



Catalysts for Change

**Call for Nominations
SEARCH Classic VII
2009-2011**



SEARCH Classic

Your Source for In-Place Workforce Development

Health is a dynamic sector faced with increasing demands for accountability related to both evidence-informed service planning and quality of care. Responding to these demands requires health professionals at all organizational levels are able to gather, assess and synthesize information to recommend better practices and understand how best to assess the impacts of current and proposed service delivery.

At a time when new knowledge is generated and shared at an unprecedented rate, it is often difficult to keep up with the volume and understand the relevance and quality of the many reports that land our desks, let alone appreciate how this information can be adapted for use in a specific setting or with a particular population. And while evaluation data is becoming increasingly important, these activities can be time consuming and uninformative unless designed and conducted using sound methodology.

Developing capacity within organizations to meet these challenges is further complicated in the current climate by a limited supply of healthcare workers. Sending people away to obtain these skills through graduate education is difficult; organizations need their continued participation in the workforce. Health professionals in every discipline are also required to demonstrate continuing competency to their professional associations. We hear increasingly from these professionals that they prefer to pursue targeted areas of development rather than embark on another formal education program.

As an independent resource to the health sector, SEARCH Canada assists organizations to develop capacity for evidence-informed decision making in ways that respond to their particular needs and the system in which they operate. Whether it's in the area of knowledge use, collaboration among project teams and networks, or the organizational infrastructure, policies and processes to support knowledge use and applied research or project endeavors, SEARCH Canada can help.

SEARCH Classic is a two-year cycle of learning, designed to build capacity in health organizations to choose, use and create evidence for application to practice, policy and service delivery. Over two years participants, nominated by their organizations, come together with academic faculty from across the province to take part in residential learning sessions (modules). Between modules, they return to their home organizations to work with local teams on projects designed to respond to priority issues in their area of practice. And through completion of those projects develop the competencies on which they have chosen to focus.

The impact of SEARCH Classic continues well beyond the formal two-year program. As a result of the ongoing involvement of individuals enrolled in SEARCH I to VI, there now exists a cross-regional network of 150+ past participants with skills and knowledge in research, evaluation, and evidence-based decision-making that a new participant and his/her organization can access for information and collaboration on future projects.

More information on SEARCH Canada

<http://www.searchca.net/users/folder.asp?FolderID=1512>

The value of SEARCH Classic Video

http://www.searchca.net/download/search_recruitment_final.wmv

Outcomes

Through 12 years of evaluation and feedback, SEARCH Classic participants and organizations have identified key benefits resulting from their involvement:

- Capacity development beyond the individual extending to the organization
- Improved understanding of the broader health context, crossing sectors, geography and disciplines to perspectives of patients, practitioners, planners and policy makers
- Enhanced skills and experience in inter-disciplinary collaboration, functioning effectively in teams, organizational navigation, network development and writing and presentation skills
- Enhanced confidence and ability to lead teams and initiatives
- Ability to integrate the use of evidence into their daily work
- Ability to act as a resource for colleagues

Eligibility

SEARCH Classic is a provincial resource and, as such, participants are selected and sponsored by their home organizations to take up seats in each cohort. In an effort to create both an equitable distribution of seats and a diversity of health system perspectives within the cohort, seats are allocated as follows:

AHS Urban health regions – 3 each
AHS rural health regions – 2 each
Physicians - 2
Government - 2
Other health organizations - 1

Health organizations/regions are asked to declare their intention to use their allocated seats by November 17, 2008. Unclaimed seats are made available to participants from the other affiliations listed, as well as to those who have been 'waitlisted' by their regions. An ad hoc selection committee composed of members whose organizations do not have applications under consideration, makes the final decision regarding the allocation of remaining seats.

Who Should an Organization Sponsor?

SEARCH Classic participants are established health professionals from many areas in health care: nursing (including acute care, public health and communicable disease control), medicine, clinical nutrition, social work, community health, community development, health promotion, environmental health, epidemiology, health inspection, rehabilitation, mental health, or health services administration.

