor it.

4. Cost Considerations

For the most part, managers did not see covering direct training costs as problematic. ITSD training administration confirms that client divisions can be affected twice with respect to computer training in French - first, because the courses are not always as timely or available, and second, because higher costs must be passed on to the division. Some regional interviewees commented that the cost of the Business and Economic Statistics Training (BEST) course inhibited participation by regional offices. However, BEST course costs are covered at a corporate level.

Other regional comments were made that the costs of external training e.g. for college and university courses, which employees must pay up-front, can be too high for those in regional offices. Regional offices do not have access to the University Certificate Program at Ottawa and Carleton universities for which Statistics Canada pays employee tuition at the start of the Program.

Stakeholder-suggested solutions

- For the University Certificate program, suggestions were made that consideration be given to developing arrangements in the regions, similar to Head Office, wherever possible, so that regional office employees can be advanced tuition.
- Deliver some courses (or modules of courses) regionally to reduce costs. For example, offer local ITSD training so that computer work in regional offices becomes more effective.

5. Managers and Employees Do Not Always Agree on the Value of Some Courses

Interviewees noted that if a manager does not share an employee's perception that a course will be useful, then approval is less likely and the employee interprets this as a barrier. The benefits of "soft" skill courses (e.g. a course that builds good people skills) may be less immediately visible than the benefits of "hard" skills training (e.g. a computer course). These were some of the examples of identified barriers. From another perspective, course managers and trainers indicated that they sometimes have difficulty convincing divisional staff of the effectiveness of a course.

Stakeholder-suggested solutions

- Better inform employees about the rationale for training decisions.



- Consider group training within a division, with a senior divisional manager included, where possible, to encourage others.
- Develop better marketing strategies to promote the value of courses.
- Emphasize to managers that good people skills can be formally learned and are beneficial.

6. Training Co-ordinators Could Be More Experienced

Interviewees noted that training co-ordinators are not always experienced or sufficiently well-informed about courses to provide assistance to divisional staff. Nor do they always pass on e-mails about the availability of space in courses, although they may be serving a useful “information-filtering” role. Others noted, however, that there are few meetings or aids for training co-ordinators to help them understand and carry out their role.

Most divisions have training co-ordinators whose level varies in seniority from directors to more junior staff. In essence, these co-ordinators act as a post-box for HRDD and ITSD, distributing training-related information (usually e-mails) according to divisional instructions. However, in some divisions, training co-ordinators have taken on a much larger role e.g. as the chairperson of a divisional training committee; primary involvement in the development and execution of a divisional plan; or carrying out branch training initiatives. As guidance, HRDD has developed information on the roles of training co-ordinators.

Stakeholder-suggested solutions

- Provide better orientation for training co-ordinators
- Encourage training co-ordinators to meet more often and consult them to see what the training needs are. When several training co-ordinators voice the same opinion, it could be a stimulus for trainers or training administrators to respond.

7. Scheduling of Training

The priority training status of recruits can make it harder for others within the Agency to access training e.g. recruits take up the majority of spaces in flagship courses. Some interviewees observed that, in effect, Statistics Canada has created two classes of employees - recruits and non-recruits. Even though recruitment programs are viewed positively, the preferential status of recruits has an impact on the morale of others. Some employees believe recruits are “privileged” with the training programs that they receive, and they believe the Agency places more importance on recruits than other employees working at the same levels.

It is understood that recruits require more training, consistent with Statistics Canada’s philosophy that formal training is a required element in the career development of new recruits. Statistics Canada has created the new Recruitment and Development Division that will have as one of its objectives streamlining the management of recruit training. Flagship course trainers report that the mix of participants has shifted with time to



include a greater proportion of recruits, although with the long-running Survey Skills Development Course (SSDC), many non-recruits have also taken the course over the years.

Depending upon the level of recruitment, a continued high proportion of course participants will be recruits, especially for SSDC, which is a required course. A review of training programs for recruits, including language training in which recruits are strongly encouraged to enroll, shows the difficulties involved in scheduling the various training courses.

Employee Issues

8. Access Varies by Group and Level

Interviewees clearly noted that access to training was more difficult for support staff such as those in the SI and CR categories. These employees are the “foot soldiers” and often difficult to release from production responsibilities to attend developmental training. Some of the interviewees also observed that managers seem to receive the least training. Still others made the observation that, in general, the availability of training at Statistics Canada was better than elsewhere. Data exists to support all these views.

Stakeholder-suggested solutions

- Develop integrated training packages for clerical staff, including job or assignment rotations.
- Develop targeted marketing campaigns.

9. Personal Barriers

A number of personal barriers were identified, including reticence to push for training; fear of training; an unwillingness to be sufficiently flexible to accommodate training; family responsibilities; an unwillingness to delegate work to attend training; a lack of commitment to training; and embarrassment at the need for training.

