

**PROTOCOL FOR CONFERRING  
A CANADIAN HOME BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION  
NATIONAL DESIGNATION ON  
NEW HOME BUILDERS AND RENOVATORS**

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In June 2006, the Board of Directors of the Canadian Home Builders' Association (CHBA) approved the Recommended National Education Benchmark for New Home Builders and Renovators, referred to hereafter as the **Benchmark**. The **Benchmark** details information on 11 topics and stipulates the knowledge that new home builders and renovators must have in order to hold a national designation.

The CHBA now wishes to set out requirements for implementing the national designation. This report examines the following items relevant to a national designation program:

- National designation concept
- Requirements for national designation
- Measures to meet requirements
- Implementation requirements

## 2.0 NATIONAL DESIGNATION CONCEPT

The CHBA's intention is to bestow a national designation, such as Canadian Graduate New Home Builder or Canadian Graduate Renovator, on individuals who have met the requirements of provincial certification programs **that meet the education requirements specified by the Benchmark**. This means that national designations apply only where provincial new home builder and renovator certification programs meet the educational requirements of the **Benchmark**.

## 3.0 REQUIREMENTS FOR NATIONAL DESIGNATION

The CHBA has one essential condition for conferring a national designation: **the designation must be credible**. Credibility of the designation requires assurance that national designation holders know the material specified in the **Benchmark**. Unless the designation is credible, it will not be perceived as having value by the public, the residential construction industry or other groups. Without credibility, a designation holds no value for the individual new home builder or renovator.

Ensuring credibility of the national designation requires the following:

- Specifying the elements of the national designation concept.
- Identifying requirements to make the elements credible: These requirements are contained in a **protocol**.
- Implementing measures to meet the requirements to make each element credible: These requirements are also contained in a **protocol**.

The term, "**protocol**" refers to requirements that ensure the credibility of the national designation. When individuals meet the requirements contained in the **protocol**, they are

deemed to have complied with the education requirements of the **Benchmark** and may be granted a **national designation**.

### **3.1 Elements of the National Designation Concept**

Organizations that bestow designations can have a range of elements in their protocols or certification requirements, including ethical requirements, continuing professional development requirements, additional occupational requirements, and periodic reassessment of persons who hold designations to determine their competence. As noted above, the **CHBA has decided that its condition for conferring a national designation at this time is compliance with the education requirements defined by the Benchmark.**

Ensuring credibility of the education requirements means making each of the core elements of the education process credible, i.e.:

- Course development
- Course delivery
- Examinations

Making these elements credible depends on each of them complying with specified conditions and procedures. These conditions and procedures constitute part of the **protocol** and are discussed below.

### **3.2 Requirements to Achieve Credible Course Development**

Courses must be structured to address the knowledge identified in the **Benchmark**. This can be done in alternate formats. For example, some educational institutions structure their course content on the basis of learning outcomes and objectives. Others identify individual competencies and structure course content on them. Either approach allows course content to be structured to ensure that all topics contained in the **Benchmark**, i.e., both the required breadth and depth of coverage, are addressed.

### **3.3 Requirements to Achieve Credible Course Delivery**

Course delivery must provide a predictable, consistent, ongoing and verifiable standard of training that teaches course materials effectively. The course delivery entity must have the capacity to ensure that this requirement is met for the delivery to be credible.

### **3.4 Requirements to Achieve Credible Examinations**

The examination content and process must assess objectively and fairly the knowledge of candidates with respect to course content. The following detailed requirements apply:

- Questions must be developed for each competency or learning objective of the courses.
- Performance standards must be developed for each competency.

- Scoring must be based on objective criteria. The use of performance standards facilitates objective scoring of results.
- The examination must be kept confidential.
- A bank of questions must be developed and rotated in the examination schedule to prevent unfair advantage to those who obtain copies of past examinations.
- Actual or potential conflicts of interest in determining candidates' scores and/or their designation must be avoided by establishing some independence between the examination body and the bodies conferring the provincial certification and national designation.
- Examiners must be free of any conflicts of interest.
- Rules of conduct during the examination must be developed and enforced to prevent cheating by those taking the examination.
- The entire examination process must be documented. This includes examination development criteria, scoring criteria, question banks, question rotation criteria, measures to prevent conflicts of interest, measures to ensure examination confidentiality, criteria for appointing examiners and rules for conducting examinations.

#### **4.0 MEASURES TO ENSURE CREDIBILITY OF ELEMENTS OF THE EDUCATION PROCESS**

This section of the report outlines measures to meet the requirements of the core elements of the education process outlined in the previous section. They are intended to achieve credibility of the education requirements and are also part of the **protocol**.

##### **4.1 Measures to Ensure Credible Course Development**

Measures to meet course development requirements include having courses developed by accredited institutions that have relevant expertise, i.e., expertise in course development. Another approach is to engage individuals who have credentialed expertise relevant to course development. In either case, courses must be developed by people who have expertise in the subject matter.

