



# TRUSTED SKILLS

CANDIDATE GUIDE



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>GET STARTED</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>SECTION 1: UNLOCKING POTENTIAL</b>	<b>5</b>
What is a Skill?	5
Enabling Skills	5
Job Skills	5
Reinventing Skill Certification	6
<b>SECTION 2: TRUSTED SKILLS PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION</b>	<b>7</b>
Marketing Management Certification	7
Digital Marketing Certification	7
Content Creation Certification	7
Creative Thinking Certification	7
It Starts with Trust	8
Anchored to Governance	8
Anchored to Concise Criteria	8
Anchored to Rigorous Assessment	8
Anchored to Evidence	8
<b>SECTION 3: GETTING CERTIFIED</b>	<b>9</b>
The Steps to Certification	9
Your <i>Trusted Skills</i> Self-Assessment	12
Professional Evidence	12
Skill Development Evidence	13
Community Evidence	13
Personal Evidence	14
Other	14
Are you Ready?	14
<b>SECTION 4: NOT READY YET? BRIDGE YOUR SKILLS GAP</b>	<b>15</b>
Building Your Skills Plan	15
Module 1 – Why Design YOU?	15
Module 2 – Exploring Who You Are	15
Module 3 – Why Mentors Matter	15
Module 4 – Exploring Career and Job Pathways	15



Module 5 – You are More Than a Job	16
Module 6 – Designing Your Map	16
Module 7 – Telling Your Story	16
Apply for Your <i>Trusted Skills</i> professional certification	16
<b>SECTION 5: PREPARING YOUR TRUSTED SKILLS EPORTFOLIO</b>	<b>17</b>
It’s About Evidence	17
Make Intangibles Tangible	17
It’s About Recognition	17
Developing Your ePortfolio	17
Tab 1: <i>Trusted Skills</i> Biography	17
Goal 1: Introduce Yourself	18
Goal 2: Describe Your Skill’s Journey	18
Goal 3: Highlight Skill Achievement	18
Goal 4: Introduce the Why	18
Goal 5: Link to your Bigger Story	18
Tab 2: Self-Declaration of <i>Trusted Skills</i>	19
Column 1: Certification Criteria	19
Column 2: Frequency	19
Column 3: Skills Evidence	19
Organizing Your Evidence in Your Master ePortfolio	20
Tab 3: <i>Trusted Skills</i> Testimonial	20
What?	20
So What?	20
Now What?	20
<b>SECTION 6: ADVANCED SKILLS CASE STUDY</b>	<b>21</b>
The Format	21
The Questions	21
Problem Analysis	21
Recommendations	21
How to Prepare	22
Assessment Criteria	22
<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>23</b>
Frequently Asked Questions	24
Project Glossary	28
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>32</b>



# GET STARTED

The world is moving fast and so are the needs of employers. Employers need people with the skills that will give them an advantage. Today, there are endless ways to develop skills - formal education, work experience, volunteering, advice from mentors, and many other forms of professional development. But how can you show potential employers that you have the skills they're looking for?

## The answer is *Trusted Skills professional certification*

*Trusted Skills* is different because it only judges the evidence of your skills, not how they were developed. *Trusted Skills* follows the adage "seeing is believing". This starts (and finishes) with you proving to a certified *Trusted Skills* reviewer that you can do what you say you can do by submitting your *Trusted Skills* ePortfolio for assessment.

## The *Trusted Skills* advantage

*Trusted Skills professional certification* matters to an employer because it means you've been assessed by a certified *Trusted Skills* reviewer and have the skills you claim to have. This is the edge that every job candidate needs.

This year, Calgary Arts Development Authority, in partnership with Calgary Economic Development, and the Calgary Marketing Association are prototyping **four *Trusted Skills professional certifications*** in marketing: marketing management; digital marketing; content creation; creative thinking.

## Get *Trusted Skills* certified

Being *Trusted Skills* certified follows a consistent six-step process. The cost for each *Trusted Skills professional certification* is **\$300**, but during the prototype, Calgary Arts Development is funding the **first 60 certificates** with **zero cost** to the candidate.

**To learn more, read this guide and decide whether *Trusted Skills* can give you the advantage you've been looking for.**





# SECTION 1

## UNLOCKING POTENTIAL

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Do you have real skills but are having trouble taking your career to the next level?

It's important to remember that hiring a new employee is a big risk for any employer. Employers look to reduce the risk by **asking for evidence** that you have the skills to do a job.

Some fields have introduced skills certification to manage this risk, but for most jobs there is no current path to certifying skills. Think about it. A doctor's skills are certified. An accountant's skills are certified. Most skilled trades, like electricians or plumbers, are certified. Employers trust this certification because they trust the organization and professionals awarding it.

But the problem is **for most skills** there is no trusted certification process. This is the *problem Trusted Skills professional certification* is designed to solve and this why **Trusted Skills may give you the edge you've been missing**.

### WHAT IS A SKILL?

It wasn't long ago when we could decide on one career path or job. That's not the case anymore. Many jobs or career paths available today may not exist tomorrow or next year. To match this change, regardless of whether you are an employer or a job candidate, it is critical for us to shift from thinking about jobs to thinking about skills. The right skills will allow us to adapt and change as quickly as the world around us.

There are two major types of skills:

#### Enabling Skills

Enabling skills (sometimes called soft skills or transferable skills) are what allow you to adapt and adopt new job-specific skills. Examples of enabling skills include communication skills, problem solving skills, collaboration skills, and core literacies (e.g., technology literacy).

#### Job Skills

Job-specific skills are the skills you need to complete a specific job, whether welding, teaching, engineering, or soccer.

Historically, job-specific skills were the most valued by employers as they were essential to generating short-term economic value. Today, many employers, from accountants to skilled trades to engineering, use specific skills frameworks to find the right employee to join their team. These frameworks define both a common language and mechanisms to assess the skill.

The challenge is that job-specific skills are highly contextual, and in today's fast-paced world, they possess an increasingly short lifespan. In the past, a trade learned as a teenager could be developed and refined through a lifetime of experience and maintain its value.

Today, job-specific skills often become dated and require continual training to maintain their value. Look at the table below based on a World Economic Forum forecast of skill demand.



## REINVENTING SKILL CERTIFICATION

There are endless ways to develop skills, through formal education, work experience, volunteering, advice from mentors, or self-directed professional development.

**The most valuable skills don't result from just one of these experiences — it's about how they work together.**

The challenge is skill certification is often integrated with skill development. Consider the structure of accredited learning. An instructor designs and teaches a course, and upon completion of the course individuals are assessed whether they meet the learning outcomes of the course. The integrated model of skill development and certification constrains both the capacity and innovation of skill development.

To overcome this, a second model of skill certification has emerged. In this model, skill development and skill certification are decoupled. An example of decoupled certification is a driver's license. Certifying an individual's skill to drive a car is fully decoupled from how they developed the skill to drive. As a result, the government solely focuses on defining and testing whether a candidate possess the skill to be certified to drive a car. In contrast, people have an unlimited number of pathways to develop their skill, from family and friends to professional instruction.

### Skill Development



Albertan develops skill to drive

### Skill Certification



Government certifies this skill

### Decoupling Development from Certification

Today, this decoupled skills certification model has been adopted by a range of professional fields and skilled trades. One of the benefits of decoupling skill development from skill certification is the potential to unlock both diverse forms of skill development, including certified, non-certified and informal, and innovative approaches to skill development.

**The *Trusted Skills* model adopts decoupled skill certification, designed to unlock the potential of Calgary's vast skill development system.**

# SECTION 2

## TRUSTED SKILLS PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION

*Trusted Skills* builds on the principles from other fields from accounting to trades — professionals certifying professionals.

For you, it means you've been certified in the skills you claim to have and that an employer needs. For employers, this means you have been assessed by a certified *Trusted Skills* reviewer that you have the skills you claim to have.

