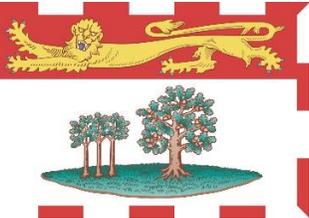


High School Equivalence Assessment Model

Call for Interest



Submission Deadline: March 29, 2019

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A. INTRODUCTION

The General Educational Development Test (GED®) is an international testing program operated by GED Testing Service (GEDTS) based in the United States (US).

A Canadian version of the GED® test, adapted from the US version to Canadian English and French, as well as for Canadian content, is administered in 11 of the 13 Canadian provinces and territories. The current version of the GED® test in Canada was developed in 2002.

The role of the GED® test in the provinces and territories varies. It may be a sufficient requirement for admission into an apprenticeship program or a college. For some post-secondary institutions, further testing, education, training, or work experience would also be required for admission. The GED® test is a flexible and easily accessible option for obtaining a high school equivalency and may help in meeting hiring criteria for individuals in the labour market. As well, it is an expedient option for those in the labour market who may need to obtain a high school equivalency because of changing job requirements or want to pursue new employment opportunities.

In January 2014, an updated version of the GED® test was published in the United States. This new version is better aligned with career readiness and post-secondary transition standards rather than for employment purposes. The test is available in an electronic version only and has been used internationally since late 2016. It relates to competencies in Reading, Writing, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science and contains multiple-choice and other question types (drag and drop, select an area, and drop down), as well as a written essay in the English version.

It is projected that most job offers over the period 2017-2026 will require some level of post-secondary education.

In 2016, with 11.5 per cent of Canadians aged 25 to 34 (340,000 persons) indicating that they have “less than high school graduation” as their highest level of education,¹ it appears that there continues to be a need for some form of high school equivalency. According to data collected in the provinces and territories, individuals who take the GED® test mainly want to undergo a high school equivalency assessment to meet employers’ requirements, access a job, retain a current job, or take advantage of advancement opportunities. Further labour market information can be found in Appendix A.

The main purpose of this Call for Interest is to validate what the level of interest is from companies or organizations in developing a methodology for a new assessment tool that, once completed, would grant a Canadian high school equivalency.

¹ Uppal, S. (2017). *Young men and women without a high school diploma*. Statistics Canada. Retrieved from <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/75-006-x/2017001/article/14824-eng.htm>

B. THE OPPORTUNITY

There are many potential benefits to Canada in developing its own high school equivalency, including the following:

- It would be tailored to the needs of Canadians who write the high-school equivalency test and would meet the requirements/needs for employment purposes and/or entry into post-secondary education.
- The provinces and territories would own the intellectual property rights and have control over the development process, the data, and the evaluation process.
- There would be no need to convert exam questions/material to a Canadian context, and development would be done in both official languages.
- The development process would include educators from secondary and post-secondary institutions, employers, industry, newcomers, Indigenous representatives (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) from across Canada, and government representatives to ensure that the standards are culturally appropriate for all Canadians.

This Call for Interest in the development of a new assessment tool for Canadians wanting to obtain a high school equivalency represents a unique opportunity for companies and organizations. This tool would offer the opportunity:

- to propose electronic, online, or paper-based assessments;
- to provide learners with comments on the assessment; and
- to generate a variety of reports.

The proposal should make provision for an entity/structure to oversee/offer the assessment on an ongoing basis, which would include development workshops, consultations, and decision-making and approval processes.

C. ABOUT THE PROJECT

A number of provinces and territories have been considering the opportunity to develop a high school equivalency test. Although the number of Canadians taking the GED® test is declining in most provinces and territories, these still feel it is necessary to have the opportunity to obtain a high school equivalency.

Many questions and concepts have been raised by the provinces and territories should a new assessment tool be developed, including the following:

- What should the assessment tool look like?
- Should it include an essential skills component?
- Does the assessment need to have five subject matter areas (e.g., should Social Studies continue to be a module, or would Civics be a better module? Depending on the purpose of the equivalency, could Reading, Writing and Mathematics be sufficient)?
- How would a new high school equivalency be recognized by employers and post-secondary and apprenticeship institutions?