Stakeholder-suggested solutions

- Make training decisions promptly and offer employees explanations and encouragement.
- Offer shorter (or more modular) courses, with less content than longer courses.
- Offer group instruction for the division. This has been used effectively for some courses like “Writing an Effective *Daily Release*.”
- Market some courses as “refresher” courses for those who already have some knowledge or experience but are “rusty” as well as including a welcoming encouragement in course calendars to ask questions and get advice from course instructors.



10. Career Development Information

The need for career development information was a consistent theme among interviewees. Employees identified a need for more information about career paths, and crossover points or bridges to other career streams, to help make decisions about training and career development. Full career paths are not available for everyone—for example, the PM and IS groups do not have career development programs similar to those of the ES, CS, SI and other groups.

Also, career development is not always discussed at appraisal time. Not all recruits have mentors assigned by the Recruitment and Development Program although some felt that recruits should not have to remind the Program of their need for mentors. Those who work in regional offices feel they have more limited career development opportunities. The large variety of courses available—identified as a plus—can make it harder to choose the most appropriate course when making career development decisions. These views are substantiated by the results of the 1999 Public Service Employee Survey (see Table 1).

Table 1: Help given less often with learning and career development decisions

Questions	PS % agree*	SC % agree*
36. My immediate supervisor helps me determine my learning needs.	49	59
74. My immediate supervisor does a good job of helping me develop my career.	45	54
92. In the past year, I have had an open discussion with someone (excluding colleagues) in my department / agency about my career.	44	55

Source: 1999 Public Service Employee Survey

*Agree is “mostly agree” plus “strongly agree”

The Career Streams Committee has tackled the need for clearer career paths. Matrices are being developed that will offer both employees and supervisors possible career paths and suggestions for training. Once they are known, they will be additional tools to help clarify career paths for employees throughout the Agency.

As well, because Statistics Canada values the work of mentors, it is considering an extension of their role in the area of career development. Statistics Canada Employee Opinion Survey results show that there has been improvement of 11% in the offer for skip-level interviews to discuss career development, from 57% in 1995 to 68% in 1998. But one-third of indeterminate employees have not—or do not recall having—received such an offer.

Stakeholder-suggested solutions

- Continue work on career paths and crossover points.
- Continue encouraging university degree training to assist in career development.



- Use mentors to provide guidance.
- Assign mentors in all recruitment and development programs.
- Form divisional and branch plans with employee input.
- Encourage contact with instructors.

Course-Related Issues

12. Course Length

While recognizing that it is impossible to reduce the length of certain courses, such as the Survey Skills Development Course, without fundamentally altering their character, interviewees commented that the length of some courses is a barrier. Some employees, especially junior staff, may never have the opportunity to attend these courses because the course length cannot be accommodated within operational constraints.

Stakeholder-suggested solutions

- Consider the length of the course in its design.
- Where possible, establish modules that can be taken in any order that can act as mini-courses.
- Use short modules to design courses for the administrative community. Frozen administrative databases could be learning tools for case studies examined in a module.

13. Scheduling Participants for Longer Courses

The content and logistics of some of the longer courses make it difficult for training course managers to be any more flexible in timing and length than they already are. When this is coupled with operational requirements managers face, interviewees reported that getting classes completely filled is difficult to accomplish. At the same time, high numbers of recruits in recent years means that there is increased demand, especially for SSDC, since many recruits are required to take it.

Scheduling recruits to get SSDC training within their recruitment and development programs has been challenging. More course events have been added to help solve the problem. The recently-formed Recruitment and Development Division is to bring greater integration and co-ordination to programs.

Stakeholder-suggested solutions

- Implement better planning and co-ordination to reduce vacancies.
- Seek commitment from managers to send people.
- Where possible, ensure more lead-time in advertising vacancies.

14. Course Timing

Interviewees noted that those who are responsible for the delivery of training do not always time courses bearing in mind the production environment of potential participants



e.g. timing could be better linked to the “valleys” in the production cycle. Sometimes courses need to be cancelled due to a lack of participants; other courses are offered too infrequently, as indicated by the lack of identified dates. Some interviewees reported very positive service from ITSD training in quickly arranging group training for a division.

Some courses, such as the flagship courses, are scheduled quite often and planned far in advance, given their complex logistics. Any required changes in these courses’ schedules need long lead times.

Stakeholder-suggested solutions

- Have more contact with clients to better meet their needs.
- Ensure that their training plan follows people, especially if required courses are postponed.
- Use online learning in the same way that universities do.

15. Availability of Courses in the Language of Choice

Although interviewees said the courses are offered less frequently in French, some also recognize improvements made over the last several years and the efforts taken to accomplish this. There was also a recognition that this is a difficult problem, especially for computer courses, where materials do not always exist and French language trainers are scarce and expensive.

Non-Computer Courses

For the 44 courses where a date is given, 50% have an equal number of French and English events. Another 30% list both languages, although there were more events in English. Nearly 20% had events listed in one language only, and this was more frequently English. This must be balanced against the proportions of employees in the population, where there are fewer people requesting training in French than in English. As of Jan 31, 2001, 41% of indeterminate employees had French as the first official language, although some of these employees request training in English.