In 2022, [Calgary Arts Development Authority](#), in partnership with [Calgary Economic Development](#), and the [Calgary Marketing Association](#) are prototyping four *Trusted Skills professional certifications* in marketing:

### Marketing Management Certification

This first certification verifies a candidate's foundational marketing skills in the following areas:

1. Marketing insights
2. Audience insights
3. Marketing management
4. Marketing communications



### Digital Marketing Certification

The Digital Marketing certification verifies that an individual has digital marketing skills. This includes using multiple forms of digital media to achieve a marketing goal. A candidate must show skill in the following:

1. Digital analytics
2. Digital advertising
3. Social media
4. Web development



### Content Creation Certification

The Content Creation certification verifies that an individual has the skill to plan, create, and curate content, including text, visual, video, and audio, to support a marketing program.



### Creative Thinking Certification

The Creative Thinking certification verifies that a candidate possesses skills to understand complex problems, gather inspiration for potential solutions, generate ideas, make those innovative ideas tangible, test those ideas to learn more, and tell the story of an insightful change that they have developed. To be certified, a candidate must demonstrate skill in the following areas:

1. Showing curiosity
2. Gathering and assessing relevant information
3. Managing ambiguity
4. Developing and testing creative ideas
5. Storytelling





## IT STARTS WITH TRUST

*Trusted Skills* will only be valued by employers if they perceive it as trusted and legitimate. As a result, *Trusted Skills* assessment is anchored to four pillars:

1. Certification Governance
2. Concise Certification Criteria
3. Certification Rigour
4. Certification Evidence

## GOVERNANCE

The **ISO 17024** standard defines explicit governance standards that must be met to ensure rigour and fairness. Consistent with this standard, the certifying body is accountable for defining and maintaining oversight of all *Trusted Skills professional certifications*, including approving certification criteria and the skill certification processes, and appointing certified *Trusted Skills* reviewers.

For the prototype phase, the certifying body is **Calgary Arts Development Authority**. The certifying body is operationalized through a *Certification Oversight Board* (referred to as the Board). This Board is accountable for delivering the mandate of the certifying body.

## CONCISE CRITERIA

*Trusted Skills* assessment is anchored to comprehensive certification criteria. This certification criteria defines the criteria and evidence that will determine if you fulfil the defined certification requirements. The certification criteria ensure a consistent framework for assessment.

## RIGOROUS ASSESSMENT

The *Trusted Skills* assessment process complies with ISO 17024 standards by incorporating mandatory elements of assessment, including objectivity, documentation comparability, and capacity to accommodate special needs.

## EVIDENCE

*Trusted Skills professional certification* adopts a rigorous evidence-based management approach to certification. For *Trusted Skills*, “evidence” is the information, facts, or data you submit to support your skill claim. Therefore, your role as a candidate is to build an evidence-based case to why you should be awarded your *Trusted Skills professional certification*.



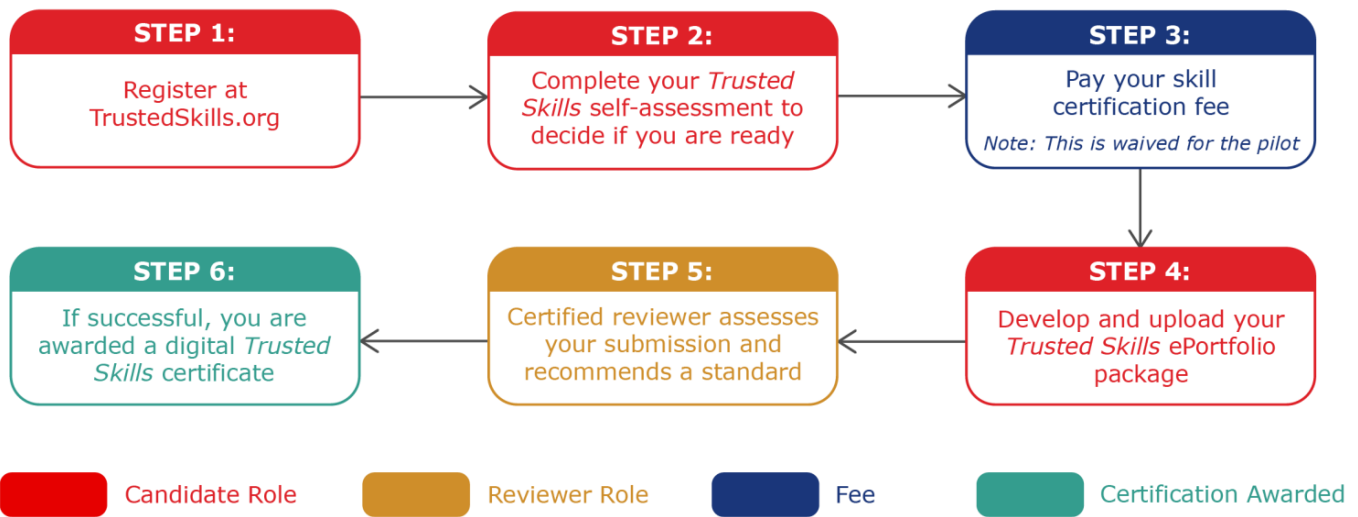


# SECTION 3

## GETTING CERTIFIED

### THE STEPS TO CERTIFICATION

**Trusted Skills professional certification follows a consistent six-step process.**



<b>STEP 1</b>	Register at <a href="https://trustedskills.org">trustedskills.org</a> . You'll receive an email with a link to the DropBox where you'll submit all your documentation for the ePortfolio.
<b>STEP 2</b>	<p>The prototype is awarding <i>Trusted Skills professional certifications</i> in marketing:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Marketing Management</li> <li>2. Digital Marketing</li> <li>3. Content Creation</li> <li>4. Creative Thinking</li> </ol> <p>Once you have identified which of the four certifications you would like to pursue, using the certification criteria, complete your <i>Trusted Skills Self-Assessment</i>. This self-</p>



	<p>assessment will help identify your strengths and areas that require additional development before applying for your <i>Trusted Skills professional certification</i>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing Management Self Assessment - <a href="#">Download Here</a></li> <li>• Digital Marketing Self Assessment - <a href="#">Download Here</a></li> <li>• Content Creation Self Assessment - <a href="#">Download Here</a></li> <li>• Creative Thinking Self Assessment - <a href="#">Download Here</a></li> </ul> <p>If you complete the self-assessment and decide you're not ready to apply for your <i>Trusted Skills professional certification</i>, your next step is to develop a plan to meet the required certification criteria. Your plan may incorporate a range of skill development experiences, including certified, non-certified, or informal skill development. Click here to access resources to support in preparing your plan.</p>
<p><b>STEP</b> <b>3</b></p>	<p>Once you're ready to apply for your <i>Trusted Skills professional certification</i>, pay your certification fee and begin the process. During the pilot, this fee is being funded by Calgary Arts Development Authority.</p>
<p><b>STEP</b> <b>4</b></p>	<p>Develop and prepare your <i>Trusted Skills</i> ePortfolio. These includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Your completed and signed <i>Trusted Skills</i> self-assessment document.</li> <li>2. Your <i>Trusted Skills</i> biography.</li> <li>3. Your <i>Trusted Skills</i> ePortfolio evidence (this may be a single PDF, or a collection of files submitted to the folder).</li> <li>4. Your <i>Trusted Skills</i> testimonial (which can be a video or written submission).</li> </ol> <p>Using the <b>secured and private</b> <i>Trusted Skills</i> DropBox Link provided in your registration email, submit all of the required documents for your selected <i>Trusted Skills professional certification</i>.</p> <p>If you're pursuing your advanced certification, you will need to register to complete an Advanced Skills Case Study. This case study is designed to demonstrate your advanced skill associated with a specific certification.</p> <p>You can register for the advanced skills case study related to your <i>Trusted Skills professional certification</i> pathway by emailing <a href="mailto:support@trustedskills.org">support@trustedskills.org</a></p> <p>Once your submission has been received and accepted, you will get an email from <a href="mailto:support@trustedskills.org">support@trustedskills.org</a> with a submission reference number.</p>
<p><b>STEP</b> <b>5</b></p>	<p>A reviewer will assess your submission relative to your certification criteria and recommend a standard to the <i>Certifying Oversight Board</i>. You can see how they'll be reviewing your submission by reviewing the <i>Trusted Skills</i> ePortfolio Reviewer Templates.</p>
<p><b>STEP</b> <b>6</b></p>	<p>The Board will make the final decision and award a <i>Trusted Skills</i> digital certificate to successful candidates. You will receive your <i>Trusted Skills</i> digital certificate by email at the address provided in your registration.</p>