The development of a Canadian high school equivalency assessment would include the following:

- A standardized assessment.
- Intellectual property jointly owned by the provinces and territories.
- Electronic and paper-based delivery.
- A variety of accommodations, such as screen readers or reading tapes and Braille for the visually impaired.
- Flexibility in leading to a credential, allowing for provinces and territories to use the tool within their context (different pathways).
- Developed and accessible in both official languages.
- Culturally sensitive, especially with respect to Indigenous people and immigrants.
- Recognition that the provinces and territories will provide feedback and direction on provincial/territorial objectives/goals.
- An assessment pedagogically suited to adult learners.
- A structure for developing the assessment, including workshops and decision-making and approval processes.
- A plan for updating the assessment to ensure its validity.
- A plan for data collection, sharing, and ownership.
- An estimated timeline.
- An estimate of development, implementation, and operating costs.

D. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

RESPONSES TO THIS CALL FOR INTEREST MUST INCLUDE:

1. Organization History (*1 page maximum*)
 - A brief history of the organization, including years of operation.
 - A description of the organization's current programs and services.

2. Statement of Interest and Experience (*2 pages maximum*) with concrete examples
 - Why is the organization interested in the project?
 - What is the organization's experience working on a similar project?
 - Does the organization have capacity to work in both official languages? Please provide details of the organization's capacity.
 - What is the relevance of the services or practices of the organization considering the project?

3. Vision for the Project (*3 pages maximum*)
 - What would be your plan for developing a high school equivalency tool, including timeline to complete?
 - How would you conduct the analysis to determine needs, etc., as outlined above in the section About the Project?
 - How would you engage stakeholders: teaching personnel from secondary and post-secondary institutions, employers, industry, newcomers, and Aboriginal representatives from across Canada?

DEADLINE

Date and time: Friday, March 29, 2019 – 11:59 p.m. (Eastern standard time)

Submit a PDF version electronically to:

Noel Baldwin, Coordinator, Postsecondary Education and Adult Learning
Council of Ministers of Education, Canada Secretariat
95 St. Clair Avenue West, Suite 1106
Toronto, Ontario M4V 1N6
Canada

Email: n.baldwin@cmecc.ca

Next steps

The information will be used by the provinces and territories to determine if they will move forward with a Request for Proposal to develop a Canadian high school equivalency assessment.

E. ABOUT THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF EDUCATION, CANADA

The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) was established in 1967 by the ministers of education. It provides an intergovernmental forum to discuss policy issues and undertake initiatives in areas of mutual interest. It is also a channel to engage with national education organizations and the federal government.

The CMEC Secretariat, which supports the Council's work, is located at:

95 St. Clair Avenue West, Suite 1106
Toronto, Ontario M4V 1N6
Canada
Telephone: 416-962-8100
Fax: 416-962-2800
Email: [INFORMATION](#)

Further information about the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada and the Secretariat can be found at: https://www.cmec.ca/11/About_Us.html.

The CMEC Secretariat is facilitating the issuing of this Call for Interest and collection of responses. This project is not a project of CMEC, nor has it endorsed the project. The role played by the CMEC Secretariat should not be taken as reflecting a decision of CMEC.

F. LIMITATIONS

Any Respondent making a submission in response to this Call for Interest does so fully accepting the following provisions:

- This is a request for information only; it is not a procurement/tender document, and no legal obligations will arise hereunder in any circumstances.
- The provinces and territories will act as they determine, on a discretionary basis, and will not be responsible for any losses or costs incurred by any respondent as a result thereof.

APPENDIX A – LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION

In 2016, 340,000 Canadians aged 25 to 34 reported “less than high school graduation” as their highest level of education.² This figure represented 8.5 per cent of men and 5.4 per cent of women in this age group. This is a significant decline over time: in 1990, 22 per cent of men and 19 per cent of women between 25 and 34 years of age had not finished high school (approximately one million Canadians without a high school diploma or equivalent).

Indigenous people are more likely to have less than a high school diploma. Twenty per cent of Indigenous men and 16 per cent of Indigenous women did not have a high school diploma in 2016. Men and women without a high school diploma (11 per cent) are more likely to be unable to enter the labour market than those with a high school or post-secondary diploma (6 per cent).³

The table below, from the Job Vacancy and Wage Survey 2017⁴ – Education, Certification and Experience Sought/Required, indicates that many job vacancies require a minimum of a high school diploma or equivalent. It should be noted that the results concerning jobs requiring low education/low experience levels may be skewed owing to high turnover in these occupations (e.g., sales and service).

