

ACCREDITATION of PROFESSIONAL STATISTICIANS in CANADA

Background

The Statistical Society of Canada is implementing an accreditation program for statisticians practicing in Canada, scheduled for April 2004. Accreditation is a professional designation similar to that used in some parts of the world, such as the United Kingdom and Australia. Currently, Quebec is the only place in North America where there is a professional designation. The prime objective of the accreditation program is to indicate that the holder has achieved an acceptable level of professional competence in the understanding and application of statistical methods and is bound by a Code of Ethics.

Accredited statisticians are expected to ensure that good statistical practices are followed throughout:

- Planning of projects and studies;
- Data collection and management;
- Analyses of data;
- Synthesis of results;
- Interpretation of data and results; and,
- Oral and written communication about projects and studies.

Statistical Accreditation will establish:

- National standards for good statistical practice; and,
- A code for ethical conduct.

What's involved in Statistical Accreditation?

Two levels of Accreditation:

- Professional (designated as P.Stat.)
- Associate (designated as A.Stat.)

Development and Maintenance of Expertise:

- A requirement for ongoing professional development, specific to the needs of the practicing statistician, will be achieved at local, regional, national or international levels.
- Website and internet access to resources and advice from other statisticians for new statistical knowledge.
- Mentorship by a professional adviser for on-the-job cooperative training of recent honours, masters, and PhD graduates in statistics.



How will Accreditation help employers?

Accreditation provides an objective, independent assurance tool. An Accredited Professional Statistician will:

- Possess statistical skills from formal training.
- Have demonstrated skill in applying Statistics.
- Possess sound oral and written communication skills.
- Document records of professional development activities.
- Follow ethical practices that meet professional standards.
- Develop the ability to build strong working relationships with colleagues/clients.

Accreditation will translate into improved efficiency to produce statistical-based information:

- The mentorship program will help ensure early acquisition of good statistical practices and on-the-job experience in specific areas of application for Associate Statisticians.
- Accreditation will augment in-house statistical resources.
- Accreditation should attract more and better skilled candidates for employment, and help maintain a skilled professional group.

How will Accreditation help statisticians?

Accreditation will:

- Enhance the professional practice of statistics.
- Facilitate professional development.
- Facilitate mentorship for new graduates through work with Accredited Professional Statisticians (this will provide an invaluable resource to expedite professional development.)
- Foster communication among statisticians.
- Promote continuing professional development.

Who is sponsoring Statistical Accreditation?

The Statistical Society of Canada (SSC). The SSC, founded in 1977, is an organization of about 700 statisticians from academia, industry and government.

The mission of the Statistical Society of Canada (SSC) encourages the development and use of statistics and probability by:

- Helping to develop a public awareness of the value of statistical thinking and the importance of statistics and statisticians in Canadian society.
- Working to ensure that decisions affecting Canadian society are based on appropriate data and valid statistical interpretation.
- Promoting the highest possible standards for statistical education and practice in Canada.
- Promoting the development of statistical methodology.
- Promoting a sense of community among all statisticians in Canada.
- Providing a forum for exchange of ideas between theoreticians and practitioners of statistics.

How can employers be involved?

Accreditation is expected to be a dynamic process. Employers are invited to work with the Society to shape this process. These partnerships will evolve over time and will be driven by the needs in the workplace. The Society needs to be alerted to the on-the-job needs of employers and their statisticians, and to recommendations for workshop topics. Employers can work to ensure that good Statistical practices are developed, maintained and enhanced. Opportunities to be involved with the mentorship program and sponsoring of specialized workshops and seminars, for the wider community of statisticians, will be possible in the future.



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Statistical Society of Canada