## YOUR SELF-ASSESSMENT

*Trusted Skills* follows the adage “seeing is believing.” This starts (and finishes) with you proving to your *Trusted Skills* reviewer that you can do what you say you can do. For this reason, the first step towards *Trusted Skills professional certification* is a self-assessment to consider whether you’re ready to challenge the certification. TO start, download the *Trusted Skills* self-assessment template for the certification you are challenging for:

1. Marketing Management Self Assessment - [Download Here](#)
2. Digital Marketing Self Assessment - [Download Here](#)
3. Content Creation Self Assessment - [Download Here](#)
4. Creative Thinking Self Assessment - [Download Here](#)

This self-assessment template provides each criterion, the definition, and an example of evidence to support that you possess this skill. At this stage, it’s important to recognize the three levels of certifications and decide which level you plan to challenge. This ensures that you align your evidence to the level. For example, the level 1 basic criteria are different from the level 2 advanced, and level 3 expert criteria.

In the final column, you will map tangible examples and associated evidence for each criterion. Ultimately, once you start building your ePortfolio, you will archive this evidence digitally. Remember, it’s possible that one piece of evidence may demonstrate multiple skills, so repurposing evidence is fine.

Skills evidence is categorized in the following areas:

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### Professional Evidence

This incorporates all evidence developed in a professional capacity. This could be as an employee or in your own business.

Remember that much of the work you did professionally may be proprietary and confidential, and there may be limits for what you can share. For this reason, always be cautious when it comes to the evidence you choose. You can deal with the proprietary nature of professional evidence in one of two ways.

**Written Approval:** The first is to get written approval from that organization the evidence was developed for. Work is often highly contextual to a moment in time, so an organization may not have any issue in you sharing a sales report from three years ago.

**Remove Identifying Information:** The second approach is to remove all company-identifying information from the evidence. This may include removing the company name and potentially the industry.

### Examples of Professional Evidence

- Descriptions about your current and past professional roles explicitly linked to skills
- Example of a project completed for an employer that demonstrates the skill
  - Samples of documentation a candidate developed or contributed to, e.g., reports, presentations, blueprints, websites, schematics, lesson plans, order forms, or management systems
  - Samples of creative outcomes you led or contributed to
  - Samples of video or audio content you developed or contributed to

### The Difference Between Your Knowledge and Your Skills

Knowledge is when you apply information to a specific context and use it to solve a problem. Information is just the raw facts about a person, place, or thing. In contrast, knowledge is your ability to recognize information and apply it to solve problems. However, knowledge has its limitations because it’s conceptual. Knowing how to solve a problem is one thing but applying it to solve a problem takes skill. If knowledge is about “knowing,” a skill is about “doing.” For example, “knowing” how a person can ride a bike is very different from having the skill to ride a bike.



- Sample of marketing programs you led or contributed to
  - Sample research you led or contributed to
  - Samples of a new product or service you designed
  - Customer satisfaction acknowledgement
  - Details of the ways your performance has been measured, like your sales volumes, client loads, safety records, and overtime you have put in
  - Performance evaluations and annual reports
  - Military records and awards
  - Evidence of training taught
  - Examples of a work completed if you are self-employed
    - Business plan
    - Marketing materials
    - Project completed for a client
- 

## **Skill Development Evidence**

This is evidence you have associated with activities that were solely focusing on skill development. This includes formal education and other forms of learning, like workshops or conferences.

### **Examples of Skill Development Evidence**

- Professional designation, certifications and corresponding evidence linked to a skill
  - Educational transcripts explicitly linked to skills
  - School project that explicitly demonstrates skill
  - Scholarly research project that explicitly demonstrates skill
  - Professional development workshops and activities with an outcome that explicitly demonstrates skill (including detailed description)
  - Details of any vocational competitions you have participated in
  - Conferences, workshops, committees, and projects that you have been involved with linked explicitly to a skill
  - Courses or training that you have completed and linked explicitly to a skill
- 

## **Community Evidence**

This incorporates all evidence developed in a voluntary capacity. Many of the same examples from your professional evidence may also be relevant for your community evidence. Similarly, some of your voluntary work may be proprietary and confidential. Always be cautious about sharing information until you are certain it's not confidential.



## Examples of Community Evidence

- Descriptions about your current and past voluntary roles explicitly linked to skills
  - Example of a project completed in a volunteer capacity that demonstrates the skill
    - Sample of documentation you developed or contributed to, e.g., reports, presentations, blueprints, websites, schematics, lesson plans, order forms, or management systems
    - Samples of creative outcomes you led or contributed to
    - Samples of video or audio content you developed or contributed to
    - Sample of marketing programs you led or contributed to
    - Sample research you led or contributed to
    - Samples of a new product or service you designed
- 

## Personal Evidence

This incorporates all evidence associated with personal interests.

### Examples of Personal Evidence

- Example of work completed for personal interest that demonstrates the skill
    - Photography explicitly linked to skills
    - Writing samples explicitly linked to skills
    - Published content explicitly linked to skills
    - Blogs/vlogs explicitly linked to skills
    - Podcasts explicitly linked to skills
    - Social media posts explicitly linked to skills
- 

## Other Evidence

- Security clearances explicitly linked to a skill
- An award that demonstrates evidence of the skill
- Past correspondence or assessments that provide evidence of a skill

## ARE YOU READY?

Once you have completed your self-assessment, it's time to decide to challenge your certification. The certification criteria require you to be at the target level for all skills in the criteria. So, if you want to apply for a level 1 basic certification, you'll need to reflect on whether you achieve level 1 in all skills in the criteria. Similarly, if you want to apply for level 3 expert certification, you'll need to meet all the level 3 expert criteria. When you're at the target level, you're ready to move forward to **Section 5** to begin preparing your *Trusted Skills* ePortfolio. If you believe you have not met the criteria, it's time to plan how to bridge this gap. If this is you, the next section provides a framework for you to build a plan.

# SECTION 4

## NOT READY YET? BRIDGE YOUR SKILLS GAP

The most important purpose of *Trusted Skills* is to become a tangible and achievable framework to guide your professional development. For example, *Trusted Skills professional certification* doesn't vaguely give you guidance on becoming a digital marketer; it provides you with concise guidance on the skills you require to succeed today.

The skills in each certification are defined by employers and represent the optimal candidate. So, using the certification as a target, provides you with a tangible goal.

### BUILDING YOUR SKILLS PLAN

Looking at the *Trusted Skills* criteria will only provide you with part of the picture. You are far more complex than a collection of skills. Most importantly, you have bigger life goals. This is why it may be time to step back and think about those bigger goals and how *Trusted Skills* can support you in achieving them. We've designed a process to support you: *Designing YOU*.

*Designing YOU* is a series of free tools to complement *Trusted Skills* and support you in building a bigger life plan. It's composed of a series of modules that include different activities. Each module is described below. It also includes a series of *Career Guides* to support you in exploring different professional pathways. Click [HERE](#) to access all the *Designing YOU* tools.



### Module 1 — Why Design YOU?

Module 1 walks you through the seven key attributes of a product designer and why you must adopt these to become the champion of your life.

### Module 2 — Exploring Who You Are

Module 2 is about reflecting on the *you* that you are today. It involves exploring your personality, knowledge, and skills right now.



### **Module 3 – Why Mentors Matter**

Module 3 focuses on the team effort required to design you. We'll explore the value of your relationships, and from this, you'll form your design team of experts who will support and guide you through the Designing YOU process.

