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Credentialed Evaluator Success Stories: Bobby Thomas Cameron

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Professional Designation Program, Success stories

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Bobby Thomas Cameron: CE Success Story

Who is the Credentialed Evaluator (CE)?

Bobby Thomas Cameron is the Manager of Policy, Planning and Federal/Provincial/Territorial Relations (FPT) with the Prince Edward Island Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. He is a Credentialed Evaluator and is a member of CES-PE Chapter. Bobby has been working in program evaluation since 2008 and obtained his CE in 2017.



Bobby holds an undergraduate degree in History and Political Studies from the University of PEI, and a Master of Arts in Public Policy and Administration from Ryerson University. He is currently a PhD candidate in public policy at Ryerson. Bobby is also a Certified Associate in Project Management (CAPM) with the Project Management Institute.

What was the initial situation?

Bobby has been evaluating programs since 2008. In 2010 he found the CES website and started focusing on "evaluation" as a distinct field and practice. Previously he thought of his work as mainly research but after learning about program evaluation, he realized he was indeed conducting evaluations.

Bobby spends the majority of his time on evaluation whether it is evaluation-related activities or applying evaluation results to policy and program development.

Why did the CE want the credential?

Bobby manages a policy unit and "a lot of what we do in policy is actually evaluation." In 2013 he began designing formal evaluations utilizing logic models, theories of change, and various evaluation methodologies. He says that the CE designation and formal evaluation practices shows the public, Departments, Ministers, and government that the unit's evaluation work is rigorous and credible. He wants evaluation users to "trust the results." One step to accomplish this credibility was for him to obtain his CE.

What was/is the relationship of the credential to the CE's work?

The policy unit supports a number of FPT and provincial initiatives for the delivery of program and services. Bobby occupies several evaluation-related roles including evaluator, coordinator, researcher, and manager. The unit conducts all evaluation activities in-house. This includes evaluating programs delivered by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries as well as analyzing evaluation results for policy and program decision making.

In his role, Bobby spends a lot of time engaging stakeholders in evaluation. He recognizes the key role of stakeholders and that the Joint Committee Program Evaluation Standards and the Credential's competencies provide a strong foundation and direction for evaluators.

What happened?

Bobby's own initiative was the key element in his obtaining the credential. The PEI Chapter Membership Chair was most helpful and mentored Bobby through the credentialing process. The Chapter network is valuable to him and is also valuable to the work of his unit. The Essential Skills Series was an important training program for the development of his own

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evaluation learning.

Bobby took about two years to shape his learning and work experience to provide examples for each competency on the professional designation program application. The process was rigorous but it forced him to be concise about his evaluation skills and experience. He found his strengths and gaps, and this assisted him with his annual learning/professional development plan. He says the application process was a challenge but a valid challenge. He had to find examples for each competency but the core challenge was the “acculturation” process; he had to learn a common evaluation language and common evaluation methodologies.

The CE application assessment process took about six months, and he was awarded his CE in 2017. He will use the competency framework to measure his learning and progress in the upcoming years. Bobby believes that the CE maintenance process will keep him in touch with emerging and relevant evaluation approaches.

Results.

As a result of obtaining his CE, Bobby believes he is in a position to create better public policy to solve public issues. He has become interested in a broad range of evaluation approaches and methodologies and has since published on the topic of responsive evaluation. He also believes the credential will benefit him in other positions. He uses the CE designation in his signature line and people often ask about its meaning. He believes that people are becoming more interested, particularly millennials who seem to be continuously in search of ways to expand their skills sets for a competitive job market. He has added the evaluation competencies to his job advertisements as “desirable” for policy positions. “A CE designation definitely shows an employer that an individual understands the theory and practice of evaluation.”

As a manager, Bobby uses the competencies and Standards to frame training for his staff. This includes coaching and leading others on tasks related to program management, evaluation planning, and interpreting evaluation results. He intends to integrate the Essential Skills Series as part of his regular staff training program.

Prior to learning about the CES, Bobby did not realize the broad scope of evaluation: internationally, nationally, and within CES. He says that there is an emergent community of evaluators who are beginning to form around the CE designation.

“This is exciting and will offer a forum for like-minded individuals to offer support as well as a space to reflect on evaluation best practices. The power of evaluation is to transform or to be transformative; the process of evaluation creates change.”

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