They range from front-line clinicians to senior managers. Some hold full-time positions focused on research, outcomes, or evaluation; others integrate this way of thinking into their daily responsibilities for programs and patients.

SEARCH participants will maximize value to their organization if they possess:

- An undergraduate degree
- Five to seven years work experience in a field relevant to healthcare
- A love of learning and ability to communicate and share information
- An interest in scholarly practice, producing and using research evidence in everyday work.
- The ability to comfortably interact with a diverse group of mature participants.
- A willingness to work collaboratively in teams.



SEARCH Classic Projects are being reconfigured to respond more directly to organizational needs.

For this cohort we are **seeking participants who are part of a team and/or initiative that is underway in the organization**. In particular, we are asking organizations to consider sending those involved with initiatives that would benefit from:

- A review of existing evidence that has been customized to suit the local context.
- Collection and/or analysis and reporting of data that will enhance understanding or contribute new knowledge to the area of interest.

Key Dates

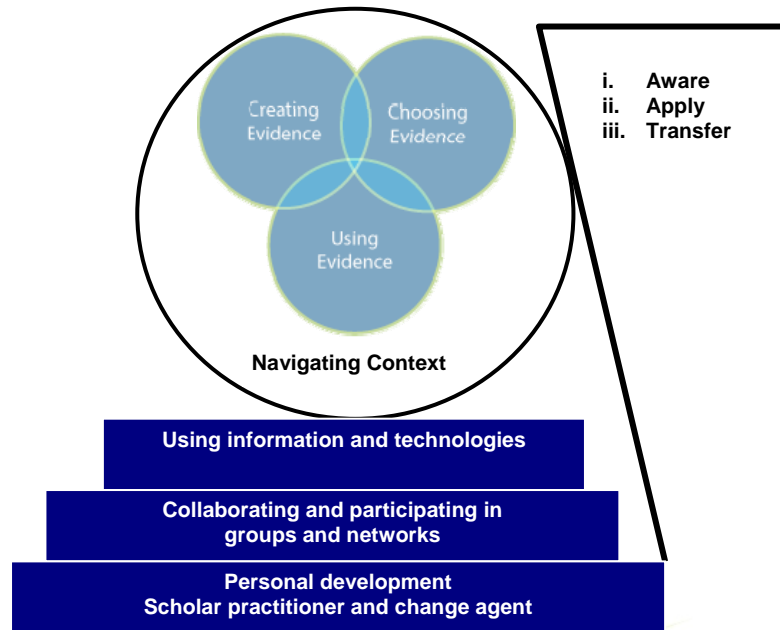
Call for Applications	October 2008
Deadline to declare intention to use allocated seats to Kelly Wiens, SEARCH Classic Program Manager (kelly.wiens@searchca.net)	November 17, 2008
AHS affiliated organizations submit <u>completed applications for both confirmed and waitlisted candidates</u> to the office of Andrew Will, Senior Operating Officer, Rural c/o Debbie Pall (debbie.pall@aspenrha.ab.ca) Other organizations submit the <u>names</u> of confirmed and waitlisted candidates to Kelly Wiens, SEARCH Classic Program Manager (kelly.wiens@searchca.net)	December 5, 2008
Completed applications for confirmed and waitlisted candidates from all organizations forwarded to Kelly Wiens, SEARCH Classic Program Manager (kelly.wiens@searchca.net).	December 15, 2008
Allocation of unclaimed seats	January 2009
SEARCH Classic Orientation for Participants & Managers	April 13 - 14, 2009
SEARCH VII Module 1	May 4 - 8, 2009

Cost of Participation

- There is no cash cost for participating in SEARCH Classic.
- All travel and accommodation expenses, curriculum materials (including computers) and seed funding to support projects are funded by SEARCH Canada.
- Sponsoring Organizations commitment to providing participants with release time (0.4 FTE per year over two years) and management support to facilitate the identification and completion of relevant projects.