### **Module 4 – Exploring Career and Job Pathways**

Module 4 focuses on exploring career options. First, you'll evaluate what you love to do and what you're good at. Then you'll explore how to leverage it to make a living. By the end of Module 4, you'll start to have a vision of the future Professional YOU.

Included in the Professional YOU is a series of Designing YOU Career Guides written to support your work down this path. These Career Guides are complimentary, and deal with some of the crucial questions facing anyone exploring their Professional YOU.

Each guide includes a series of Career Mission Maps that provides examples of how you can chart a course to achieving your professional mission. If you'd like to start by exploring our range of Career Mission Maps, [click here](#) to search our Designing YOU Mission Map Gallery.

### **Module 5 – You Are More than a Job**

Module 5 is when you will discover how your Professional YOU fits into your Whole YOU. The Whole YOU is about how you define success. You'll think about where you want to live, the people you want to be around and other factors that matter to you.

### **Module 6 – Designing Your Map**

Module 6 is possible after you've identified your destination in Module 5. The roadmap will allow you to implement the Whole YOU. Every decision you make in pursuit of the destination now has a purpose.

### **Module 7 – Telling Your Story**

Module 7 recognizes that having the best product that no one has ever heard of or cares about is called "going out of business." Your story is how you'll connect to the audience you care about and how you'll make them care about you. You'll figure out what you can offer the world and develop a strategy to communicate it

## **APPLY FOR YOUR CERTIFICATION**

Once you have bridged the gap and feel confident that you're ready to apply for your *Trusted Skills professional certification*, proceed to the next section. We'll guide you to developing your *Trusted Skills ePortfolio*.



# SECTION 5

## PREPARING YOUR TRUSTED SKILLS ePORTFOLIO

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Your ePortfolio for your *Trusted Skills* application is a structured digital archive that allows you to concisely showcase your skills, supporting evidence, and how they relate to the defined certification criteria. An ePortfolio submission is required for all levels of certifications. It's designed to build on your existing resume. Whereas your resume summarizes information about you, your ePortfolio expands on that information by including details and evidence.

### **It's About Evidence**

Your ePortfolio follows the adage, "seeing is believing." Remember, the goal of the *Trusted Skills* program is to help employers mitigate their hiring risk. This starts (and finishes) with you proving to your *Trusted Skills* reviewer that you can do what you say you can do.

### **Make Intangibles Tangibles**

Many employers don't struggle with tangible skills. Rather, they struggle with the intangible skills. Your ePortfolio will translate intangible skills into tangible evidence.

### **It's About Recognition**

One of the goals of the *Trusted Skills* program is to recognize the diverse skills we have in our city. The fact that 81% of skill development in Calgary is not certified says a lot. It means many skilled people aren't being recognized. Your ePortfolio is your chance to tell your story and present your evidence of the skills you developed over your lifetime.

## DEVELOPING YOUR ePORTFOLIO

There are two important types of an ePortfolio. The master ePortfolio is a complete collection of all your skills and associated evidence. Once you have your master ePortfolio, you can select different items to develop a certification *specific* ePortfolio. This requires a bit more upfront investment in developing your master ePortfolio, but it will pay off as the customization of your ePortfolio for different certifications will be far more efficient.

For consistency, all *Trusted Skills* ePortfolios follow a common structure and are based on a **private and secure** Dropbox that only you and your reviewer will be able to access. This creates both efficiency in preparing your certification-specific ePortfolio and for your *Trusted Skills* reviewer.

Finally, remember that you have a target audience of one: your *Trusted Skills* reviewer. This person is a professional peer and a subject matter expert in the certification you're applying for. Make sure the tone of your ePortfolio reflects professionalism and respect. Also, minimize the use of jargon. Professional context is everything and your context may be different than your reviewer, so minimizing jargon and keeping it simple will manage any risk of misinterpretation.

Your ePortfolio will appear as three separate tabs.

### **Tab 1: *Trusted Skills* Biography**

The biography is a one-page summary to introduce yourself to the reviewer. The goal of the biography is to summarize your background and its link to the skills you're applying to have certified. Remember, though your biography should be sufficiently explanatory, it should also not exceed one page (about 250





words). Your goal is to briefly introduce yourself to the reviewer, so they have context in reviewing the remainder of your ePortfolio. Your biography should deliver on the following five goals:

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**GOAL**      **Introduce Yourself**

**1**

Begin your one-page biography by stating your first and last name and highlight the most important dimension of your professional identity.

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**GOAL**      **Describe Your Skill's Journey**

**2**

Concisely highlight your skills journey to the reviewer. This will provide important context for the reviewer when they read your self-declaration of skills and review your reflective exercise.

A skills journey is not a list of jobs; rather, it highlights life experiences and their contribution to your skill development. This may include education, professional and personal experiences, and volunteer experiences. The *Trusted Skills* process recognizes all experiences contribute to your skill development, so this is your opportunity to tell your personal story.

---

**GOAL**      **Highlight Skill Achievements**

**3**

Building on your skill's journey, the next section is an opportunity to highlight specific achievements or milestones that offer strong evidence of the skills defined in the certification criteria. This could include an academic achievement, a program at work you're proud of, an award, or a certification. Highlighting these will guide the reviewer to your evidence.

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**GOAL**      **Introduce the *Why***

**4**

Up until now, your biography has focused on *what* you have done. This section focuses on the *why*. The *why* are the values and passions that drive you to get up every morning. The *why* can often take the form of a personal mission statement. This section will provide important context to the reviewer as they assess your evidence and its link to your passions and values. This section provides the foundation for the *Trusted Skills* testimonial section of your ePortfolio, where you will be able to expand deeper into the *how* and *why* of your skills journey.

---

**GOAL**      **Link to Your Bigger Story**

**5**

Now that you have explained your skills journey and introduced your passions and values, close your biography by guiding them concisely to more information about you. This can be a link to your LinkedIn profile. If you do this, ensure your LinkedIn profile is up to date and represents your most current professional information. If you do not have a LinkedIn profile, we recommend that you create one. If this is not something that interests you, you may replace your LinkedIn profile by providing an updated resume.

Regardless of format, this section is important because it will provide your reviewer an additional layer of information about your journey, including education, professional, community and life experiences. It's important to ensure that your LinkedIn profile or resume aligns with your self-declaration. For example, if you refer to professional or volunteer experience in your self-declaration evidence, but it doesn't appear on LinkedIn or in your resume, the reviewer will be confused. Confusion (and doubt) is not in your best interest.

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## Tab 2: Self-Declaration of *Trusted Skills*

The self-declaration of *Trusted Skills* is the most important component of your ePortfolio. This self-declaration requires you to provide evidence of each skill defined in the certification criteria. Importantly, it requires you to sign and certify the accuracy of your submission and the evidence provided. *Trusted Skills* is only valuable if they are recognized as legitimate and trusted. Therefore, the *Trusted Skills* reviewer will assess every component of your self-declaration and verify the evidence provided.

