

It's the Canadian way

Why the CHRP designation isn't standard across the country

Some people who contact the Human Resources Professionals Association of Ontario (HRPAO) are surprised to discover there are different requirements for the Certified Human Resources Professional (CHRP) designation in different provinces. Let's take a look at these differences and what they imply.

First, the regulation of professions is a provincial matter. To the extent the designation is the subject of legislation, that legislation will be provincial. In Ontario, this legislation is the Human Resources Professionals Association of Ontario Act, passed in 1990. It gives the HRPAO the exclusive right to grant the CHRP designation in Ontario. The same act also makes it an offence to "suggest or hold out that one is a CHRP unless one is a member of the association and has satisfied the criteria set out in the bylaws of the association." Some other provinces have similar legislation as well.

The Canadian Council of Human Resources Associations (CCHRA) does not grant the CHRP, provincial associations do — which is why they are sometimes referred to as "provincial designation-granting associations."

For a number of reasons, a national designation is useful, especially if it is transportable across provinces. This idea is not a novel one. Many trades and professions have worked out such arrangements. For instance there are the "red seal" trades for which common inter-provincial standards have been established. In most cases, there is a national body responsible for setting standards.

Consider that there are nine provincial associations that are members of the CCHRA. Were it not for the CCHRA, there would need to be 36 bilateral agreements to ensure the transportability of the CHRP designation



■ GUEST COMMENTARY

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across all provinces.

But transportability does not require the processes and requirements for the designation be identical. What is required is that they be equivalent, or considered close enough. Provinces have the latitude to develop their own processes and requirements for the CHRP. The only boundaries are mutual recognition of the designation. These boundaries allow for a fair degree of variation across provinces.

Other than the membership requirement — that the designation holder be a member of her provincial association to obtain and maintain the CHRP — there is no requirement applied in the same way across all provinces.

Differences make sense

The fact that provinces differ in the requirements for the CHRP is just that — a fact. What is interesting is how people feel about it. Some want identical requirements across all provinces; but, setting aside the fact that is very unlikely to happen, it actually would be a bad idea. It would unnecessarily limit the ability of provincial associations to reflect the different circumstances of each province.

In all matters that fall under provincial jurisdiction, there are always differences

from one province to another. Consider employment law and all the other laws that impact the workplace. Most legislation that affects the workplace is provincial. Although there are general principles that cut across provincial jurisdictions, they all differ in their details.

In Canada, national programs always need to accept and take into account the different provincial realities — just ask any federal politician. Having each province take a different approach is just the Canadian way of making things work.

Indeed, there are situations where an identical approach would go against the essence of the designation itself. For the most part, workplace legislation is provincial in nature. One aspect of being a competent HR practitioner is to master the nuances of the law as it applies in one's jurisdiction. One could see, for example, how a provincial association would want to ensure its CHRPs are competent in interpreting the legislation that applies in its jurisdiction. This kind of requirement would vary by its very nature from one province to the next.

The fact that the CHRP requirements vary from one province to the next is, well, so very Canadian.

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