Computer Courses

Since 1997, about 20% of ITSD organized computer courses have been given in French. Only 3.3% of the personal computer operating systems are set up in French. ITSD training reports that the majority of Francophones at Statistics Canada request technical training with the English version of the software delivered by a qualified French instructor using manuals written with French text and English ‘screen shots.’

Stakeholder-suggested solutions

- List dates for the course in both official languages
- Continue offering courses in French with a reduced class size.



- Co-ordinate flagship organizers and recruiting staff well in advance to better forecast demand. Course dates need to be set *well in advance* so that there is adequate planning time.
- Vary when French courses are offered, while recognizing the need for a critical mass in a class for it to have a dynamic result. This is particularly true for flagship courses. An anticipated closer collaboration between training course managers and the new Recruitment and Development Division is expected to reduce scheduling problems.
- Partner with other federal departments for computer training in French.

16. Access to Course Information

Interviewees generally reported that they were able to find the course information they needed, and that this has continued to improve over time. However, some observed that more improvements would help improve access. Barriers included: course information is sometimes fragmented and not consolidated; access to internal course calendars can be difficult for those who do not have computers or who are not well versed in their use; some internal courses do not indicate dates, external course information can be difficult to find (e.g. PSC and PWGSC courses at the Institute for Government Information Professionals). There is also a lack of timely information about the status of an application for a course. Course invitations are normally sent out about 45 to 60 days before the course begins. Course applications are processed as they arrive, followed by course confirmations.

In spite of the generally positive comments about electronic access to information, there are still some concerns. The calendars for courses provided by the Training Institute on the ICN and various Intranet sites could be better linked. There are no Internet addresses for PSC or PWGSC courses on the ICN, although some external training-related addresses are now on the recruits' Web site. On January 25, 2001, nearly half of the 86 courses listed in the Training Institute Calendar did not have a date provided for the next course.

Stakeholder-suggested solutions

- Continue paper-based advertising. Identify those employees without their own computer and target training-related information to them through other means. Training co-ordinators could assist.
- Provide additional training-related addresses on the ICN.
- Provide dates for Training Institute courses.
- Provide more timely course confirmation notices.

17. Course Descriptions and Prerequisites

Interviewees noted that some potential participants are uncertain about how to interpret the prerequisites for courses. Information on prerequisites is provided for many of the courses listed in the Training Institute calendar and within the description of informatics training courses. Occasionally, the information is vague or puts the prerequisite in terms



of courses rather than experience. Some trainers underlined their willingness to help employees decide if a course will meet their needs or be appropriate for them.

Stakeholder-suggested solutions

- Encourage people—through e-mails, calendars and training co-ordinators—to get informed advice by speaking to course instructors directly, where instructors agree.

18. Course Availability

Much of the training for the administrative support community is on-the-job training. Some of the information gained in external courses requires modification after the training has been taken to adapt the learning to a Statistics Canada context. Some of the training needed about management systems would also benefit managers. Similarly, account executives working in regional offices do not have training courses geared to all their needs. While selling skills can be augmented through training available in the private sector, other types of training would only be available in-house since it would need to be based on Statistics Canada terminology, concepts, products, geography and other factors.

The Administrative Officer Recruitment and Development Program has been initiated, but the training component has not yet been brought up-to-date. There are plans to do this, although other priorities may mean that these changes will not happen immediately. The report entitled *Administrative Community Renewal: Recommendations on the Issues of Workload and Recognition* (May 2000) excluded training, but noted that it needs to be addressed.

A course on financial and budget management is to be developed as part of the Management Development Program. This obviously targets managers although there is the desire from those interviewed in the administrative community that this be extended to include Administrative Officers since in many cases, these employees perform financial and budgetary support functions in their jobs.

Stakeholder-suggested solutions

- Develop courses or a series of modules.
- Develop a financial training course for managers that could be extended and tailored for the administrative community. This could be done to enable Administrative Officers to attend when their managers do.
- With the new Administrative Officer Recruitment and Development Program, a list of training courses has been included based on work done in 1993. Examine this list further within the context of the Program and other efforts to continue the renewal of the administrative community. This is particularly important since the report entitled *Administrative Community Renewal: Recommendations on the Issues of Workload and Recognition* specifically excluded training and development.



- Adopt more widely the practice of holding regular training sessions for new Administrative Officers until the training program is in place.

19. Training of Instructors

Sometimes, divisional employees are used as substitutes for qualified trainers to deliver courses or specific components of an individual course. Many of these employees do not have the skill to teach even though they may be subject matter experts. As a result, their training efforts meet with limited success.

Full-time trainers identified the importance of good teaching skills so that the most effective use is made of classroom time. Because Statistics Canada continues to place the highest priority on the design and delivery of effective job training to meet the technical, professional, managerial and administrative needs of the Agency, the skills and abilities of those delivering training must be assured.

Stakeholder-suggested solutions

- Train the trainers. (There is a two-day course for occasional trainers offered regularly.)
- Use the private sector to purchase quality training if a course is not available, except in the case where courses require Statistics Canada subject matter experts.