This self-declaration incorporates three components:

<b>Column 1: Certification Criteria</b>	<b>Column 2: Frequency</b>	<b>Column 3: Skills Evidence</b>
<p>The first column is the skill and will be directly copied from the certification criteria word for word.</p>	<p>The second column requires you to estimate how often you applied this skill in any capacity (professionally or personally) over the past five years. For the ePortfolio, we define this at four possible levels.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Never:</b> A skill that you have not applied or have evidence to support over the past five years.</li> <li>2. <b>Occasionally:</b> A skill that you have applied occasionally over the past five years. For example, you may be involved in annual planning involving research, so you conduct primary research once per year.</li> <li>3. <b>Often:</b> A skill that you have applied often over the past five years. For example, you may be involved in quarterly planning involving research, so you only conduct primary research each quarter.</li> <li>4. <b>Very Often:</b> A skill that you have applied very often over the past five years. For example, you may be the director of research, so you are involved in primary research as part of your core responsibility.</li> </ol> <p><i>Trusted Skills</i> recognizes that roles evolve and change. Therefore, something you may have done very often three years ago, you may only occasionally do today. In this case, you would make a judgement on the frequency. Frequency provides the reviewer with a sense of your depth of skill in an area relative to others. This will assist how the reviewer interprets your submitted evidence.</p>	<p>This column is the most important component of your entire <i>Trusted Skills</i> application. In this column you will provide a summary of the evidence you have to support this skill. The full list of different forms of evidence are listed in the self-assessment section. This evidence will be archived in the evidence folder of this tab for the reviewer to consider. It's possible that the items you choose to display in your ePortfolio will demonstrate more than one skill in your certification criteria. This is effective, but you must explicitly clarify this in your self-declaration.</p> <p>Your evidence will be embedded in your digital ePortfolio. If you have "hard copy" evidence, you will need to scan these and save them in the structured ePortfolio. If a scanner isn't available, taking a digital photo is sufficient. In both cases, use the highest resolution possible.</p>



## Organizing Your Evidence in Your Master ePortfolio

As noted earlier, start with developing a master archive of evidence. This master ePortfolio will accelerate the development of certification-specific ePortfolio. Your master archive will be organized by skill criteria. This allows you to easily customize all future *Trusted Skills* applications in a skills family, as they all incorporate a consistent structure. In your archive, include a descriptor of how this evidence connects to your skill development.

### Testimonials, Skills, and Evidence

After high school, Serena followed the crowd to university. A year in, she dropped out, realizing it wasn't a good fit for her. In hindsight, Serena noticed she had failed to consider an alternative path other than post-secondary straight after high school. In that moment of self-testimonial, she understood the importance of getting to know herself today before she could plan for herself in the future.

A natural salesperson, Serena excelled in the workforce. On the job, she was cognizant of building on her strengths while shoring up her weaknesses. Her ongoing self-testimonial led her back to school in pursuit of higher achievement after eight years of working. Serena's self-awareness was an asset as a mature student. She was skilled academically, and her time working allowed her to recognize the best lessons in life are not always in a classroom. Her work experience also taught her that the hours in a day were limited, so she had to ensure everything she did in and outside of the classroom contributed to a purpose. She became the president of the university marketing club and doubled membership in a year.

### Tab 3: *Trusted Skills* Testimonial

The testimonial component of your ePortfolio is an explicit opportunity for you to provide context and insight to your reviewer into how you developed your skills and its link to your evidence. This is critical as the relevance of the evidence to your skill development may not be immediately apparent to the reviewer. Testimonial may be in a written or video format.

For your testimonial section of your portfolio, consider the following thought-starter questions.

<b>What?</b>	<b>So What?</b>	<b>Now What?</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What was the context of the evidence?</li> <li>2. What was your role in this evidence?</li> <li>3. When was it developed?</li> <li>4. Did you complete it independently or as part of a team?</li> <li>5. What was the budget?</li> <li>6. What were some of the challenges or barriers you faced?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What skills did you develop? How are these related to the certification criteria?</li> <li>2. What was the result?</li> <li>3. Was there an impact on your business or community?</li> <li>4. What worked well? What didn't?</li> <li>5. What were your feelings when it happened?</li> <li>6. What are your feelings now? Are there any differences? Why?</li> <li>7. How do you think others feel?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are the implications for you and others?</li> <li>2. What would you do differently next time?</li> <li>3. Why is this learning important to you?</li> <li>4. How did you use this learning to advance your skill development?</li> <li>5. Would there be anything you'd do differently today?</li> </ol>



# SECTION 6

## ADVANCED SKILLS CASE STUDY

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### THE FORMAT

The level 2 *Advanced Skills Case Study* is a two-hour “real-time” challenge for those pursuing level 2 certification. The case study will define a concise problem related to the specific certification you’re challenging.

Case studies are used as tools in business, medicine, law, and other fields. The goal is to examine how a person responds to a real-world challenge that asks the question, “What would you do in this situation and why?”

#### **The problem**

A marketer is grappling with some question or problem that needs to be solved.

#### **The context**

It describes the context and scenario associated with the problem.

#### **The evidence**

The case embeds the evidence to allow you to make an evidence-based recommendation. This evidence will depend on the certification you’re challenging. Evidence may range from supporting data to creative examples and everything in between. The evidence will be contextual and linked to the certification.

The purpose of including a “real-time” case study in the certification process is to verify that you can deliver on the advanced skills in the certification criteria. Like all problems we face, a case study does not have a “correct answer.” Rather, the case study focuses on how you can apply your skills to identify the problem, analyze options, and recommend a solution in the defined scope.

### THE QUESTIONS

*Trusted Skills* case studies all follow a consistent format, though the topic and context will vary by certification.

#### **Problem Analysis**

1. What is the major problem?
2. What are the additional problems that must be considered?
3. What is the evidence that supports this conclusion?

#### **Recommendation**

1. What is the recommendation?
2. Is the recommendation linked to the analysis and evidence?
3. Is the recommendation something that can be done reasonably?
4. Does the recommendation resolve the problems and achieve the desired result?
5. Does the recommendation make efficient use of available resources?



## HOW TO PREPARE?

The advanced skills case study is an application and synthesis of the skills in the advanced certification criteria. When you completed your self-declaration, you identified the frequency of how often you applied each skill and your supporting evidence. The case study is simply a real-time application that follows the “show, don’t tell” principle.

Your preparation is limited to reviewing this section of the candidate guide. Once you understand the basic structure of the case study and the expectation (defined by the assessment criteria) you will be ready to go.

### Tips:

1. **Be patient, organized, and analytical.** Review and read the entire case and note key issues. These notes should be used to frame and synthesize your analysis into a concise response on the answer sheets.
2. **Indicate a clear link to certification criteria.** Start your answers by clearly identifying the certification criteria you’re using to support your analysis. This should demonstrate your ability to apply this criterion in a problem-solving context. An answer that does not provide a clear and concise link to certification criteria will force your reviewer to try to connect the dots, which is not in your best interest.
3. **Link to evidence.** In your analysis and recommendations, link to the evidence embedded in the case study. We don’t expect you to conduct additional research while completing the case study. Instead, we’re looking for your ability to analyze the case study and extract evidence to support your recommendation.
4. **Be concise.** For your answer to each question, be concise and write clearly. Use point form and focus on demonstrating your knowledge and ability to apply the concepts, principles, and readings in the course to the specific questions and the evidence in the case. Focus on quality **not** quantity.
5. **Time management.** Ensure you manage your time. Your submission is due in two hours from the moment your case study begins.

## ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

### Maximum assessment out of 20

#### Problem Identification (6)

1. What is the major problem?
2. What are the additional problems that must be considered?
3. What is the evidence that supports this conclusion?

#### Recommendation (6)

1. What is the recommendation?
2. Is the recommendation linked to the analysis and evidence?

3. Is the recommendation something that can be done reasonably?
4. Does the recommendation resolve the problems and achieve the desired result?
5. Does the recommendation make efficient use of available resources?

#### Applies Certification Criteria (8)

Does your analysis and recommendation demonstrate the application of the certification criteria identified in the case study?



# APPENDICES



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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## **Do I need to take a class to be certified?**

No. *Trusted Skills* considers combined life experiences and recognizes that there are many ways skills develop.

When we think of how we traditionally develop skills, we think of a program or class that we take, and at the end, we are assessed on whether we have the associated knowledge and skills. This is referred to as integrated certification because developing a skill is integrated with the process of verifying the skill.

*Trusted Skills* adopts decoupled certification. Decoupled certification recognizes that there are infinite ways to develop a skill, including formal education, work experience, self-directed skill development, and mentoring. The decoupling principle is widely used today in various professional fields, skilled trades, and motor vehicle licensing. Think about a driver's license. People learn how to drive in all different ways. The driver's test is decoupled from a specific class or approach to learning how to drive. Instead, the test focuses only on testing a candidate's ability to drive. For this reason, *Trusted Skills* only assesses the skill, not the pathway by which the skill was developed.