Course development requires the following items to be addressed:

- **Course terms of reference:** This includes decisions on course content and teaching approach.
- **Course developer selection:** This includes decisions on the selection approach (e.g., competitive approach) and selection criteria.
- **Project management:** This includes addressing responsibility for managing the work and methods for ensuring quality assurance.

**Course development requirements must be met for course delivery to be credible.**

## 4.2 Measures to Ensure Credible Course Delivery

Measures to meet course delivery requirements include having courses delivered by accredited institutions that have relevant expertise, i.e., expertise in course delivery. Accredited institutions or individuals must confirm or demonstrate that they have processes for maintaining instructional standards and for verifying the competence of trainers. Another approach is to engage individuals who are subject experts and have credentialed instructional skills.

Course delivery requires the following items to be addressed:

- **Course availability/accessibility:** It is important to make courses available and accessible to new home builders and renovators throughout a province. Alternative approaches can be used:
  - Electronic, i.e., on-line course delivery: This approach has significant merits, e.g., standardized course delivery, ease of access, reduced travel time, flexibility with respect to course timing, reduced time away from work, and no geographical boundaries.
  - Delivery by instructors at educational institutions: This setting typically provides a good environment for learning because of the facilities used and the opportunity for interaction between students and instructors.
- **Quality assurance:** Methods for assuring quality include monitoring course delivery against relevant criteria and applying selection criteria to course developers.

**Course delivery requirements must be met for course delivery to be credible.**

## 4.3 Measures to Ensure Credible Examinations

Measures to meet requirements for effective examinations outlined above include engaging accredited institutions to develop and conduct the examinations.

The development and delivery of effective examinations requires the following items to be addressed<sup>1</sup>:

- **Selection of examination developers:** This includes decisions on the selection approach (e.g., competitive approach) and selection criteria.
- **Managing the development of examinations:** This includes addressing responsibility for managing the work and methods for ensuring quality assurance.
- **Examination availability/accessibility:** Examinations should be easily accessible in a province to make the provincial certification and national designation opportunities available.

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<sup>1</sup> The measures listed above do not reflect the use of prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR) techniques for assessing those that have experience and expertise independent of taking any courses that are developed pursuant to the Benchmark. However, this may be unnecessary since new home builders and renovators could be permitted to challenge the examination without having to complete any courses.

**Examination requirements must be met for examinations to be credible.**

## **5.0 ANCILLARY FUNCTIONS RELATED TO PROTOCOL IMPLEMENTATION**

A credible protocol requires various ancillary or supporting functions to be carried out. These include the following:

### **5.1 Registrar Functions**

- Recording and tracking individuals who hold national designations.
- Ensuring that the registry of individuals holding national designations is current.
- Ensuring that the registry of individuals holding national designation is kept open for public scrutiny.

### **5.2 Hearing Functions**

- Hearings and rulings on appeals to national designation decisions.
- Hearing and ruling on complaints about national designation holders.
- Hearing and ruling on disciplinary issues regarding national designation holders.

### **5.3 Recording and Documentation Functions**

- Documenting the designation process, including all elements of the protocol and methods for implementing it.
- Recording hearings and their results.
- Maintaining the integrity and confidentiality of the data and personal information contained in the registry database.
- Preparing all correspondence regarding designation issues.
- Establishing information storage and retrieval systems for all documentation produced and held.

## **6.0 IMPLEMENTATION REQUIREMENTS**

### **6.1 Overview of Responsibilities**

CHBA must develop national policies and regulations for such items as the following: 1) modifying the terms of national designations, 2) behaviour of national designation holders and recourses in case of breach of rules, 3) rules on use of national designation certificate/logo and 4) suspending or withdrawing national designations. CHBA must also carry out ancillary functions such as those listed above.

Provincial associations are responsible for ensuring that the requirements for their certification programs are met. This means meeting all elements of the **protocol** if graduates of their programs wish to apply for national designation.

## 6.2 Evidence of Compliance

Implementing national designations requires the following evidence of compliance:

- **Evidence of compliance by provincial certification programs with education requirements of the Benchmark as defined by the protocol:** In order to confer a national designation, CHBA must have evidence of compliance of provincial certification programs with the **protocol**. This will require clarity about what constitutes acceptable evidence of compliance and methods for providing it.
- **Evidence of compliance by applicants for national designation with requirements of the protocol:** CHBA will also require evidence of compliance by applicants for national designation with educational requirements specified in the **Benchmark** in accordance with terms of the **protocol**. This will require clarity about what constitutes acceptable evidence of compliance and methods for providing it.

## 6.3 Organizational Requirements

In order to ensure objectivity and impartiality of the national designation process, there should be independence between the conferring entity and the educational/training entity. This is key to credibility.

## 6.4 Implementation Issues

A business plan must be developed to implement the national designation. This requires a determination of costs and conditions for financial viability of the national designation program.

It also requires the development of conditions and procedures to establish credibility requirements in consultation with provincial HBAs.