	Canada
No minimum level of education sought	34.9%
High school diploma or equivalent	28.7%
Apprenticeship or trade certificate or diploma	8.2%
College, CEGEP, or other non-university certificate or diploma	13.5%
University certificate or diploma below bachelor’s level	3.3%
Bachelor’s degree or above	11.4%

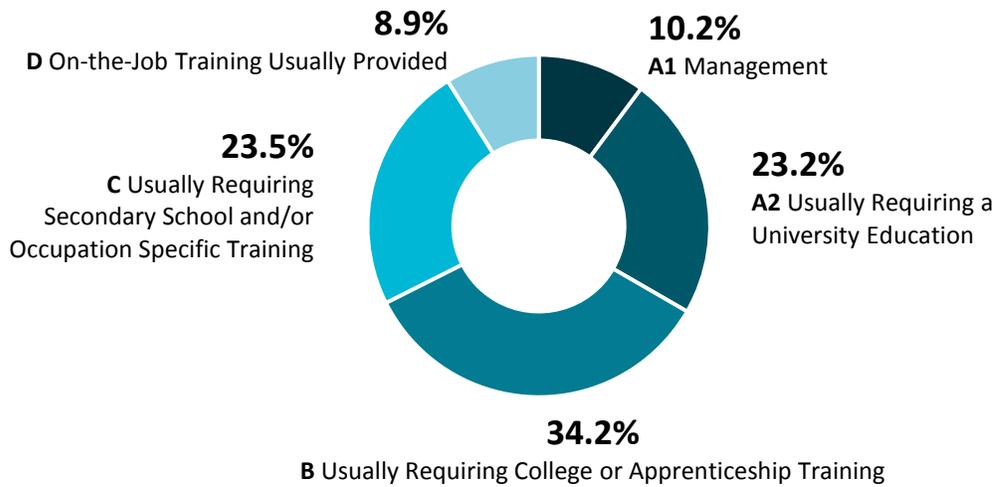
It is projected that most job openings over the period 2017-2026 will require at least some form of post-secondary education, as noted in the diagram below.

² Uppal, S. *Young men and women without a high school diploma*. Statistics Canada. Retrieved from <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/75-006-x/2017001/article/14824-eng.htm>.

³ Ibid.

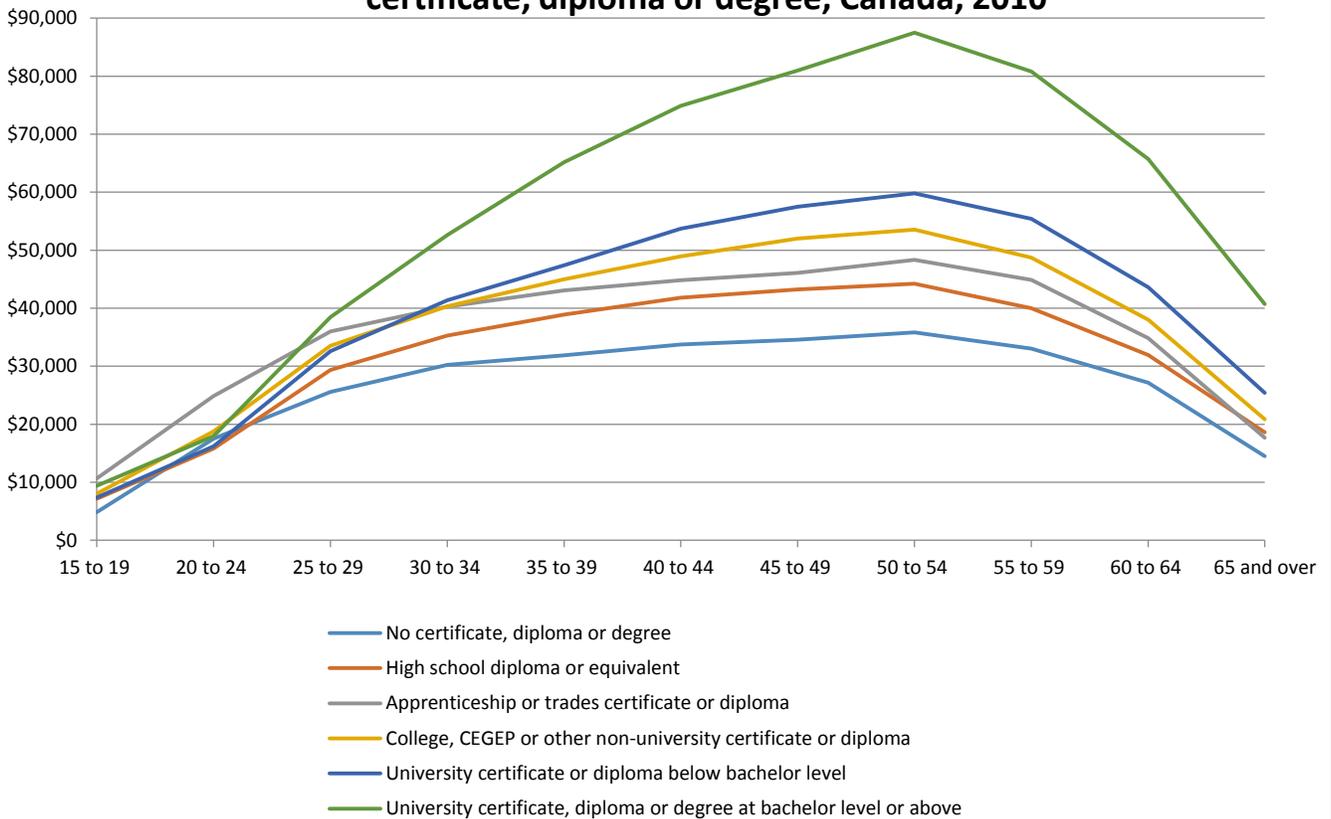
⁴ The following industries are excluded from the JWVS: 'Religious organizations' (8131), 'Private households' (814), 'Federal, government public administration' (911), 'Provincial and territorial public administration' (912), 'International and other extra-territorial public administration' (919). Furthermore, the 'employee' concept used in the JWVS excludes owners or partners of unincorporated businesses and professional practices, the self-employed, subcontractors, external consultants, unpaid family workers, persons working outside Canada, military personnel, and employees on unpaid leave.