## **What is the value of *Trusted Skills* to an employer?**

*Trusted Skills* aims to mitigate risk for employers during the hiring process. Consistent and trusted mechanisms certifying a candidate's skills remove some of this risk. Employers often request specific educational credentials (e.g., degree) or professional certifications (e.g., a Chartered Professional Accountant designation). These certifications confirm in advance that a candidate has certain skills from an objective and trusted third party.

However, few recognized certifications exist for many areas, including non-technical fields. For instance, a university degree in marketing does not necessarily certify that a candidate can plan, launch, and manage a digital media campaign. The real value of *Trusted Skills* is the potential to recognize the infinite ways high-valued skills can develop, whether through volunteering, attending a workshop, or having a mentor.

## **What employers will benefit most from *Trusted Skills*?**

*Trusted Skills* helps all employers; however, we expect it to have the greatest impact on Calgary-based small-medium enterprises. Since small-medium employers often recruit from the local labour market, they could explicitly seek candidates with a specific certification. In contrast, large national or multinational corporations recruit from a global labour market. Therefore, we expect it will be rare that large-scale employers will specifically include *Trusted Skills* into their recruitment process.

## **What is the value of *Trusted Skills* to a job seeker?**

The job market is highly competitive, and most employers receive hundreds or thousands of applications for each job. The job seeker aims to make this decision easier for employers and remove the risk. Having *Trusted Skills professional certification* helps manage this risk by certifying in advance that the job seeker has the skills the employer seeks.



## Why is it only Calgary?

Skill demand is dynamic and ever-changing, making speed and agility essential. By narrowing the scope to metropolitan Calgary, we also narrow the number of stakeholders involved, increasing efficiency while ensuring economies of scale. Keeping the scope at a city-level focuses the program's benefits on Calgary-based small-medium enterprises, which represent 99% of all employers in the city. Research shows that small-medium employers depend heavily on recruiting from their local geographic labour market, primarily because of the high cost of moving a new employee. In contrast, large organizations have the ability and resources to recruit from a larger labour market.

## Can someone who has never studied marketing be certified?

Yes. The *Trusted Skills* program recognizes that developing skill comes in many forms. For example, an early study we conducted found that only 12% percent of marketing professionals in the sample held a degree in marketing.<sup>1</sup> We know that skills no longer develop through a single path but instead develop in the classroom, online, at work, and volunteering, or a combination of these. *Trusted Skills* seeks to recognize and reward skills, no matter how they are developed.

## What is the process to receive *Trusted Skills* professional certification?

*Trusted Skills* professional certification follows a consistent six-step process.

### Step 1

Register at [trustedskills.org](https://trustedskills.org)

### Step 2

Using the certification criteria, complete the *Trusted Skills* self-assessment. This self-assessment will help identify your strengths and areas that require additional development before applying for your *Trusted Skills* professional certification.

If you're not ready to apply for your *Trusted Skills* professional certification, your next step is to develop a plan to meet the required certification criteria. Your plan may incorporate a range of skill development experiences, including certified, non-certified, or informal skill development.

### Step 3

Once you're ready to apply for your *Trusted Skills* professional certification, pay your certification fee and begin the process. During the pilot, this fee is being funded by Calgary Arts Development Authority.

### Step 4

Complete and upload your *Trusted Skills* ePortfolio. Your ePortfolio is a collection of evidence that demonstrates your skills as required by the certification. This could be videos, documents, project work, or evidence of your own skill development. The portfolio follows the adage, "show, don't tell," and includes tangible evidence of skills as defined in the certification criteria. The evidence is contextual to each certification.

Submit your testimonial as either a video or written submission. You'll be prompted and asked to reflect on your professional experience and how your evidence relates to the certification. The testimonial requires you to think about how your evidence, experience, and perspective contribute to your skill. The testimonial component of certification allows you to provide context and insight to *Trusted Skills* reviewers into how you've developed your skills.

If you're pursuing your advanced certification, you will complete your advanced skills case study. This case study is designed to demonstrate your advanced skill associated with a specific certification.

### Step 5

A reviewer assesses your submission relative to your certification criteria and recommends a standard to the certifying oversight board.





## Step 6

The oversight board makes the final decision and awards a *Trusted Skills* digital certificate to successful candidates.

### **Who conducts the *Trusted Skills* professional certification?**

We will appoint a *Trusted Skills* certified reviewer to review submissions. The reviewer will have expertise in the specific skill being verified and certification in assessment. To ensure consistency and transparency, all candidates and reviewers have access to a comprehensive skill criterion.

### **How are *Trusted Skills* professional certifications assessed?**

The assigned *Trusted Skills* reviewer will use the certification criteria to assign a candidate one of four potential levels:

- Level 0: No evidence of basic skill level
- Level 1: Evidence of basic skill
- Level 2: Evidence of advanced skill
- Level 3: Evidence of expert skill

### **How much does it cost for *Trusted Skills* professional certification?**

The current economic model expects a fee to be paid by the candidate for every certification. This fee is solely for cost recovery.

For the prototype, Calgary Arts Development Authority will fully fund the certification fee. The goal of this model is to balance rigour and accessibility. If the rigour of the *Trusted Skills* professional certification process is compromised, the *Trusted Skills* professional certification will have no value to employers. However, if the process is so costly that Calgarians pursuing *Trusted Skills* professional certification face a financial barrier, it also defeats the goal of greater inclusivity in the labour market.

### **What is a *Trusted Skills* testimonial?**

*Trusted Skills* testimonial is embedded as a component of your *Trusted Skills* ePortfolio. This testimonial requires a candidate to reflect on how their evidence, experience, and perspective contribute to their skill. The testimonial component is an explicit opportunity for a candidate to provide context and insight to the *Trusted Skills* reviewer into how you developed your skills and its link to your ePortfolio. Testimonial may be submitted in either written or video format.

### **What about other *Trusted Skills* professional certifications?**

*Trusted Skills* professional certification aims to be one part of a network of certification opportunities that help Calgarians develop and show the skills they need to succeed in their career pathways. Skill certification, whether through the certification or an existing certification, is essential to all Calgarians' success in their career pathways.

### **Can a candidate submit work that was completed as part of a team?**

When you submit evidence, you will note the team members who contributed to the project. If you did the work independently, you could leave this section blank. But if you worked as a team, you must share the names or handles of co-contributors. Failure to do so results in a disqualification.

### **How can *Trusted Skills* professional certification facilitate greater inclusivity?**

In skill areas where there are no rigorous forms of skill certification, employers de-risk hiring through informal methods (e.g., checking references). These methods are shown to systematically disadvantage candidates in marginalized communities. *Trusted Skills* professional certification is designed to objectively review the level of an individual's skills and reduce the current dependency on informal methods.

### **What is the process for reviewing the different skills?**

Each skill is anchored to a rigorous certification criteria developed by professionals. Your portfolio will be reviewed when applying for certification. For level 2 advance certification, you will also complete a case study. For level 3 expert certification, your portfolio will be reviewed by an expert panel.



### **How are *Trusted Skills* reviewers certified?**

A core principle is that *Trusted Skills professional certification* is only as legitimate as the process and people who verify them. For this reason, an imperative goal of this prototype phase is evaluating a variety of mechanisms to ensure rigour. Each *Trusted Skills* reviewer will undergo a rigorous evidence-based review to prove they have the currency and ability to review specific skills.

### **What organization is awarding *Trusted Skills professional certification*?**

The project is a joint initiative of Calgary Arts Development Authority and Calgary Economic Development. During the prototype, we will evaluate the optimal structure and resources needed for a potential scaling of *Trusted Skills professional certification*.

