

Results at a glance

Evaluation of the Professional Development Function (March 2018)

The purpose of the Professional Development (PD) function is to equip employees with the knowledge and skills needed to effectively deliver on their work objectives. Employees can develop new skills to meet both departmental business requirements and career aspirations. PD training is required for Justice Counsel by law societies in order to maintain their licenses to practice law. The function is based on three main delivery providers:

- **The Continuing Legal Education Program (CLEP)** is responsible for the planning and delivery of legal training on substantive legal content and skills development for Justice Canada employees. CLEP is the main interlocutor with provincial law societies for the accreditation of legal learning to lawyers.
- **The Centre of Expertise for Learning and Professional Development (LPD)** (formerly Professional Development Directorate) is responsible for common, non-legal, and Justice Canada learning not available through the Canada School of Public Service. LPD also manages the relationship with CSPS and acts as a liaison.
- **The Canada School of Public Service (CSPS)** offers a broad range of government-wide learning opportunities. Beginning in 2014-15, CSPS became the provider of core curriculum common to all public servants.

WHAT WAS FOUND

- Analyzing data for PD is challenging due to the availability, consistency and accuracy of existing data.
- Justice Canada employees reported generally positive impacts of PD. A majority of respondents also noted that they have been able to apply their knowledge and skills to their work.
- The majority of employees report that they get the training they need, despite noting barriers such as budget and operational constraints. Challenges in delivering training tailored to regional realities and needs were also noted, including limits to virtual participation related to technological issues and time zone differences. Without a systematic departmental training needs assessment, an objective assessment of the degree to which employees' needs are met is not possible.
- There is an informal approach to planning and alignment with departmental and federal

government priorities. There is no strategic approach to planning and priority setting at a departmental level.

- There is no overarching governance of the departmental PD function. There is insufficient communication and coordination of PD activities across portfolios, sectors, regional offices and the main PD providers. The lack of a clear governance framework has led to unreliable mechanisms to identify training needs and set annual departmental priorities.
- The absence of a coordinated approach to drive alignment of limited resources with departmental and governmental needs and priorities may limit efforts to deliver training to Justice Canada employees in a cost-effective manner.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recommendation 1: Establish an overarching governance mechanism for the departmental professional development function. The governance mechanism should include representation at a senior level across portfolios and sectors (including regional offices reporting through National Litigation Sector [NLS]) to provide oversight and high-level guidance, and to ensure that learning activities address departmental and governmental priorities.

Recommendation 2: Establish an overarching, integrated framework for the professional development function within the Department, which would include clarification of the mandate for the departmental PD providers, as well as clear roles and responsibilities for portfolios and sectors (including regional offices through NLS).

Recommendation 3: Develop a performance measurement strategy to measure the performance of the PD function.

ABOUT THE EVALUATION

The evaluation of the Department of Justice PD function covers a five-year period (2012-13 to 2016-17) and was completed in accordance with Treasury Board's Policy on Results (2016). Its main objective was to assess the performance (effectiveness and efficiency) of the professional development function.

For the full report, please visit the Evaluation Division:
<http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cp-pm/eval/rep-rap/2018/pdf-fpp/index.html>