Job Openings by NOC Skill Level (Canada, 2017 to 2026)

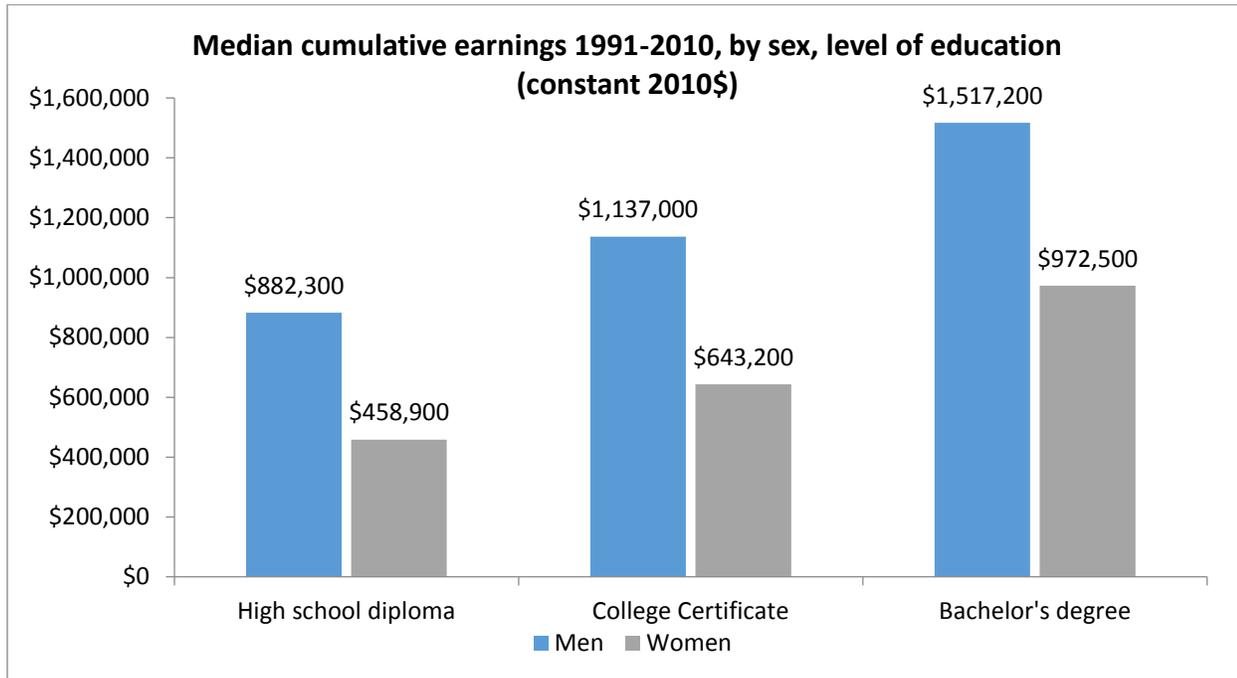


Furthermore, employment opportunities can vary significantly for those without a high school diploma or equivalent. For example, as shown in the chart below, the average earnings of Canadians without a high school diploma lag behind the earnings of those who complete high school (or receive a high school equivalency) or a post-secondary credential. The gap in average earnings starts early in a person’s working life and increases throughout their career.