### **Does decoupling dilute the value of certified skill development?**

*Trusted Skills professional certification* is designed to complement all forms of skill development, including certified skill development. Decoupling recognizes that there are infinite routes to developing a skill. Most skills involve the intersection of certified, non-certified, and informal skill development experiences. Decoupling unlocks and recognizes the importance of this intersection in modern skill development. An example is how studying liberal arts could help develop high-demand skills, such as problem-solving and communications. Similarly, sports and recreation can play a significant role in developing skills associated with leadership and collaboration. *Trusted Skills professional certification* offers a path for individuals who have these skills to have these rigorously assessed and certified regardless of their background.

### **How are different skill levels recognized?**

Each certification has three defined levels: basic, advanced, and expert. Each level includes detailed certification criteria that define the evidence needed to prove the associated level of skill. To receive a “basic” certification in an area, a candidate must demonstrate a minimum “basic” level in each of the certification criteria.

### **How can professional or community volunteer work experience be recognized?**

The specific evidence will vary by certification. However, all *Trusted Skills professional certifications* require a candidate to supply evidence that they can do what they say they can do. Often this evidence is in the form of earlier work experience. Whether this evidence was the output of a paid employment or a volunteer experience is irrelevant to the review process, which only considers the outcome.

### **Why is the prototype linked to marketing?**

This project is being funded by Calgary Arts Development Authority, with the support of Calgary Economic Development and the Calgary Marketing Association. Calgary Arts Development is leading the development of Calgary’s **creative economy strategy**. A pillar of this strategy is the critical need to accelerate the development of Calgary’s creative skills. We’re evaluating whether decoupling has the potential to unlock and recognize the existing capacity in the system by providing creative skill developers with a certification path.

### **What happens after the prototype phase?**

Following the prototype phase, the project team will review its success compared to the defined questions. At the same time, we will review paths to potential expansion and scaling of *Trusted Skills professional certification* to other professional fields. Based on this, the project team will evaluate the next steps.



# PROJECT GLOSSARY

## Certification Application Process

The *Trusted Skills professional certification* application process complies with ISO 17024 standards by incorporating the following mandatory elements:<sup>2</sup>

- Information required to identify the applicant.
- The scope of the desired certification.
- A statement that the applicant agrees to comply with the certification requirements and supply any information needed for the assessment.
- Opportunity for the candidate to declare, within reason, a request for accommodation of special needs.

## Certification Assessment Process

- The assessment is planned and structured to ensure the defined requirements are objectively and systematically verified with evidence to confirm the candidate's skill.
- The certification criteria for assessment of evidence shall be established, documented, and monitored.
- The definition of evidence must ensure the comparability of each candidate's results, both in content and difficulty, including the validity of a *Trusted Skills professional certification* decision. This will ensure that each assessment is fair and valid.
- The assessment process will verify and accommodate special needs within reason and where the integrity of the assessment is not violated.
- Procedures must ensure a consistent administration.

## Certifying Body

During the prototype phase, the certifying body is Calgary Arts Development Authority.<sup>3</sup> The certifying body is operationalized through the Certification Oversight Board, accountable for defining and maintaining oversight of all *Trusted Skills professional certifications*, including approving certification criteria, the skill certification processes, and appointing *Trusted Skills* reviewers. In compliance with ISO 17024 standards, the Board incorporates the following mandatory elements:<sup>4</sup>

- Is responsible for all decisions relating to certification, including the granting, maintaining,

expanding, and reducing the scope of the certification.

- Will make public the scope of the certification criteria and a general description of the certification process.
- Will maintain comprehensive certification records. These records will be identified, managed, and disposed of to maintain confidentiality.
- Incorporates policies and procedures necessary to ensure security throughout the entire certification process.
- Will verify and provide information, upon request, on whether an individual holds a current, valid certification and the scope of that certification.
- Incorporates processes and policies to prevent fraudulent examination practices.
- Will monitor the performance of the reviewers and the reliability of the reviewers' judgements.
- If certification is fully deployed, it will ensure that the certification criteria is assessed and validated on an ongoing, systematic basis.

## Certification Candidate

The applicant who is pursuing *Trusted Skills professional certification*.

## Certification Criteria

Certification criteria defines the certification criteria and evidence by which the Certification Oversight Board determines that a person fulfils certification requirements (also referred to as "standards"), including application, assessment, decision on certification, recertification and use of certificates and logos/marks as applicable. Certification criteria comply with ISO 17024 standards by incorporating the following mandatory elements:<sup>5</sup>

- A definition and scope of each certification and recertification.
- A definition of the required skills to be awarded certification.
- A definition of the assessment methods required for the initial certification and recertification.
- A definition of the required evidence of this skill.
- A definition of the certification criteria for suspending and withdrawing certification.



- A definition of the certification criteria for changing the scope or level of certification.
- Be managed by appropriate experts.
- Embed appropriate processes and structures.

### **Certification Decision**

The information used to award a *Trusted Skills professional certification* complies with ISO 17024 standards by incorporating the following mandatory elements:<sup>6</sup>

- Certification decisions are the sole discretion of the Board.
- All information used is traceable.
- The Board will award certification based on only the certification criteria.
- Those on the Board are not in conflict of interest with the candidate.
- Those appointed to the Board possess the expertise to decide on awarding certification.
- Certification will not be granted until all certification requirements are fulfilled.
- If certification is fully deployed, the Board must provide a documented process to receive, evaluate and make decisions on appeals, including the following:
  - A public process for appealing, including providing timely updates on the status of an appeal.
  - A process for tracking and recording an appeal.
  - A process to ensure corrective action will be taken if applicable.
  - Policies to ensure appeals are timely and impartial.
  - Process to guarantee that the submission, investigation, and decision on appeals shall not result in discriminatory actions against the appellant.

### **Certification Fee**

The certification fee is the cost associated with reviewing each. This fee is a direct cost recovery to compensate the *Trusted Skills* reviewers. The certification fee for the prototype is \$500, which Calgary Arts Development will fully sponsor.

### **Certification Oversight Board**

*Trusted Skills professional certification* is operationalized through the Certification Oversight Board, accountable for defining and maintaining oversight of all *Trusted Skills professional certifications*, including approving certification criteria, the skill certification processes, and appointing *Trusted Skills* reviewers.

### **Certification Reviewer**

Certified expert assigned to review the evidence submitted by a candidate. The selection and approval processes shall ensure that reviewers:

- Are certified by the Board as having expertise in the specific skill being assessed.
- Understand and can apply the certification process.
- Have identified any known conflicts of interest to ensure impartial judgements are made.
- Will remain anonymous to a candidate.<sup>7</sup>

### **Digital Certificate**

The Board will provide a certificate to all persons who have been awarded *Trusted Skills professional certification*. The Board maintains the sole ownership of the certificates. The format of the certificate during the prototype will be defined by the Board and be authorized by a responsible member of the Board, and contain the following:

- Certified person's name.
- Certifying body's name.
- Refer to the certification criteria where relevant.
- The scope of the certification.
- Awarding date of the certification.
- Elements to minimize the risk of counterfeiting.

### **Decoupling**

In a skill development context, decoupling involves disconnecting the process of developing a skill and certifying a skill. Higher education often integrates these paths. For example, an individual takes a class and is assessed upon completion as meeting a defined learning outcome. Decoupling puts the primacy of skill certification by recognizing that infinite ways to develop a skill exist. The decoupling principle is widely used today in various professional fields, including skilled trades and motor vehicle licensing.

### **Educational Certification**<sup>8</sup>

This category includes persons who have obtained a secondary or high school diploma or high school equivalency certificate. The section also includes university certificates or diplomas below the bachelor's level. University certificates or diplomas commonly link with professional associations in accounting, banking, insurance, or public administration. The certificates and diplomas in this category do not require a bachelor's degree as a prerequisite.

### **Enabling Skills**

Enabling skills (also called transferable, human, or soft skills) incorporate aptitude, ability, knowledge, and skills associated with problem-solving, self-reliance, collaboration, communications, core literacies, and core workplace skills.



## Experience

The hours put into a specific skill development experience. To be recognized in most certification programs, such as co-operative education or the Red Seal, hours need to be tracked and documented.

## Evidence

Tangible evidence of a defined skill.