Curriculum

- SEARCH Classic uses a unique, integrated curriculum, building capacity in the areas of 'Creating Evidence', 'Choosing Evidence', and 'Using Evidence', all within the context of the working environment.
- Information management, network participation and being a change agent are foundational skills developed throughout the program.
- The program is delivered using a blended format. Core content is increasingly provided online with face to face residential learning modules being used for exercises that encourage participants to explore the application of these concepts in practice.
- Sessions are geared toward three levels of competency development; allowing participants to achieve awareness of program concepts, application in practice and/or the ability to transfer those skills to others in their workplace.
- Our multidisciplinary faculty members, seconded from universities, colleges and health organizations throughout Alberta, deliver program sessions and provide academic mentorship for participants and organizational teams.
- SEARCH Classic program staff support participants' attendance at residential learning sessions, as well as ensuring timely access to program materials, offering assistance with negotiation of release time, and facilitating project team work.



Learning Approach

SEARCH Classic is a resource and catalyst for helping health organizations build capacity through development of their people. As such, participants are not students in the traditional sense, but employees accountable to their sponsoring organizations. SEARCH faculty and staff endeavor to respect that accountability, while providing mentorship and supportive guidance.

Unlike traditional educational programs, SEARCH Classic seeks to develop a community of learning where participants learn from each other, as well as from faculty, to facilitate appreciation of a diversity of perspectives and roles in the health sector. Our participants are adult learners who come to the program with a wide variety of skills and interests. The Classic curriculum offers opportunities for a broad array of competency development. Faculty members strive to tailor the delivery of the program to the needs and abilities of the participants so that each of them develops along their own trajectory in a supportive environment.

The cohort-based approach has proven to be an effective method to develop networks and communities of practice that serve participants and organizations long after the SEARCH

Classic learning process is completed. Participants can ‘tap their network’ of like-minded colleagues and academic faculty for current information, collaboration on projects and continued professional development.

Residential learning modules are purposefully delivered at different locations throughout the province. This strategy allows us to equalize travel distances for all participants and, more importantly, to enable participants to experience the diverse ‘landscape’ of the health context in Alberta. While we are in the neighborhood, we invite organizations to join us to share insights about health care in their region or provide a demonstration about an innovative approach to assessing and/or addressing the health needs of their particular population.



Projects

In a recent consultation, the Program Advisory Committee emphasized to SEARCH Canada that projects are very important to sponsoring organizations – both in terms of providing relevant evidence to inform clinical, service planning and policy questions, as well as being an indication of skills and capacity being developed in their SEARCH Participant.

They further indicated that the value of project work would be enhanced if:

- Projects were directly relevant/contributory to initiatives underway in the organization
- Deliverables were produced in a timely way
- Projects could involve or build skills and capacity within local initiatives or teams, as well as within the sponsored participant

SEARCH has taken this advice seriously and is currently working on a re-visioning of the Classic program to provide just-in-time content and opportunities to learn through projects that are strongly associated to continuing organizational initiatives. For SEARCH VII, therefore, we are seeking participants who are connected with ongoing organizational teams or initiatives.

The projects for each year of the program will be similar in focus to previous years, but will be executed quite differently:

Year 1

What's the same? The main deliverable is a Synthesis Project; a review of what is known on a particular topic with emphasis on customizing the results of the review to suit the local context.

What's different? Teams of participants will work together to find and critically appraise a body of literature on a common theme such as “Best Practices for Safe Medication Administration”. Individual participants will then work with staff in their home organizations to identify aspects of the literature that are most relevant to their initiative and to contextualize the findings to meet their needs. For example, the review might be refined to focus on “Safe Medication Administration Practices in Long Term Care Settings”.

Year 2

What's the same? The main deliverable is a Knowledge Generating Project; a project involving the collection and or analysis of data to answer a question of relevance to the health system.

What's different? Participants will still work with teams, but rather than creating teams within the cohort of participants, we are asking participants to work with existing teams or initiatives

in their home organizations. The other difference is that instead of developing a project on a topic defined through the provincial priority setting exercise, teams will develop a project relevant to their local priorities that builds on the results of the Year 1 research synthesis.