Average earnings or employment income, by age group and highest certificate, diploma or degree, Canada, 2010



Over a person’s working life, differences in earnings increase with level of education. The data below show the cumulative effect on earnings of high school, college, and undergraduate university attainment over a twenty-year period.⁵



Participation in the labour force of Canadians who do not have a high school diploma or equivalent is lower than that of those who do have a high school diploma or equivalent, or post-secondary credential. Since 2010, labour force participation has been 20 to 40 percentage points lower among Canadians who have not completed at least a high school diploma or equivalent. That gap has been consistent across the period from 2010 to September 2017, as seen in the table below. It should be noted, however, that the participation rate between 2010 and 2017 went down for all educational attainment categories. The decreases are due in large part to Canada’s aging population.

Labour force participation 2010-2017, by educational attainment, both sexes, 15 years and older, not seasonally adjusted ⁶									
Educational attainment	Average	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017 (to Sept)
All levels	66.3	66.9	66.7	66.5	66.5	66.0	65.9	65.7	65.9
0 to 8 years	22.4	23.3	23.2	23.1	23.0	22.0	21.4	21.2	21.9
Some high school	46.1	48.1	47.7	46.5	46.3	45.6	44.9	44.4	45.0
High school graduate	65.2	67.5	67.0	66.2	65.9	64.9	63.4	63.1	63.0
Some post-secondary	65.8	67.6	67.0	66.8	66.1	65.1	64.8	64.3	65.0

⁵ Frenette, M. and Ostrovsky, Y. (2014). *The Cumulative Earnings of Postsecondary Graduates Over 20 Years: Results by Field of Study*. Statistics Canada. Retrieved from <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-626-x/11-626-x2014040-eng.htm>

⁶ Statistics Canada. CANSIM Table 282-0003. Labour force survey estimates (LFS), by educational attainment, sex and age group, unadjusted for seasonality, monthly (persons unless otherwise noted).

Labour force participation 2010-2017, by educational attainment, both sexes, 15 years and older, not seasonally adjusted ⁶									
Post-secondary certificate or diploma	74.5	75.7	75.4	74.9	74.8	74.3	74.1	73.5	72.9
University degree	78.3	79.4	78.6	78.8	78.3	77.8	78.0	77.7	77.8
Bachelor's degree	78.3	79.7	78.4	78.8	78.3	77.7	78.0	77.7	77.8
Above bachelor's degree	78.3	78.8	79.0	78.7	78.1	78.0	77.9	77.9	78.0

From the 2016 Census – Education, the number and percentage of Canada’s population aged 25 to 64 with no certificate, diploma, or degree by province/territory is 11.5%.

Education, the number and percentage of Canada’s population aged 25 to 64 with no certificate, diploma or degree		
Province	Total (Aged 25 to 64)	% (of Population Aged 25 to 64)
Canada	2,169,790	11.5%
NL	45,170	15.7%
PE	8,950	12.0%
NS	60,280	12.2%
NB	55,645	13.9%
QC	580,635	13.3%
ON	752,995	10.4%
MB	94,310	14.4%
SK	69,200	12.2%
AB	244,755	10.8%
BC	244,000	9.6%
YT	2,255	10.7%
NT	4,850	20.5%
NU	6,750	40.9%

This can be further broken down for the percentage of the population with no certificate, diploma, or degree within each age group by province/territory (2016), as seen in the table below. For example, 8.7 per cent or 398,470 of Canadians between the ages of 25 and 34 have no certificate, degree, or diploma versus 16.2% of those aged 55 to 64 years.

Province	25 to 34 years	35 to 44 years	45 to 54 years	55 to 64 years
Canada	8.7%	8.8%	11.8%	16.2%
NL	8.0%	10.2%	17.2%	23.7%
PE	6.6%	7.6%	13.1%	18.2%
NS	7.4%	8.2%	13.0%	17.9%
NB	7.9%	8.5%	14.3%	21.7%
QC	10.5%	9.9%	13.5%	18.4%
ON	7.7%	7.9%	10.6%	15.1%
MB	12.1%	11.5%	14.8%	19.2%

Province	25 to 34 years	35 to 44 years	45 to 54 years	55 to 64 years
SK	9.8%	9.4%	13.4%	16.4%
AB	9.3%	9.1%	11.4%	14.2%
BC	6.8%	7.6%	10.1%	13.5%
YT	9.5%	7.3%	12.3%	13.5%
NT	19.6%	18.3%	22.9%	21.5%
NU	43.4%	38.7%	42.0%	36.9%