## Fairness

Equal opportunity for success provided to each candidate in the *Trusted Skills professional certification* process.<sup>9</sup>

## Four-Level Standard

The evidence associated with each certification will be assigned one of four standards:

- Level 0: No evidence of basic skill level
- Level 1: Evidence of basic skill
- Level 2: Evidence of advanced skill
- Level 3: Evidence of expert skill

## Functional Skills

Functional skills are linked to skills needed to complete a specific role, such as an accountant, a project manager, a chef, a nurse, or a software developer. Functional skills embed the ability to adapt and apply this skill across different sectors. Functional skills can develop through a variety of certified, non-certified, and informal skill development. However, the foundation for many functional skills is developed through forms of certified skill development. For example, university and college programming often center around a functional skill (e.g., Bachelor of Nursing; Culinary Arts Diploma).

## Impartiality

Presence of objectivity. Objectivity means that conflicts of interest do not exist or are resolved to not adversely influence subsequent activities of the certifying body.<sup>10</sup>

## Job-Specific Skills

Job-specific skills incorporate aptitude, ability, knowledge, and skills needed to complete a functional task (e.g., accounting, welding) or apply a skill to a unique sectoral context (e.g., oil and gas, logistics).

## License<sup>11</sup>

A license is a permit from a recognized authority to perform a defined task (e.g., medical).

## Management of Impartiality

The management of impartiality complies with ISO 17024 standards by incorporating the following mandatory elements:<sup>12</sup>

- The Board shall document its structure, policies, and procedures to manage impartiality and ensure that the certification activities are undertaken impartially. The Board shall have management commitment to impartiality in *Trusted Skills*

*professional certification* activities. The Board shall have a statement publicly accessible without request that it understands the importance of impartiality in carrying out its certification activities, manages conflict of interest and ensures the objectivity of its certification activities.

- The Board shall act impartially concerning its applicants, candidates, and certified persons.
- Certification policies and procedures shall be fair among all applicants, candidates, and certified persons.
- Certification shall not be restricted on the grounds of undue financial or other limiting conditions, such as membership in an association or group. The Board shall not use procedures to unfairly impede or inhibit access by applicants and candidates.
- The Board shall be responsible for the impartiality of its certification activities and shall not allow commercial, financial, or other pressures to compromise impartiality.
- The Board shall identify threats to its impartiality on an ongoing basis. This shall include threats that arise from its activities, its related bodies, its relationships, or the relationships of its personnel. However, such relationships do not necessarily present a body with a threat to impartiality.
- The Board shall analyze, document, and eliminate or minimize the potential conflict of interests arising from its certification activities. The Board shall document and be able to demonstrate how it eliminates, minimizes, or manages such threats. All potential sources of conflict of interest identified, whether they arise from within the certifying body, such as assigning responsibilities to personnel or from the activities of other persons, bodies, or organizations, shall be covered.

## Professional Field

A professional field is a group of people or organizations with a common professional interest, such as an industry (e.g., film) or occupation (e.g., digital marketers). The establishment of a new certification can be initiated by any professional field that identifies demand for skill certification. If approved, a designated professional field is accountable for establishing an oversight committee responsible for developing and managing all aspects associated with their certification. The professional field for the prototype is marketing.

## Professional Field Oversight Board (PFOB)

In a scenario of full deployment, each certification will be the responsibility of a designated Professional Field Oversight Board (PFOB). The PFOB will be accountable to the Certification Oversight Board.

## Project Governance Committee

The *Trusted Skills* Project Governance Committee is mandated to provide counsel for developing and deploying the *Trusted Skills professional certification*



prototype between April and December 2022. The project governance committee comprises representative stakeholders, including employers, skill developers, professionals, and functional experts.

### **Reliability**

The indicator of the extent to which examination scores are consistent across different examination times and locations, different examination forms and different reviewers.<sup>13</sup>

### **Review Process**

A process led by a *Trusted Skills* reviewer that evaluates a candidate's fulfilment of the certification criteria.<sup>14</sup>

### **Sectoral Expertise**

Sectoral expertise is the unique contextual knowledge or skills needed to complete a specific role within a defined sector. For example, a sector may have unique regulatory, legal, or historical contexts that influence a functional role. For example, an accountant in oil and gas may require specialized knowledge compared to an accountant in the financial services sector. The challenge with sector expertise is the highly contextual nature of sub-sectors within a sector. For example, the oil and gas sector comprise dozens of specialized sub-sectors, including upstream, midstream, and downstream. Within each of these sub-sectors, an additional specialization is tied to exploration, drilling, transportation, refining, and distribution.

Unlike functional skills, sector expertise is primarily developed and refined through direct experience in a sector. The immersion in a sector contextualizes functional skills to this sector. For instance, an individual with strong functional marketing skills must adapt these skills to shift from consumer-packaged goods to tourism.

### **Self-Assessment**

This is the process of a candidate assessing their skills compared to the certification criteria. Based on the self-assessment, a candidate can establish a skill development plan to meet the criteria for *Trusted Skills professional certification*. This plan may incorporate various skill development experiences, including certified, non-certified, or informal skill development.

The *Trusted Skills professional certification* website supplies guidance on development pathways and resources available by the diverse skill ecosystem.

### **Skills**

The combination of aptitude, ability, and knowledge to complete a task. In this project, we cluster skills into two categories: enabling skills and job-specific skills.

### **Skill Evidence**

This is the evidence a candidate is asked to submit to prove their skill. The evidence is contextual to each certification.

### **Skill Certification**

Skill certification is the practice applied to decide if a candidate has evidence of the aptitude, ability, knowledge, and skills needed to complete a defined task.

### ***Trusted Skills professional certification***

*Trusted Skills professional certification* aligns with the economic development priorities Calgary. This model is intentionally decoupled from a specific skill development process and is granted by an independent community body. The legitimacy is rooted in the rigour of the *Trusted Skills professional certification* and the potential for ubiquity across a community's skill ecosystem.

### ***Trusted Skills Testimonial***

The *Trusted Skills* testimonial is embedded as a component in a *Trusted Skills* ePortfolio. This testimonial requires a candidate to reflect on how their evidence, experience, and perspective contribute to their skill. The testimonial component is an explicit opportunity for a candidate to provide context and insight to the *Trusted Skills* reviewer into just how they have developed their skills and its link to their ePortfolio. Testimonial may be submitted in either written or video format.

### **Validity**

Evidence that the assessment measures what it is intended to measure, as defined by the certification criteria.



# REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup> Refer to ISO/ IEC Standard 17024 available from:  
<https://www.iso.org/standard/52993.html>

<sup>2</sup> Refer to ISO/ IEC Standard 17024 available from:  
<https://www.iso.org/standard/52993.html>

<sup>3</sup> Refer to ISO/ IEC Standard 17024 available from:  
<https://www.iso.org/standard/52993.html>

<sup>4</sup> Refer to ISO/ IEC Standard 17024 available from:  
<https://www.iso.org/standard/52993.html>

<sup>5</sup> Refer to ISO/ IEC Standard 17024 available from:  
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<sup>7</sup> *Statistics Canada*, Classification of educational qualifications responses (2016). Retrieved from  
<https://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p3VD.pl?Function=getVD&>

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<sup>8</sup> Refer to ISO/ IEC Standard 17024 available from:  
<https://www.iso.org/standard/52993.html>

<sup>9</sup> Refer to ISO/ IEC Standard 17024 available from:  
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<sup>10</sup> Lexico.com. (n.d.). licence. Lexico. Retrieved from  
<https://www.lexico.com/definition/licence>.

<sup>11</sup> Refer to ISO/ IEC Standard 17024 available from:  
<https://www.iso.org/standard/52993.html>

<sup>12</sup> Refer to ISO/ IEC Standard 17024 available from:  
<https://www.iso.org/standard/52993.html>

<sup>13</sup> Refer to ISO/ IEC Standard 17024 available from:  
<https://www.iso.org/standard/52993.html>

<sup>14</sup> Refer to eCampus Ontario experiments as an example.