Following on the example provided above, an organizational project team may decide to do an evaluation project: to examine current medication practices for the purpose of developing an evaluation tool and process, as well as to establish a baseline to assess the impacts of quality improvement/assurance initiatives.

Participants will work with their organizationally-embedded teams to design the project, collect/access the data, conduct appropriate analysis and write up results in a useful format(s). These teams will have access to SEARCH faculty advisors and SEARCH staff for facilitation and project management assistance throughout the process.

Residential Learning Modules

- SEARCH Classic participants along with their sponsoring managers attend a 1½ day program preparation session at the beginning of the cohort.
- There are also 8 residential modules, typically 4-5 days in duration held at various sites around the province. Attendance at these modules is mandatory.
- Participants and their sponsoring managers are invited to present the results of their work to a provincial audience at a Think Tank and Conference event held in May or June each year.

Workplace Learning

- Between and beyond the residential sessions, participants complete on-line exercises through the virtual learning community also known as the SEARCH Classic Desktop. Completion of this preparatory work is essential to participation in the application exercises offered at the residential learning modules.
- Throughout the two-year cycle, participants connect with the teams in their home organizations to refine the focus of their projects, collect and analyze information relevant to their local initiative and report results in a meaningful way.
- Curriculum content in the residential learning modules is paced to provide just-in-time learning for each phase of project development. Participants and managers are encouraged to keep their projects on track so that learners are at similar stages of development and can learn from each other's experiences when they come together for the face-to-face sessions.

2009 – 2011 Proposed Dates

DRAFT activity schedule: dates may change.

Program Component	Program Deliverables		Proposed Dates	
Preparation and Orientation for Participants AND Managers	Workplace Learning	Synthesis Project	13 - 14 April 09	
Residential Learning Module 1			4 - 8 May 09	
Workplace Learning				
Residential Learning Module 2			15 - 18 June 09	
SEARCH Forum and SEARCHing for Excellence Awards Ceremony			19 June 09	
Workplace Learning				
Residential Learning Module 3			27 - 31 July 09	
Workplace Learning				
Residential Learning Module 4			25 - 30 October 09	
Workplace Learning				
Residential Learning Module 5			7 - 12 February 10	
Workplace Learning				
Residential Learning Module 6 <i>SEARCH Priorities Think Tank</i> <i>Calgary Health Research Methods</i>			Knowledge Generating Project	3 - 4 May 10 5 May 10 6 - 7 May 10
Workplace Learning				
Residential Learning Module 7				25-29 October 10
Workplace Learning				
Residential Learning Module 8	March 2011			
SEARCH Conference		June 2011		

Program Supports

As part the program, SEARCH Canada provides participants with access to:

- Licensed library resources
- Online knowledge management tools
- Curriculum collaboration tools
- Academic mentorship

SEARCH Canada also commits to:

- Providing Desktop technical support and consultation during the program
- Funding participants' travel and accommodation costs for attendance at training modules
- Providing comprehensive access to course materials online
- Facilitating and funding meetings of project teams
- Ensuring appropriate linkages with mentors, collaborators, and other SEARCHers
- Providing weekly information updates and news items for current and past participants
- Making seed funding available to support the completion and presentation of projects.

Partners and People

SEARCH Canada programs are implemented in collaboration with like-minded individuals and organizations with a keen interest in working to create a dynamic health system. Member and partner organizations are the lifeblood of the organization - they provide skilled faculty, topnotch infrastructure, and access to practitioners. They also extend the reach of SEARCH in Alberta's communities.

A **Program Advisory Committee (PAC)** provides SEARCH Canada with a regular forum for engaging its regional and organizational partners on the delivery of core programming.

Co-Chairs:

Cindy Gerdes
Director of Programs
SEARCH Canada

Gail MacKean
Adjunct Assistant Professor
Department of Community Health Sciences
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